Author’s response to reviews

Title: Evaluation of the content quality of websites for recurrent aphthous ulcers and oral lichen planus

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear editor and reviewers,

We have amended our manuscript according to the good advice of the two reviewers. The amendments were shown below.

Reviewer 1

Major revisions

1. Page 5 line 5-7: Regarding the choice of keyword, I don't think the keyword "recurrent oral ulcers" (ROU) can be used instead of RAU as the term ROU also encompasses recurrent ulcers for other reasons e.g. EM, HSV and also as oral manifestations of systemic conditions e.g. Behcet's, IBD or HIV. I would suggest the authors to apply the term "recurrent aphthous ulcers" even though ROU may be more popularly used. Otherwise the authors may consider changing the title and focus of the study to ROU instead of RAU.

We agreed that RAU was more accurate than ROU, and we changed the keyword to “recurrent aphthous ulcers” and search in the search engines again. In order to avoid bias in time consistency, we also applied the other keyword “oral lichen planus” again in the same time.(Methods section, page 5, line 1-3)
2. Page 5 line 14-15: The minimum no of pages per saved search should be consistently either 50 or 100 consecutive websites (the latter is preferred) in each search engine. Selection of number of reviewed websites based on "at least 15 websites could be evaluated" is an inadequate justification.

We changed our strategy and saved the top 100 websites in each search engine. (Methods section, page5, line 6)

3. As there are two recent papers on the similar topics (one assessed content quality of internet information for OLP and another for oral ulcers), I am surprised that the authors did not mention or compare results of the present study with these articles. In addition, both previous studies used both DISCERN and other instruments to evaluate content quality of websites while the present study only use the DISCERN. Therefore, the justification of conducting the present study need to be clearer.


Thanks for the reminding, we cited the two studies in the “Background” section and the “Discussion” section.

Minor corrections and suggestions:

BACKGROUND

Page 2 sentence 1 line 1-2:

1. immunologically-mediated conditions and oral infections should be added

These conditions were added.

2. small typo: potentially malignant disorders

Already changed, thanks.
3. Reference list did not match well with the text including ref2.

We changed this part in the background, delete ref2 and focused on the two disease: recurrent aphthous ulcers and oral lichen planus.

P2 sentence 2 line 3:

I understand that the authors used prevalence of 30% from ref4 but the population of this study is only a group of fishermen in India, and therefore cannot be used to reflect worldwide or general population. Large-scale epidemiological study or national study should be used as reference instead.

We deleted ref4 and added the explanation of RAU and OLP.

P2 sentence 3: Reference needed

We didn’t find accurate references, and changed the arbitrary words to “two of the most common diseases”.

P2 sentence 4:

1. Need clearer definition of RAU e.g. recurrent oral ulcers in an otherwise healthy patient

We added description of RAU here. (Background section, page 2, line 5-7)

2. I think "most patients suffer from severe pain" is incorrect as RAU can be a mild condition with certain degree of oral discomfort or only bothersome

We changed this part to “varying degrees of pain”

P2 sentence 5: Need more explanation of OLP e.g. clinical features and behavior

Added the clinical features of OLP. (Background section, page 3, line 1-4)

P2-3 sentence 6:

1. Increased risk of oral cancer

Add “oral” as suggested.
2. and the malignant transformation rates

Add “malignant transformation” before rate as suggested.

3. the authors should cite the following article of malignant transformation of OLP as this is more recent compared to Fitzpatrick et al, 2014 (ref7), and figures of 1.1% may be used.


We used this reference and renewed the figures, thanks to your suggestion.

P3 line 9: ref8 websites required access date in the reference section

Access date was added in this ref.

P3 line 17-19: need references for "some studies"

We deleted this sentence, and added description of studies with detailed references.

P3 line 21-22, P4 line 1-9: I personally think that this is somewhat off-topic. The authors should give more examples of previous studies assessing content quality of websites for oral conditions or oral mucosal conditions as there are a number of studies of online content quality in the field of dentistry and Oral Medicine being conducted.

We deleted this part, and added more examples related to oral mucosal diseases. (Background section, page 4, line 4-13)

P4 line11-12

Reference to be added for the completion:


This reference was added here. (Background section, page 4, line 4-5)

P4 line 17-18: literature gap should be given more clarification as there are a number of studies assessing content quality of websites in OLP and RAU as followed (should be added after "previous reports" on line 18:


These two studies were cited in this part. (Background section, page 4, line 8-13)

P4 line 20: concerning oral mucosal diseases
“mucosal” was added after “oral” as suggested.

METHODS

P5 line 1-3: requires references (e.g. statistics) to justify why these search engines are the most common.

We did not find exact numbers or studies to support the “most common”, so we changed the word to “popular”.

P5 line 3: "." After the websites
Punctuation location changed as suggested.

P5 line 20: requires reference


This reference was added here. (Methods section, page 5, line 16-18)

RESULTS

P7 line 4: the date of conducting online search should be added

The date was added in Methods section, page 5, line 6.

P7 line 11-14: Do all ROU websites have information specific to RAU or include both RAU and ulcers for other reasons.

We changed the keyword to RAU, so this part we only focused the RAU-related websites.

P8 table 1: As mentioned earlier, number of reviewed websites should be consistently either 50 or 100 (the latter is preferred).

We delete table 1, and the number of reviewed websites changed to 100 consistently.
P9 table 2: I think it would be nicer to provide brief description of each question of e.g. 1. aims clear or 3. relevance in the table

Brief description of each question was added in New table 1.

P10 line 1: Differences in content quality of websites in Chinese and English

We added “content quality” here as suggested.

P10 line 4: with a statistically significant difference

The word “statistically” was added.

P10 line 11-12: and in each search engine

The word “search” was added before “engine”. (Results section, page 11, line 3)

P10 line 20: what is popular science?

We re-divided websites into 4 categories according to the source, and popular science was canceled. (Results section, page 11, line 17-20)

P11 Table3, 4: Are the categorization of these websites in Chinese or English or both languages?

We changed the presentation of this part to figure 2, which was clearer in showing the categories.

DISCUSSION

P12 line 1: The ranking of websites and their overall quality rating scores

“Overall quality rating” was added before “scores” as suggested. (Results section, page 12, line 6)

P13 line 3-6: As mentioned earlier, the authors should compare and discuss the results of the present study with previous studies on the quality of websites related to RAU and OLP as followed as both studies applied DISCERN as the present study


The two studies were cited here, and discussed the consistency.

P13-15: in general, lack of referencing
We deleted some discussion without references, and added some new discussion.

Reviewer 2

Minor errors:

1). In abstract, page 1, line 37 and in methods, page 5, lines 38-39; the minimum number of pages per saved search must be specified. 50 or 100?

We change the number to consistent 100.

2). In methods, page 5, lines 1-27, the date for websites accessed must be included.

The date was added in Methods section, page 5, line 6.

Major errors:

1). The authors have used only the DISCERN rating instrument. Why?? Only with this instrument the information is very brief. Why JAMA benchmarks, existence of the Health on the Not (HON) seal and Health Information Quality (HIQ) were not used.

We added the JAMA benchmarks to assess the included websites.