



IBSA FOUNDATION
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Università
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SAPIENZA
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HEALTH LITERACY AND INFORMATION QUALITY

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INFORMATION JOURNEY IN THE DIGITAL AGE



CHANNEL MIX



THE WORLD WIDE WEB



DOCTOR-PATIENT
RELATIONSHIP

ISSUES REGARDING INFORMATION QUALITY

- **SOURCES OF HEALTH INFORMATION**
- **PATIENTS WHO GO TO SEE THEIR DOCTOR HAVING ALREADY RESEARCHED THEIR CONDITION**
- **COGNITIVE DISSONANCE AND SELECTIVE MEMORY**
- **DOCTORS OFTEN SEEING THEIR INFORMED PATIENTS AS A 'THREAT'**

ISSUES REGARDING INFORMATION QUALITY

- **OVERLAPS OF ONLINE AND OFFLINE CHANNELS**
- **COEXISTENCE OF PATIENT SEARCHES AND MEDICAL ADVICE**
- **THE INTERNET: ACCESSIBILITY , USEFULNESS AND RELIABILITY OF INFORMATION**
- **POOR CRITICAL JUDGMENT SKILLS ABOUT THE WORTH OF THE INFORMATION FOUND (LOW HEALTH LITERACY)**

DISCERN –AN INSTRUMENT FOR JUDGING THE QUALITY OF HEALTH INFORMATION

- DEVELOPPED AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY
http://www.discern.org.uk/discern_instrument.php
- IT HELPS PEOPLE JUDGE THE QUALITY OF HEALTH INFORMATION FROM THEIR ORGANISATION OR ANY OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED

SECTION 1

IS THE WEBSITE RELIABLE?

1) ARE THE AIMS CLEAR?

NO PARTIALLY YES (No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT

Look for a clear indication of:

- what it is about
- what it is meant to cover (and what topics are meant to be excluded)
- who might find the information useful

SECTION 1

DOES IT ACHIEVE ITS AIMS?

NO PARTIALLY YES (No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT

Consider whether the website provides the information it aimed to as outlined

SECTION 1

3) IS THE WEBSITE RELEVANT?

NO

PARTIALLY

YES

(No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT:

Consider whether

- the website addresses the questions that readers might ask.
- recommendations and suggestions concerning treatment choices are realistic or appropriate

SECTION 1

4) IS IT CLEAR WHAT SOURCES OF INFORMATION WERE USED TO COMPILE THE WEBSITE?

NO PARTIALLY YES (No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT

- Check whether the main claims or statements made about treatment choices are accompanied by a reference to the sources used as evidence, e.g. a research study or expert opinion.
- Look for a means of checking the sources used such as a bibliography/reference list or the addresses of the experts or organisations quoted, or external links to the online sources

SECTION 1

5) IS IT CLEAR WHEN THE INFORMATION USED OR REPORTED IN THE WEBSITE WAS PRODUCED?

NO

PARTIALLY

YES

(No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT

Look for:

- dates of the main sources of information used to compile the website
- date of any revisions of the website
- date of publication.

SECTION 1

6) IS IT BALANCED AND UNBIASED?

NO

PARTIALLY

YES

(No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT

Look for:

- a clear indication of whether the information on the website is written from a personal or objective point of view
- evidence that a range of sources of information was used to compile the website, e.g. more than one research study or expert
- evidence of an external assessment of the website

SECTION 1

6) IS IT BALANCED AND UNBIASED?

NO

PARTIALLY

YES

(No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT

Be wary if:

- the website focuses on the advantages or disadvantages of one particular treatment choice without reference to other possible choices
- the information is presented in a sensational, emotive or alarmist way

SECTION 1

7) DOES IT PROVIDE DETAILS OF ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND INFORMATION?

NO

PARTIALLY

YES

(No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT

Look for suggestions for further reading or for details of other organisations providing advice and information about the condition and treatment choices

SECTION 1

8) DOES IT REFER TO AREAS OF UNCERTAINTY?

NO PARTIALLY YES (No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT

- Look for discussion of the gaps in knowledge or differences in expert opinion concerning treatment choices.
- Be wary if the website indicates that a treatment choice affects everyone in the same way, e.g. 100% success rate with a particular treatment

SECTION 2

- HOW GOOD IS THE QUALITY OF INFORMATION ON TREATMENT CHOICES?
- PLEASE NOTE: THE QUESTIONS APPLY TO THE TREATMENT (OR TREATMENTS) DESCRIBED IN THE WEBSITE

SECTION 2

9) DOES IT DESCRIBE HOW EACH TREATMENT WORKS?

NO PARTIALLY YES (No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT

Look for a description of how a treatment acts on the body to achieve its effect

SEZIONE 2

10) DOES IT DESCRIBE THE BENEFITS OF EACH TREATMENT?

NO PARTIALLY YES (No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT

Benefits can include controlling or getting rid of symptoms, preventing recurrence of the condition and eliminating the condition, both short-term and long-term

SECTION 2

11) DOES IT DESCRIBE THE RISKS OF EACH TREATMENT?

NO PARTIALLY YES (No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT

Risks can include side effects, complications and adverse reactions to treatment, both short-term and long-term

SECTION 2

12) DOES IT DESCRIBE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF NO TREATMENT IS USED?
NO PARTIALLY YES (No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT

Look for a description of the risks and benefits of postponing treatment, of watchful waiting (i.e. monitoring how the condition progresses without treatment) or of permanently forgoing treatment

SECTION 2

13) DOES IT DESCRIBE HOW THE TREATMENT CHOICES AFFECT OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE?

NO PARTIALLY YES (No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT

Look for:

- description of the effects of the treatment choices on day-to-day activity
- description of the effects of the treatment choices on relationships with family, friends and carers.

SECTION 2

14) IS IT CLEAR THAT THERE MAY BE MORE THAN ONE POSSIBLE TREATMENT CHOICE?

NO PARTIALLY YES (No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT

Look for:

- a description of who is most likely to benefit from each treatment choice mentioned, and under what circumstances
- suggestions of alternatives to consider or investigate further (including choices not fully described in the website) before deciding whether to select or reject a particular treatment choice

SECTION 2

15) DOES IT PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR SHARED DECISION-MAKING?

NO PARTIALLY YES (No=1, Partially= 2-4, Yes = 5)

HINT:

Look for suggestions of things to discuss with family, friends, doctors or other health professionals concerning treatment choices

SECTION 2

16) BASED ON THE ANSWERS TO ALL OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, RATE THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE WEBSITE AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT TREATMENT CHOICES

LOW(1) MODERATE(3) HIGH(5)

1= Serious or extensive shortcomings

3= Potentially important but not serious shortcomings

5= Minimal shortcomings