Evidence Based Evaluation of Health Information on Erectile Dysfunction in 10 National-wide Daily Newspapers in Korea

Introduction and Objective: A rapid growth of socioeconomic status in Korea has triggered health information resolution of unprecedented magnitude among the general population. Despite its obvious benefits, the increase in the amount of information could also result in many potentially harmful effects on both consumers and professionals who do not use it appropriately. Thus, this study was conducted to evaluate health information on erectile dysfunction in 10 national-wide daily newspapers.
Materials and Methods: This study was performed to evaluate health information in 10 national-wide daily newspapers in Korea from January 2011 through December 2011. We evaluated the quality and the accuracy of health information provided in 10 national-wide daily newspapers. We reviewed the health information for quality using the evidence-based medicine tools which evaluate the accuracy required to understand the text. Simple reporting and advertising articles were excluded.
Results: A total of 47 articles were gathered. Among them, 27 (57.4%) contained inaccurate or misleading statement based on evidence-based medicine. These included confusing surrogate outcome with an end outcome (3 cases, 6.4%), extrapolating nonhuman results to human (2 cases, 4.3%), exaggerating results in conclusion (8 cases, 17.0%), incorrect words (14 cases, 29.8%) (Figure 1). The rate of error was higher in information of Korean source compared to those of international sources (22 cases vs. 5 cases).
Conclusions: The rate of inaccurate medical information was approximately 57% of total information in the articles of 10 national-wide daily newspapers.

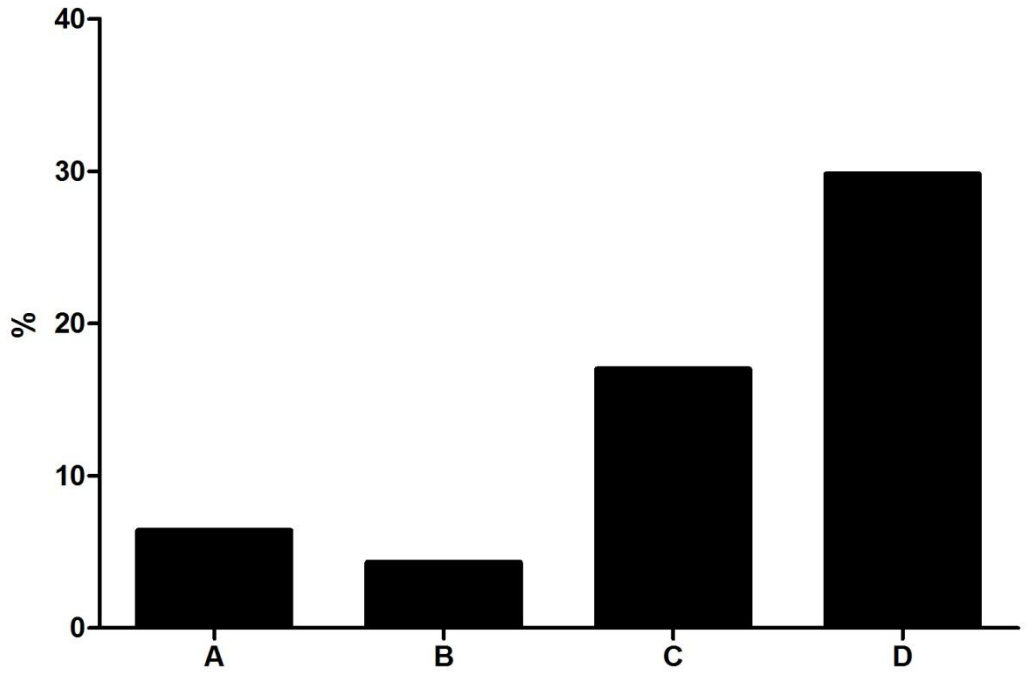

Figure 1. Evidence based evaluation of inaccurate health information.
A: confusing surrogate outcome with an end outcome, B: extrapolating nonhuman results to human, C: exaggerating results in conclusion, D: incorrect words