

## **Health Information Quality on the Internet in Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia and its Treatment: A Multilingual Evaluation**

**Introduction and Objectives:** Internet information quality for benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) is considered variable but no comprehensive analysis exists. Our objective was to compare the quality of BPH-related websites and to assess for language and other differences across Western languages.

**Materials and Methods:** Health on the Net (HON) principles may be applied to websites using an automated toolbar function. Using the Google search engine ([www.Google.com](http://www.Google.com)), in 2011, 9000 websites were assessed for benign prostatic hyperplasia and associated common surgical and medical treatments. For disease, keywords searched were BPH, benign prostatic hyperplasia, benign prostatic hypertrophy, benign prostatic enlargement, prostomegaly; for surgical treatment, TURP, transurethral resection of prostate, greenlight laser prostate, laser prostate surgery, holmium laser prostate, diode laser prostate, prostatectomy; and for medical treatment, medical therapy prostate, alpha blocker prostate and alpha reductase prostate. All searches were performed in English, French, German and Spanish. The first 150 websites in each language had HON principles measured. A further analysis of site sponsorship was performed.

**Results:** A total of 9000 websites were assessed; disease search (3000) surgical treatment (4200) and medical treatment (1800). Regardless of language or search keyword, the majority of sites are not HON accredited. English had more HON accredited sites than French, Spanish or German. Significant differences were found comparing language, disease, surgical and medical treatments. For disease search, the most accredited sites were commercial sites (34.4%); others (18.7%); non-profit organisations (16.9%); institutions/Government/Education (16.3%); physician/surgeon (8.3%) and lastly other health professional sites (3.4%). Similar trends were observed for surgical and medical treatments.

**Conclusions:** A lack of validation of most BPH sites related to the disease and treatment should be appreciated by urologists. Further, there is a discrepancy in quality and number of websites across major Western European languages. We need to encourage informative, ethical and reliable complimentary health websites on the Internet and direct patients to them.