A Clinically Safe Online Health Community Website

Background

The rising popularity of online social networks has made it relatively easy for end-users to share information. Online healthcare social networks (also known as online health communities) empower patients with information, give them instant virtual families who understand their plight and provide support. However, research shows that misinformation is prevalent in online health social networks.

Requirements

This project builds on prior research and creates indicators of accuracy of threads relating to specific diseases in online social networking sites; with a view to alert patients about the possibility and extent of inaccuracies in the threads. Specifically, this project develops a system for experts such as physicians to assess the accuracy of response to a thread question, while considering the characteristics of the question and the characteristics of the responding user (patient) as secondary indicators. The anticipated outcome of this project is to develop real time indices and cues for information quality in online health social networks, thereby making such platforms safer for the patients.

1. Create a website where patients can create profiles about their conditions, demographics, symptoms, and medication information that can be stored in a database.
2. The website should have a typical discussion forum feature where they can post questions about their conditions.
3. There should be a separate forum for each condition and the website must have at least 3 such forums.
4. The website should have 3 different roles assigned to users- patients, physicians and admins.
5. The physicians cannot add posts to any threads. They can only evaluate the posts for accuracy of clinical information. Once they evaluate, for accuracy, those scores must be used to give a color code for the thread. For example, Red indicates that all the posts in the threads are inaccurate. Yellow indicates half of the posts are inaccurate and green indicates that all posts are accurate.
6. The website need not have real data. It can have made up threads, posts and physician evaluation scores but the data must be in a database and pooled into the website