Patients read peer-reviewed medical publications

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To assess whether patients read medical publications, and whether/how they use information derived from medical publications to manage their disease.

Methods: 100 patients and 50 caregivers of patients with atopic dermatitis/eczema were recruited from a national US database. Eligible participants completed an online survey to report their behaviors and opinions regarding information sources. The survey questions were reviewed and validated by patients (n = 5) in initial telephone interviews. The patient survey was designed and conducted by Adelphi Research, a health-care marketing research firm.

Results: The majority of respondents had college (45%) or graduate school (33%) education. Respondents identified online searches (45%) and health-care providers (37%) as the key sources of medical information. The majority of respondents (62%) reported previously sourcing information about their condition from medical research articles. Of those familiar with medical publications (n = 68), 77% actively searched for them, 53% accessed freely available articles. Medical publications were accessed via a general Internet search (45%); scientific journals (22%); libraries (9%); and health-care providers (7%). The majority of respondents had college (45%) or graduate school (33%) education. Respondents identified online searches (45%) and health-care providers (37%) as the key sources of medical information. The majority of respondents (62%) reported previously sourcing information about their condition from medical research articles. Of those familiar with medical publications (n = 68), 77% actively searched for them, 53% accessed freely available articles. Medical publications were accessed via a general Internet search (45%); scientific journals (22%); libraries (9%); and health-care providers (7%).

Conclusions: Patients read and use peer-reviewed medical publications to improve their disease management. Therefore, patients should be considered an important audience. Additional analyses taking into account other educational levels and other disease areas are warranted.

RESULTS: KEY FINDINGS

A considerable proportion of patients is familiar with medical publications

Patients read medical publications to stay informed and better manage their disease

Respondents felt that medical publications helped them to:

Be involved in the decision-making regarding their disease management (41%)

Stay up-to-date with the newest developments in their condition (50%)

Discuss alternative treatment options with HCPs (48%)

Optimize their disease management (48%)

Feel more in control of their disease (45%)

Adhere to their treatment regimen (30%)

Unmet need for clarity and relevance: why medical publications may not be easy to understand

Scientific & Medical terms

Lacks clarity/Statistics are confusing

Details missing

Too long

Survey design

The patient survey was designed and conducted by Adelphi Research, a health-care marketing research firm.

The survey questions were reviewed and validated by patients (n = 5) in initial telephone interviews.

100 patients and 50 caregivers of patients with moderate to severe atopic dermatitis/eczema were recruited from a national US database.

Eligible participants completed an online survey to report their behaviors and opinions regarding information sources. Patients were shown an example of a medical research article.

The majority of responses were measured on a 7-point scale. Percentages represent patients/caregivers who selected 6/7, indicating that they strongly agreed with a statement.

LIMITATIONS

Our data are based on a single therapy area (atopic dermatitis), so results cannot be generalized to any other therapy areas. The survey can be easily conducted in any therapy area for disease-specific information.

Although we have some respondents with only high-school or trade-school education, our sample is skewed toward more educated patients (68% completed college/graduate school), which is likely representative of the online patient population.

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