

Digital Medicine: The Internet as a Healthcare Tool



Walter Moyo: student
(Master of Science in Public Health)

Introduction

- The internet continues to play an increasing role in healthcare in the world.
- It is leveraged by health professionals, scientists and other consumers of health information



Roles of the internet in health

- The internet is used by health experts to communicate with each other.
- It facilitates consultations between health experts and remote patients through telemedicine.
- It allows for information-sharing among people with health needs.
- Electronic Medical Records (EMRs).

“Open Health”

- Open Health is a concept under the “Open Movement”, which promotes Open Scientific practices.
- It includes the open and free distribution of scientific health literature, health software.
- It can save many lives by increasing access to such information and software.
- Open Health websites should be given more online visibility to improve health information-dissemination.

“Open Health” contd...

- Policymakers in different positions (academia, research institutions, communications regulatory authorities and others) should come together to promote Open Health both directly and indirectly.

Nomenclature of health-related websites

- Names of health-related websites should sound professional, should reflect the content that they seek to relay, and should be commensurate with the audience they seek to reach.
- Names should not be ambiguous .
- Example: a website for providing information on cancer can be named: www.cancercorner.com

while a website for discussions among cancer survivors can be something like: www.cancerchat.com

Nomenclature of health-related websites

- Notice that the second web address has the key word “chat” (which would alert a visitor that their purpose is reciprocal information exchange, not one-way information-sharing). For one-way information exchange, the first web address would be more suitable.
- Suppose www.cancerchat.com is already occupied, it would be better to adopt another TLD (eg .net) and name it www.cancerchat.net instead of www.cancertalk.com (which may be a bit ambiguous)

Nomenclature of health-related websites

- www.cancertalk.com may be more ambiguous than www.cancerchat.net (“talk” may represent either one-way or two-way information provision).

Thus, nomenclature of health websites is critical as it can affect who visits the websites (hence affecting who gets health information).

The End

“Thank you”

“Ngiyabonga”

“Dankie”

“Merci”

“Gracias”

“Obrigado”

“شكر”

“谢谢”