

Short commentary

Might the Articles Evaluating the Quality and Reliability of Videos Available on Youtube Platform be Useful in Healthcare Providers' Work?

Ewelina Zofia Joniec*, Natalia Maria Hawryluk and Małgorzata Stompór

¹Department of Family Medicine and Infectious Diseases, University of Warmia and Mazury, 10-719 Olsztyn, Poland

Introduction

In recent years articles evaluating the quality and reliability of medical videos available on YouTube platform began to be published [1-8]. This increasing tendency has been related to the importance of the Internet as a source of medical information, while YouTube has been the biggest platform for free video sharing. The main advantages of educational materials on YouTube are easy access, anonymity and wide choice; however the leading disadvantage is lack of confirmed and controlled compliance with evidence-based medicine principles. Therefore some tools were invented to be able to use educational videos in health providers' work for the benefit of patients and to reduce the risk in leading the patient to confusion and misinformation. To achieve this, there is a need to assess their quality and reliability.

The Global Quality Score (GQS) is used to evaluate the quality of educational videos. The GQS is a 5-point one-choice scale taking into account the flow, whether relevant information is covered and how beneficial for patients the video is. The reliability is assessed with the use of DISCERN scale, which consists of 16 questions including, inter alia, reliability, aims, relevancy, sources of information, balance, bias, treatment methods, mechanism, risks and benefits [9]. JAMA criteria are used for rating both quality and reliability. The video scores in the above-mentioned scales usually are compared with parameters such as duration of the video, view count, channel subscribers, like ratio and the external websites linked to the videos.

***Corresponding author:** Ewelina Zofia Joniec, Department of Family Medicine and Infectious Diseases, University of Warmia and Mazury, 10-719 Olsztyn, Poland, Tel: +48 783954944; E-mail: ewelina.joniec@outlook.com

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Since the quality of the videos available on YouTube differs, the patients' acquired knowledge may also vary. The articles evaluating quality and reliability highlight that the minority of videos is high quality and relevant for patients. This helps us understand why even if the patient seems to have knowledge about his health problem, it may be incomplete and sometimes incorrect [1-6]. YouTube also contains videos promoting unscientific therapies and controversial topics. Using the popularity, misleading information can be spread all over the world. On the other hand, there are still some useful videos, so if the patient obtained information about his disease from the material available on YouTube, this source of information should not be automatically negated. The results of many articles show that the quality of videos from medical sources, e.g., physicians, hospitals or academic workers, is higher than non-medical, moreover authors often include the links to the videos of the highest quality [1,2,7,8].

The cooperation between the patient and the doctor is crucial in therapeutic goals accomplishment. To improve the compliance to treatment the patient has to understand his medical condition, what may be achieved more successfully by conversation in combination with other methods of communication particularly written and visual. The video materials are a good source of information, more approachable for patients due to animations and diagrams usage that make it easier to understand and remember the presented content. Unfortunately some medical videos insufficiently emphasize treatment-related issues. In the DISCERN scale, 6 out of 16 questions refer to the treatment and therefore videos that only briefly discuss the treatment itself, despite providing a broad explanation of other issues, score lower. Another limitation is that due to the lower availability of videos in languages other than English, there is obviously a group of patients for whom they are not suitable.

The videos available on YouTube platform may be the source of the medical information for patients and their families but precautions should be taken when selecting the materials. Carefully selected videos may be recommended by the healthcare providers for their patients to introduce them to the medical characteristics of the disease and prepare them for therapeutic dialogue with broadening knowledge. The highest quality videos are usually provided by medical sources. The GQS, DISCERN and JAMA enable an objective evaluation of the quality and reliability of the videos available on YouTube, therefore especially videos highlighted in the articles may be useful in clinical practice. Currently, the information about the scores obtained by the video is not published on YouTube, which makes it difficult for patients to search for videos containing reliable information. It should be considered to prepare future research evaluating YouTube videos as well as facilitating the accessibility to the results for the dissemination of reliable information.

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