

Measuring the health literacy level of a new scar treatment website: Evaluation by patient, caregiver and non-related individuals.

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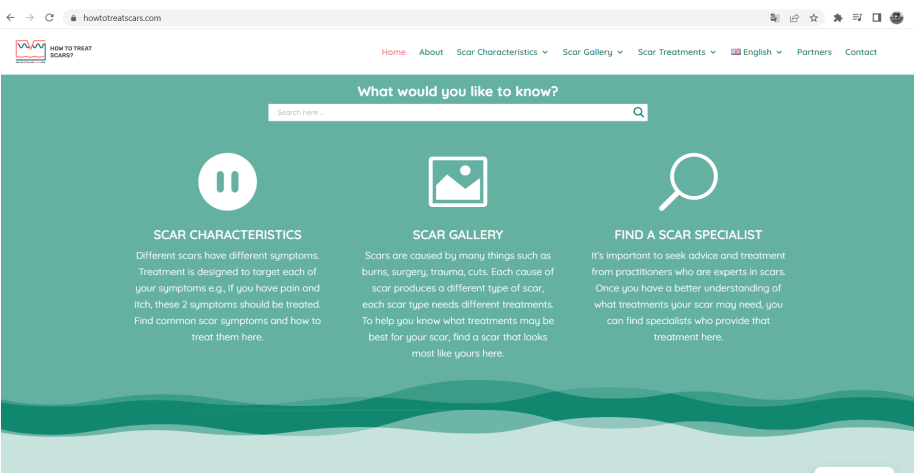
Introduction

Over 100 million people worldwide suffer from pathological scarring as a result of surgical intervention, burn injury or trauma. Many of these people search for solutions, but except from unvalidated internet sources, relevant information is lacking.

To guide these people in their search Oscare developed an informative website from an interdisciplinary point of view and with the perspective of Personal and Public Involvement (PPI). This website provides evidence-based information on a wide variety of treatment options.

To optimize the health literate level, we decided to involve patients in the evaluation and validation of this website. The aim of our study is to investigate whether this website meets the relevant health literate criteria and can be divided into 3 questions:

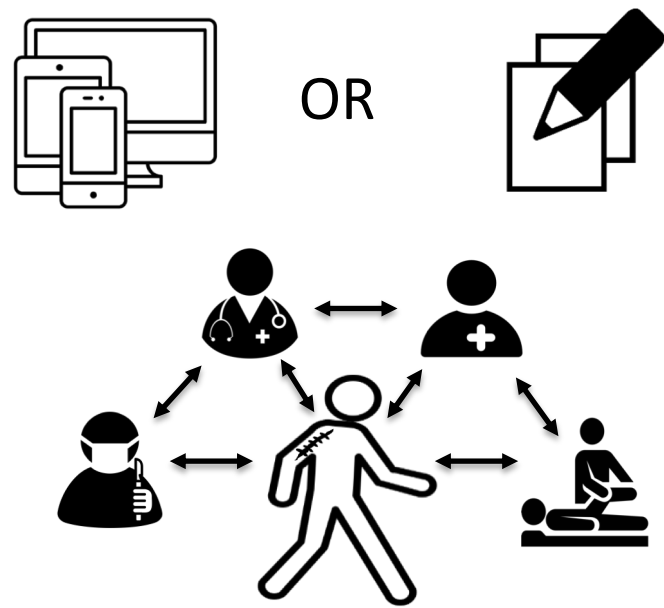
1. Does this website increase the patients' knowledge of scar therapies? - Knowledge Transfer
2. Do patient and caregiver find the same most suitable treatments after performing a web search? - Treatment Plan Agreement
3. Is the content of the website accessible to people with various levels of health literacy? - Health Literacy Aspects



Method

Patients will complete a pre-use online or paper questionnaire to assess their awareness about possible therapeutic solutions to improve their scars. After visiting and performing a scripted search on the website, patients will receive a post-use online or paper questionnaire. This questionnaire will assess 1) changes in information knowledge, 2) the educational aspects with a Patient Educational Material Assessment Tool (PEMAT) and 3) the feasibility of the search and health literate aspects together with the design of the website, using the Dutch PHAROS VBI tool.

To assess the 'Treatment Plan Agreement' patients and their respective caregivers will both perform the same search to investigate the differences in their outcome.



Results

DESCRIPTIVES

We present the preliminary results of 20 patients and caregivers. Patients represent 55% of the respondents.

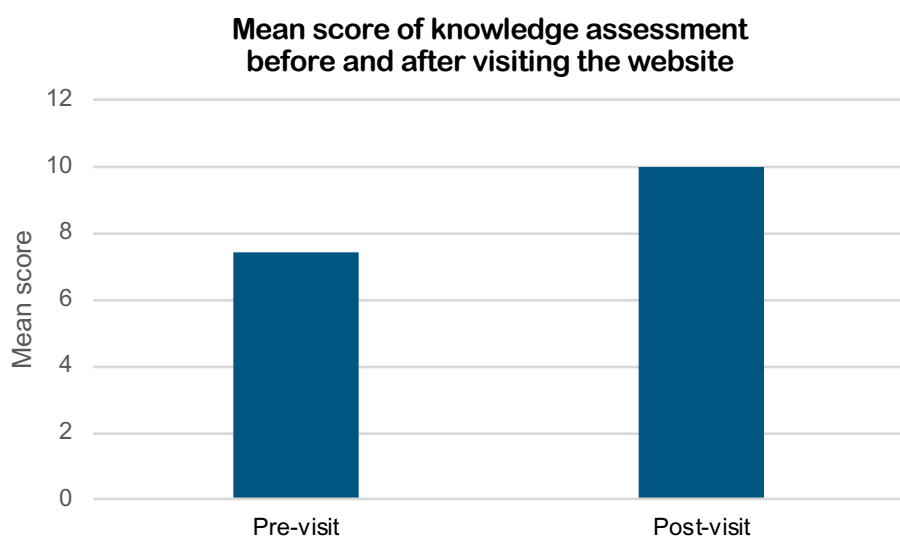
Sixty-six percent of the patients were never treated for their scars in a specialized aftercare center.

Forty-three percent of the patients performed a search for treatments on the internet before their first visit to the caregiver.

All respondents can be considered as digitally literate and had access to a digital medium at home.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

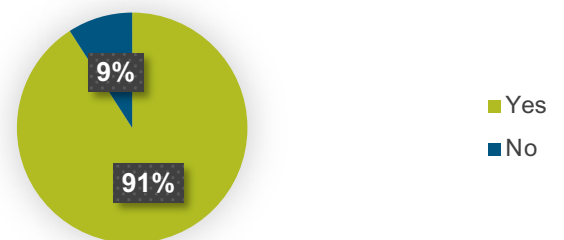
We noticed a statistically significant improvement ($p = .004$) of the knowledge assessment after visiting the website compared with the pre-visit assessment. The mean score increased from 7.4/12 to 10/12.



TREATMENT PLAN AGREEMENT

After performing a search on the website 91% of the patients and caregivers ended up with the same therapeutic solution(s) to create the most appropriate treatment plan.

Agreement between patients and caregivers on therapeutic solution(s)

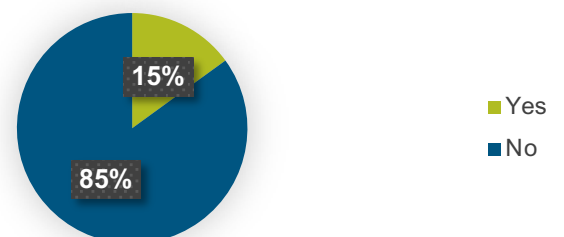


HEALTH LITERACY ASPECTS

One-hundred percent of the respondents rated the website as well designed and user friendly. The PEMAT score assessing the understandability and actionability of the website was 96%.

However 15% of the respondents indicated the use of too much medical jargon.

The use of too much medical jargon



Conclusion

The website did induce knowledge transfer and treatment plan agreement. Most people found the website user friendly and well designed but although the PEMAT score turned out to be very high, 15% mentioned the use of too many medical terms. Our intention was to involve patients in the evaluation of an already developed website, but these results triggered us to develop a 2.0 version where co-creation with patients and caregivers already starts before the content is written.



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