A study of the support and information needs of men using the ‘Your Prostate’ service

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BACKGROUND
Prostate cancer incidence is high across Europe (A White et al, 2011). It is the most common cancer in men in many European countries (CRUK, NCIN, MHS, Leeds Metropolitan University, 2013) and around 3 million men were living with prostate cancer in 2008 (A White et al, 2011). In general men are less well informed about the signs and symptoms of cancer than women, (Robit, K. et al, 2009) Men’s knowledge about prostate health in general, and BPH symptoms in particular is low. “It is estimated that as many as 24 million European men aged 50 and over experience bothersome urinary symptoms. (European Commission, 2012, de la Rosette, 2009)” Yet, despite experiencing symptoms, men typically wait nearly two years before speaking to their GP or doctor (CRUK 2011).

Health information available to men about their prostate health is limited and different health professionals may have varying opinions about the value of PSA tests and how to proceed.

APPROACH: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ‘YOUR PROSTATE’ SERVICE

The European Men’s Health Forum (EMHF) developed an e-service for men to ask questions about any aspect of their prostate health. www.yourprostate.eu

The intention was to identify the main concerns that men have, the gaps in information and support available to them, and to make an analysis of the language used by men in their questions and to compare this across countries. The service is supported by specialist urologist nurses and consultants in English, Spanish and German. From September 2013 it will be available in French too.

A bespoke database was designed to enable questions and answers to be automatically entered exactly as they had been written into the database. Within 48 hours a nurse or consultant answers questions.

They inform service users about signs and symptoms to watch out for, advise them to see their GP or consultant if their symptoms suggest this is necessary, provide up to the minute information about different treatments and options which are available and what is known about progress in the field of research. They do not make recommendations about specific treatments or courses of action and they do not suggest any specific diagnosis. Rather, men use the information provided to inform their “next step.”

This poster will present preliminary findings and the work is on-going.

EMHF’S RESEARCH APPROACH

Quantitative analysis of how many:
- Questions were asked and to rank the question by type and the age of the user
- Users were male/female
- Users previously sought medical attention and/or received any treatment

Quantitative analysis included:
- Content analysis
- Categorisation of questions by topic
- Consideration of analysis of European Union National Cancer Plans

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