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Evaluation of Rheumatoid Information Providing Web Site on the Internet

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Abstract and objective

The purpose of this study was to analyze and evaluate internet web sites about rheumatic arthritis in Korea. The results indicated the need of regular and reliable monitoring of the health information websites.

Keywords:

rheumatoid arthritis, information, internet

Introduction

The increasing health information on the web indicates the need of monitoring and evaluation of the quality of web based health information.

Methods

One hundred forty eight sites of general/university hospitals were searched through domestic search engines and included in the 1st analysis. Eleven websites which are entirely developed for RA information, were selected and secondly analyzed using web evaluation tools developed by Kim(2003)[1].

Results

In the 148 web sites of general/university hospitals, there were 60 sites(40.5%) with bulletin board, 107 sites(73.6%) with web master contact information, 115 sites(79.1%) with the site maps for the convenient search, 136 sites(92.6%) with search function, and 106 sites(71.6%) with customer service functions. Second analysis of selected 11 web sites which are developed entirely for health information about rheumatoid arthritis, showed high scores in the website purpose items(purpose and target users are indicated clearly), and reliability items(developer information and contact information are clearly provided) but resulted in relatively low scores in source of references(36.4%), site maps/outlines(45.5%), how-to-use/help function(18.2%).

Conclusion

The results from this study indicated that internet information about rheumatoid arthritis were not enough quantitatively and qualitatively[2]. It is necessary to improve the understandability of information for consumers, and provide the reference sources to improve the reliability of health information.

Table 1 - Analysis of the quality of the RA websites

Criteria	Description	Yes N(%)	No N(%)
Purpose	Purpose of web site is stated clearly.	11(100)	0(0.0)
	Subject is stated clearly.	11(100)	0(0.0)
Contents	Contents serve the purpose of the web site.	11(100)	0(0.0)
	Contents are appropriate for the subject.	11(100)	0(0.0)
	Contents are suitable for targeted theme.	11(100)	0(0.0)
	Design is appropriate for intended subject.	7(63.6)	4(36.4)
	Contents covered the related topics enough.	8(72.7)	3(27.3)
	Information for the theme is consistent.	11(100)	0(0.0)
	Information is correct and accurate.	11(100)	0(0.0)
	Information has clear sources.	4(36.4)	7(63.0)
Author-ity	Author or information provider is indicated.	9(81.8)	2(18.2)
	Contact information (e-mail, tel) is indicated.	9(81.8)	2(18.2)
	Author has an authority in the related field.	8(72.7)	3(27.3)
Reliability	Developer and supporter of site is indicated.	10(90.9)	1(9.1)
	Contact information is indicated.	11(100)	0(0.0)
Interface	Contact e-mail is provided.	10(90.9)	1(9.1)
	Users' opinion page is provided	9(81.8)	2(18.2)
	Users' opinions are considered	8(72.7)	3(27.3)
Search	Site map indicates overall site structure.	5(45.5)	6(54.5)
	Instruction to use is available.	2(18.2)	9(81.8)
	Search function serves the site.	10(90.9)	1(9.1)
	Site title is suitable for purpose and content	11(100)	0(0.0)
	URL/Domain name of web site is appropriate.	10(90.9)	1(9.1)
Updates	The opening date of web site is indicated.	8(72.7)	3(27.3)
	Latest update date is indicated.	1(9.1)	10(90.9)
	Recent comments in bulletin board have dates.	9(81.8)	2(18.2)
	All links are available.	7(63.6)	4(36.4)

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