

Prostate Cancer and the Web: History and Current State of the Art

Arnon Krongrad, MD

I. Information

Patients seek information, but they don't necessarily trust what they get. Is that something that has to be a permanent feature of the human condition? People are searching for health information, and they generally seek information about symptoms. They get a lot of information, little of which is directly relevant, and that is one of the problems with searching on the internet.

II. Remedy

Can we really use some of the available mechanisms and platforms to share the kinds of information that a patient would want to have that replicates what we're doing here today? It's sharing knowledge from different perspective quickly, easily, free of charge and preferably authoritatively.

Prostate Cancer International, which is a Virginia-based not-for-profit corporation has developed two portals, one of which is called the New Prostate Cancer InfoLink. It is a one-way authoritative blog, and it is written by a professional health communicator and overseen by a scientific advisory board. The New Prostate Cancer InfoLink social network is in essence a Facebook for prostate cancer, and you will find subject-specific groups, geographic-specific groups, videos, and information on events. It provides individuals with instant, easy access to people who care about prostate cancer and are potentially in a position to help them.

III. Conclusion

If we all work together and we share in this sort of environment, we may be at a point where we can actually transform the human condition so that the Scythian king who died 3,000 years ago of prostate cancer who had only a bunch of screwball soothsayers to tell him to burn the village idiot as a response to his prostate cancer will never have to face that sort of situation again. There is knowledge all around us, and we do have the mechanisms through which we can share it.

Brian Stone, MD

There's a lot of information on the internet. How does a non-medical-savvy individual choose information that is valid?

Arnon Krongrad, MD

It's always a challenge to try to sift through good information and bad information. There are going to be certain criteria, and if you're patient enough to try to absorb them in an environment where you have people who understand science and we have statisticians for example, as well as a lot of really well

educated patients, you're probably going to open yourself up to good information. It is always complicated, and one of the areas of greatest problems, I think, is the area of nutrition and supplements.

Participant

Do we dare talk about alternative medicine in regard to prostate cancer?

Arnon Krongrad, MD

If you're talking about this network, the only things we sensor on there literally are profanity, slander and commerce.