Introduction: e-Health is becoming increasingly important to individuals and health services in Europe and around the world (1-3). As various forms of treatment and other interventions are becoming available over the Internet, the bulk of e-health remains related to information about health and illness (1-5). While the positive aspects of health information on the Internet have been highlighted, less has been published about related challenges.

Methods: We performed a narrative review of the literature on challenges connected to health information on the Internet. A literature search containing various search terms relating to challenges with health information retrieval from the Internet was performed on PubMed and Web of Science and supplemented with hand searches.

Results: A range of challenges were found to be associated with online health information, including a lack of searching skills, not being able to identify misinformation or commercialized or biased information, information overload, not properly understanding correct information, and not being able to make use of the information in terms of taking some action.

Discussion and conclusion: Health information on the Internet can enable people to make better choices, for instance regarding life-style and treatment. However, several challenges need to be addressed in order to improve the use of the Internet as a channel for health information. Stakeholders who use the Internet for the dissemination of health-related information should be aware of these factors when planning and implementing their strategies.

Lessons learnt, limitations and suggestions for future research: A main lesson learnt was that while health information on the Internet is positive overall, there are some challenges related to obtaining, understanding and making use of this type of information. This was a narrative review and the method has several important limitations, including that the literature search was not systematic. There is a need to focus also on the challenges related to the use of e-Health and more research is needed in order to know more about how to overcome these challenges.

References:


**Keywords:** internet; health information; review