Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 0 Date: 11 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Paswach Wiriyakijja

Reviewer's report:

Dear authors of the manuscript "Evaluation of the content quality of websites for recurrent aphthous ulcers and oral lichen planus", upon reading this nice manuscript of modern topic, I identified a couple of important flaws in the methodology, which require major revisions as followed.

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.

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.

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.


Apart from these important flaws, please find minor corrections and suggestions as followed.
BACKGROUND

Page 2 sentence 1 line 1-2:

1. immunologically-mediated conditions and oral infections should be added
2. small typo: potentially malignant disorders
3. reference list did not match well with the text including ref2

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.

P2 sentence 3: reference needed

P2 sentence 4:

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

P2 sentence 5: need more explanation of OLP e.g. clinical features and behaviour

P2-3 sentence 6:

1. increased risk of oral cancer
2. and the malignant transformation rates
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.


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

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

P4 line 11-12

Reference to be added for the completion:


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:


P4 line 20: concerning oral mucosal diseases

METHODS

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

P5 line 3: "." After the websites

P5 line 20: requires reference


RESULTS

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

P7 line 11-14: Do all ROU websites have information specific to RAU or include both RAU and ulcers for other reasons.
P8 table 1: As mentioned earlier, number of reviewed websites should be consistently either 50 or 100 (the latter is preferred).

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

P10 line 1: Differences in content quality of websites in Chinese and English
P10 line 4: with a statistically significant difference
P10 line 11-12: and in each search engine
P10 line 20: what is popular science?
P11 Table3, 4: Are the categorization of these websites in Chinese or English or both languages?

DISCUSSION

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

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


P13-15: in general, lack of referencing

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons
CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal