



Two-Factor Theory of Health Information Use: A Suggestion

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ABSTRACT

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Introduction

Today, the role of information is not deniable in decision-making, education, research, advertisement, content production, etc. (1). In fact, information in health systems depends on time and demand specifications and is extremely important for reasons such as having short half-life, impact on health behavior, and sensitivity to death and life (2). Peoples' need for health information is deeply different. Physicians, patients, hospital administrators, students and faculty members have different kinds of needs for information because of their specific goals (2). Understanding the type of information needs is a fairly long and complex process that is influenced by various factors. But the final goal of information seeking behavior is using retrieved information. This information is used for various reasons by beneficiaries and is influenced by various factors. In this letter, we aim to offer a conceptual and predictable framework of health information use. In this conceptual framework, two main factors of using health information, i.e. motivational and functional, are briefly explained.

Motivational factors

Using health information is based on previous purpose, or is unintentional. Many users may review their information, but this review is caused by the aimless efforts. What represents the users' real information needs is their deliberate use (gaps in one's knowledge). Eysenbach mentioned that the use of health information includes cases like fitness, weight loss or gain, exercise, pregnancy, birth control, maturity, domestic violence, and smoking (2). But "Sabahi and Ahmadi believe that the motivation in using health information is to understand the cost of treatment, self-care, learn more about disease, reduce hospitalization time, check the accuracy of information, reduce the medical care and proper diet" (3). In general, incentives to use health information include preventing, diagnosing and treating the diseases, understanding the process of treatment, counseling, improving the quality of life, promoting family health, providing more effective training, producing contents, and seeking disasters related information.

Functional Factors

The factors are created by institutions and health information staff (medical librarians and healthcare providers). In fact, they play an essential role in facilitating, accessing and using health information. In this section, three factors are explained:

- 1) Features of health information delivery channels: Channels to access health information should be provided corresponding to the information needs of the users. Sometimes, a face to face interview with the users in the library or hospital, and sometimes the supply of information through various media (websites, brochures, speeches, radio, television, etc.) would be an effective way in the use of health information.
- 2) Professional features of staff: Hurwhat believes that professionalism is a kind of manner which makes sense with the sense of responsibility in the supply of products and services (4). To fulfill this mission, medical librarians should have sufficient abilities in the use of new technology, communication skills, interest in helping others and quick response to others' health information needs.
- 3) Features of resources: Among the wide range of topics, health information is important, but sometimes its validity is questionable." Kader states that capacity to harm physical, mental and special conditions of health information on one hand and lack of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating have created a lot of concern (2). Thus, providing access to reliable and update information sources is very important.

Summary

The use of health information is influenced by two factors (motivational and functional). In a motivational factor, incentives for the use of health information by the users are important and gaps in the user knowledge are the most important factors in the search and use of health information. However, the functional factor is relevant to the health information service providers such as medical librarians and medical staff. The ability in the acquisition, processing and dissemination of information on the suitable time, place and method can increase and strengthen the use of health information among people. Via this theory, we can predict and explain the intensity of the use of health information among different groups.

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