Reviewer's report

Title: An analysis of online health information on schizophrenia or related conditions: a cross-sectional survey

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Reviewer: Lian van der Krieke

Reviewer's report:

This is an informative paper that investigates the quality of relevant online websites for people with schizophrenia or a related disorder in two countries (languages) with a disparate ICT context. The paper is a relevant addition to the existing literature about developments in the e-mental health area.

Minor essential revisions:

Introduction:
1. On page 5 you state “a thorough promotion for the use of web-based health information in different countries is needed”. This statement might be too strong and a bit premature. The aim of your paper is to see what information is provided on websites and to find out whether the quality is sufficient. At the same time, I do agree with your point that internet access and access to proper online health information is a basic right. Perhaps you can reformulate your sentence, focusing more on the priority that should be given to this topic, instead of promoting the use of online health information sites.

Results
2. Please explain what a HON certification is (last sentence, page 11).

Discussion
3. What I miss in the discussion section is a discussion of your findings related to the difference in ICT context in Finland and Greece. In the introduction, you explain the differences in ICT context, and why it is relevant to take these two countries. But, you do not come back to it (only in the Conclusion, which is too late). Could you please elaborate on this in the Discussion? What do the differences that you found between Greece and Finland mean in the context of their different ICT climates? What are the implications? For instance, do the results indicate that top internet countries do not produce top websites? That countries in which the internet penetration rate is less high do not produce worse websites?

4. Could you elaborate on how to improve mental health websites (for people with schizophrenia) in the future? Who should be involved? What needs to be taken into account?

Discretionary revisions:
Introduction

5. This sentence, especially the first part, I find difficult to understand: “While the Web can be accessed by a variety of populations [17], consumers may apply to their own lives the online information they read [18], which in turn may support their empowerment and understanding of the disease [19, 20].” Do you aim to focus on ‘consumers’ as a specific subgroup of ‘a variety of populations’? Or do you want to say that, because all the information on the web accessible for everyone, all consumers have the opportunity to look for free information that is relevant to them (an opportunity that they did not have before, no longer solely dependent on professionals)?

6. On page 4, where you discuss computer-based psychoeducation, I would suggest to also mention the Cochrane Review about computer-based psychoeducation recently published by your research group.

7. On page 6, the sentence “However, a limited number of similar studies were conducted in countries like Finland or Greece, which differ in population, internet access and, Information and Communication technologies (ICT) use and attitudes” can be reformulated into a more informative sentence. To me, it is not clear whether previous studies were conducted in Finland and Greece, or in countries like Finland and Greece (in that case, how were they similar?). Furthermore, it is not clear to me what the findings of these studies were. Perhaps you can reformulate the sentence into something like: “Only two studies have been conducted in Finland and Greece that showed that …. They had a broad focus, including a variety of populations. The objective of this study is to assess....”

Methods

8. On page 6, I would replace “one” by “a search” to make the sentence more clear: “Search terms in Finnish and Greek language were chosen with the aim of generating a list of websites that might to a search produced by....”

9. On page 7, you explain your hypothesis for four most probable search terms. I was wondering, did you check the validity of your hypothesis with some random service users?

10. Regarding inclusion criterion 1) on page 8: did you focus on adults in general or adults with schizophrenia or related disorders (as is stated in your introduction)?

11. Regarding exclusion criterion 8: by ‘parents’, do you mean ‘parents of people with schizophrenia’?

12. About the selection process: can you add information about reviewers (e.g. two independent reviewers), and possibly interrater reliability?

Results

13. Page 12: About the correlations/associations: you report that there is no significant correlation between accountability and interactivity. But, why would you expect a correlation between these two factors? I would suggest to motivate
the associations that you are investigating in the analysis section.

14. Page 13: Interactivity of the website. I would suggest to start reporting the results about incorporated evaluation questionnaires. To me, this is a more 'typical' characteristic of interactivity than the provision of email addresses of web masters.

Discussion:

15. Page 14: Perhaps you can make the first sentence more specific by underlining the fact that your focus was on websites intended for people with schizophrenia or a related disorders.

16. In the discussion, you seem to discuss the results of all indicators, except for Characteristics of the website.

17. About accountability and ownership (page 15): could you explain why you think information about accountability and ownership is important? Could you speculate about a possible 'best' and a 'worst' owner?

18. Page 15: I don’t understand the relation between these two sentences: “Not many governmental websites appeared in our online searches. AND Governmental bodies, patient associations and other official organizations participated in the development process of reliable health information to citizens.”

19. Page 15: Relying on … higher quality scores”. What do you mean with higher quality scores? Are you thinking about the content of websites?

20. Page 16: “In the current study it was found… health or mental health websites”. Aren’t you only focusing on mental health websites?

21. Page 16: “Additionally, it was assessed… might have been inadequate”. I would suggest to move this sentence to the limitations. Also, ‘was’ should be deleted.

22. Page 16/page 17: I don’t understand the function of the paragraph starting with “In the analysis, ‘wikis’ were scrutinized.” Why do you pay special attention to wikis in the discussion section? To me, it does not seem to logically follow from the previous paragraphs.

23. You could consider adding to your limitations some critical remarks related to the measurements that you used. I was a bit surprised to find out that ‘Aesthetics’ did not include the use of pictures or video material, whereas I think this can be crucial in information sites for people with psychotic problems.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.