

Changes in Internet Use and Wishes of Patients with Cancer

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1. INTRODUCTION

Given the major changes in internet use for health communication, we compared internet use and wishes over time (2005 vs. 2017) and between different groups of cancer patients (POP* vs. OHC**).

2. METHODS

A sample of 390 patients in 2005 and 539 patients in 2017 who were diagnosed with breast, prostate, or gynecologic cancer or lymphoma in 4 different hospitals, were sent a paper-based questionnaire.

In 2017 a sample of 531 kanker.nl-participants were invited to fill in the same questionnaire online.

The questionnaire contained 50 questions about demographics, four broad applications of internet use: content, community, communication and e-health and the 12 items of the Partners in Health-scale.

RESULTS

- 2005: POP: N=254 (response 75%), 64% female, 60% internet use
- 2017: POP: N=233 (response 45%), 62% female, 85% internet use
- 2017: OHC: N=214 (response 40%), 59% female, 100% internet use
- A significant sample of cancer survivors have indicated that the internet is an important source of information regarding their illness.
- Little change was evident over the past 15 years or between groups in patients' priorities regarding their wishes.
- A large difference (30-50%) is visible when it comes to the current use of the internet in relation to their wishes (Table 2).

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

- Wishes of users in 2005 were found to accurately reflect the internet use of the majority of patients in 2017.
- The results of the current studies support the belief that health care professionals should expand their online services and tailor them toward the needs and wishes of their patients.

*POP = Population Based, sample from the Netherlands Cancer Registry

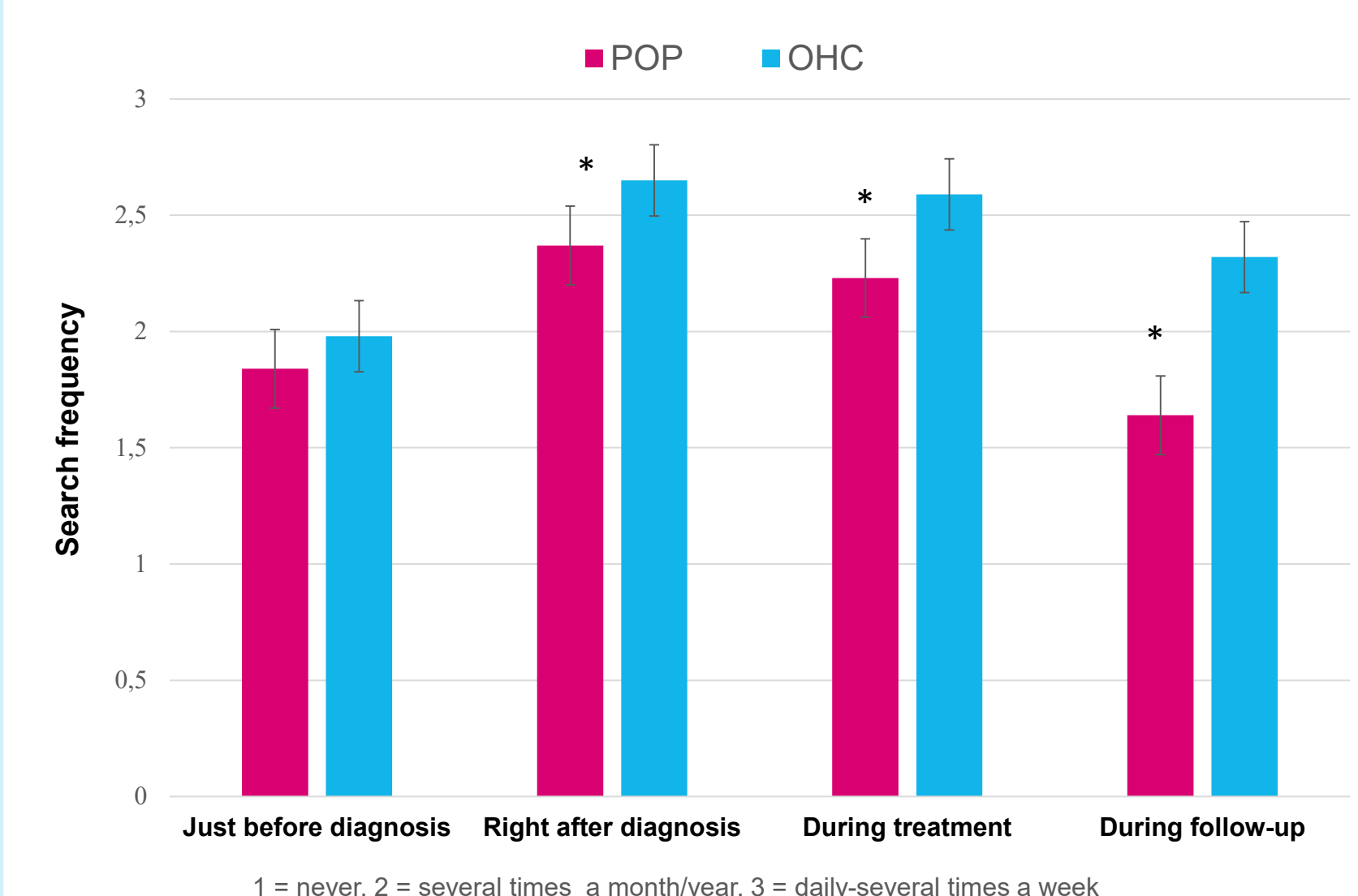
**OHC = Online Health Community, members www.kanker.nl

Table 1 Respondents

	Response	Response	Internet use
POP* 2005	n = 254 (75%)		2005: 60%
POP* 2017	n = 263 (53%)	n = 233 (45%)	2017: 85%
OHC** 2017		n = 214 (40%)	2017: 100%

*POP = Population Based, sample from the Netherlands Cancer Registry
**OHC = Online Health Community, members www.kanker.nl

Figure 1 Search Strategy during Patient Journey



*p < .001

Table 2 Patients' Use and Wishes for Internet Possibilities

	Current use		Ranking wishes		Future wishes	
	POP (n=233)	OHC (n=214)	POP - OHC	POP (n=233)	OHC (n=214)	
Accessing own test results	31	36	1-1	73	86	
Accessing own medical file	32	36	2-2	71	85	
Making an appointment	24	38	3-3	69	81	
Requesting prescriptions	31	38	4-4	67	77	
Getting personal advice on symptoms	-	-	5-5	61	71	
E-mailing with oncologist	25	30	6-5	58	71	
Getting advice on supportive care	-	-	7-7	54	69	
Receiving reminders	24	26	8-9	53	67	
Self-monitoring treatment consequences	-	-	11-9	48	67	
Chatting with others	4	5	19-16	18	43	

Table 3 Partners in Health – Scale

Partners in Health	POP (n=233)	OHC (n=214)	p value
	M (SD)	M (SD)	
Knowledge of the condition	6.75 (1.25)	7.08 (1.09)	.004
Knowledge of treatment	6.54 (1.45)	6.87 (1.33)	.017
Ability to take medication	7.13 (1.77)	7.12 (1.68)	.944
Ability to share in decisions	7.36 (1.31)	7.19 (1.46)	.184
Ability to deal with health professionals	6.74 (1.90)	6.93 (1.71)	.312
Ability to attend appointments	7.56 (1.35)	7.52 (.93)	.777
Ability to monitor and record	6.60 (6.86)	6.76 (1.81)	.397
Ability to manage symptoms	6.86 (1.56)	7.09 (1.42)	.120
Ability to manage the physical impact	6.61 (1.57)	6.02 (1.84)	<.001
Ability to manage the social impact	6.92 (1.33)	6.13 (1.90)	<.001
Progress towards a healthy lifestyle	6.55 (1.41)	6.07 (1.96)	.005

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