

PELVIC ORGAN PROLAPSE ON THE INTERNET -SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES AND JAPAN-

Hypothesis / aims of study

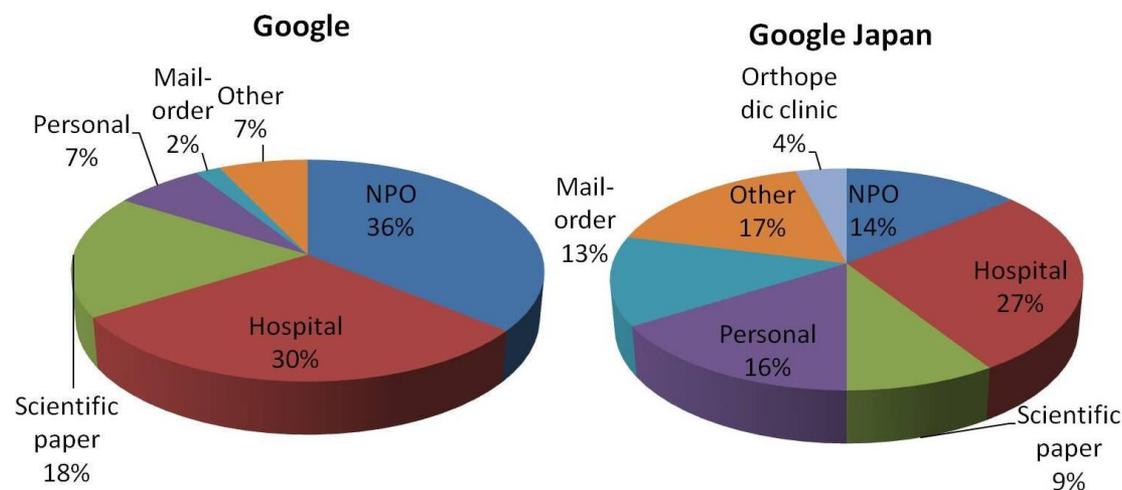
Pelvic organ prolapse (POP) is a common condition for aged women. The recent explosion in the number of the Internet has dramatically changed the way to find information about patient's problems and treatments. However, information from the Internet is usually not peer reviewed. This study aims to assess the quality of information available to patients on POP on the Internet. Moreover, we assess the similarities and differences between English-speaking countries and Japan.

Study design, materials and methods

The search engine Google, Google Japan (GJ) and Yahoo! were used with the search term "pelvic organ prolapse" and Japanese "pelvic organ prolapse" to generate a list of 100 websites which were reviewed for attribution, frequency of update and content.

Results

No significant differences were seen in the search results of Google and Yahoo!. 40 (Google) and 38 (GJ) sites indicated a date of last update within 12 months. Of the Google results, 36 were managed by nonprofit organizations (NPO), 30 were hospital sites (11 gynecology, 10 urogynecology, 8 urology, and 1 surgery), 18 were scientific paper sites, 7 were personal sites including advocacy group, 2 were mail-order sites about POP related book, and unclassifiable sites. Of the GJ results, 14 were managed by NPO, 27 were hospital sites (10 gynecology, 6 urogynecology and 11 urology), 9 were scientific paper sites, 16 were personal sites, 13 were mail-order sites, 5 were news sites, 4 were orthopedic clinic sites, and unclassifiable sites. (Figure) Of 68 (Google) and 61 (GJ) sites covered the treatment option of Tension-free Vaginal Mesh (TVM) repair.



Interpretation of results

This assessment of the quality of information on POP on the Internet reveals a variety of important findings related to similarities and differences between English-speaking countries and Japan. There was no significant difference between Google and GJ in the frequency of update. The number of NPO and scientific paper sites is significantly low in Japan. In the particular Japanese problem, all sites of orthopedic clinic described not enough information about treatment options for POP. And some personal sites described insufficient and biased information.

Concluding message

The urologist needs to be aware of current situation on the Internet when counseling patients on POP. Moreover, authoritative sites by trusted sources should be posted for broadcasting of reliable information.

Specify source of funding or grant

none

Is this a clinical trial?

No

What were the subjects in the study?

NONE