

WikiCardio: A New Tool To Get Reliable Information

WikiCardio: nueva herramienta para informarse bien

INTRODUCTION

Internet has increased easy access to all kinds of information, including health topics. While online information on diseases, symptoms and treatments has contributed to change risk behaviors and has improved knowledge of many conditions, in some cases it has led to wrong perceptions of the disease and gross errors, in people prone to "self-diagnosis".

Although most doctors prefer their patients not to search the web for their symptoms, the truth is many do it: today, 1 out of 20 Google searches are health-related queries.

In the United States, 7 out of 10 adults look online for health information, according to a Pew Research Center survey. (1) Most of the people who search for data are patients with chronic diseases. Three-quarters of users utilize search engines (like Google, Bing, Yahoo), while 13% uses sites specialized in medical information, 2% uses Wikipedia, and 1% a social network (like Facebook).

The picture is not very different in Europe. In 2012, a survey conducted in Italy revealed that 57% of users surf the Internet for health information. (2) In turn, 68% of adult Internet users in Germany refer to the Internet for health-related purposes. (3) According to the recent German study published in BMC Public Health, half the users seek health-related information online because they are ill and want information on their illness and treatment options. One third of users search the Internet for health information not for themselves, but for another person. Moreover, most German users who search the Internet for health-related information are women from middle or upper classes.

IN CASE OF CHEST PAIN, TAKE THESE STEPS:

Different studies demonstrate that release of medical information improves doctor-patient relationship and treatment adherence. Informed patients and citizens use healthcare services more efficiently, allowing the reduction of unnecessary costs.

To take advantage of Internet for health topics, it is essential to access quality scientific information, developed by experts and in non-technical language. Those are precisely the criteria that the Argentine Society of Cardiology (SAC) followed to develop the new site, WikiCardio, which includes reliable information on cardiovascular topics for patients and their relatives.

Inspired in websites designed by professional organizations recognized worldwide, such as MedlinePlus, WikiCardio is organized as a dictionary of medical terms frequently used in Spanish-speaking countries.

Illustrated with pictures, videos and charts specially designed to improve understanding of terms, WikiCardio offers updated scientific information on symptoms, treatments, prevention, cardiovascular risk factors, medications, and other topics of general interest for the community of patients.

With free access through Internet (wikicardio.org.ar) in computers, mobile phones and tablets, the new SAC educational website has been developed by a multi-disciplinary team consisting of cardiologists, scientific journalists, specialists in social communication and designers, based on scientific material provided by 100 cardiologists of SAC Committees.

Using medical terminology in simple yet scientific language, WikiCardio provides basic and necessary information about all the topics related to cardiology, and also includes synonyms of popular usage in Argentina.

After the formal launching of WikiCardio in the third quarter of 2015, the site will continue to be updated with the contributions from SAC members to answer patients' queries with high quality and easy to understand information.



This new website developed by the Argentine Society of Cardiology offers reliable information in Spanish for the entire community.



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The information provided is intended to be informative and educational and is not a replacement for professional evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by your health-care professional.

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