A Guide for Nutrition and Health Professionals to Improve Their Ability to Identify and Use Credible, Science-Based Resources on the Internet

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Abstract

The purpose of this research project was to create a guide for nutrition and health professionals to improve their ability to identify and use credible, science-based resources on the Internet. Specifically, a Qualtrics questionnaire assessed the experience and knowledge of nutrition and health professionals that assisted in the selection of the Nutrition and Health Professional Review Committee (NHPRC). A prequestionnaire was sent to NHPRC members assessing how they determined if a website or resource on the Internet was credible and science-based. Their post-evaluation of the final guide was comprised of eight rating components. Response categories suggested that the NHPRC members used different techniques to determine credibility of Internet information. Overall, they supported development of a guide.

Background / Introduction

Nutrition and Health Communications

- The Health Communicator's Social Media Toolkit was published to disseminate health and safety information in a timelier manner, expand outreach to broader and more diverse audiences, increase access and the potential impact of important messages, engage with the public and empower people to make safer and healthier decisions (CDC, 2011, p.1).
- Social media has transformed the practice of dietetics and has opened new avenues for communicating food and nutrition information, such as virtual nutrition counseling, patient education, peer-to-peer support, and public health campaigns (Helm & Jones, 2016).

Misinformation

- Misinformation can potentially lead to public confusion, frustration, indifference, information overload, or resistance to evidence-based health recommendations among the **public** (Arora et al., 2008; Nagler, 2014).
- If used appropriately, sharing content on the Internet or via social media can benefit patients, consumers, and practitioners (Helm & Jones, 2016).

Ethics and Responsibilities of the Professional

• Failing to effectively and ethically use social media can reflect poorly on the individual practitioner and the profession. All practitioners should ensure that their social media presence complies with their profession's specific principles (Helm and Jones, 2016).

Objectives

- **Objective 1:** To help nutrition and health professionals improve the overall quality and credibility of the content they post and share on the Internet.
- **Objective 2:** To ensure that nutrition and health professionals will avoid posting any misinformation about nutrition and health and will use credible, science-based resources within their content.

Methods

Sample (n= 8)

4 Registered Dietitians/Nutritionists and 4 health profess

Table 1: Criteria for membership in NHPRC and participa

Nutrition and Health Professional Review

Work experience in health or nutrition-related field for at le Provide record of developing communications materials a and consumers

Demonstrate interest in the topics of nutrition and health and health community

Demonstrate knowledge of ethical responsibilities for sha the Internet

Demonstrate ability to identify credible, science-based res **Procedure Steps** Mea

- Contacted organizations and individuals via email \bullet
- 2. Sent Selection Questionnaire Qualtrics
- 3. Selected NHPRC members
- 4. Sent Pre-Questionnaire Qualtrics
- 5. Developed first draft and final draft of guide
- 6. Requested Final Evaluation Qualtrics

Results

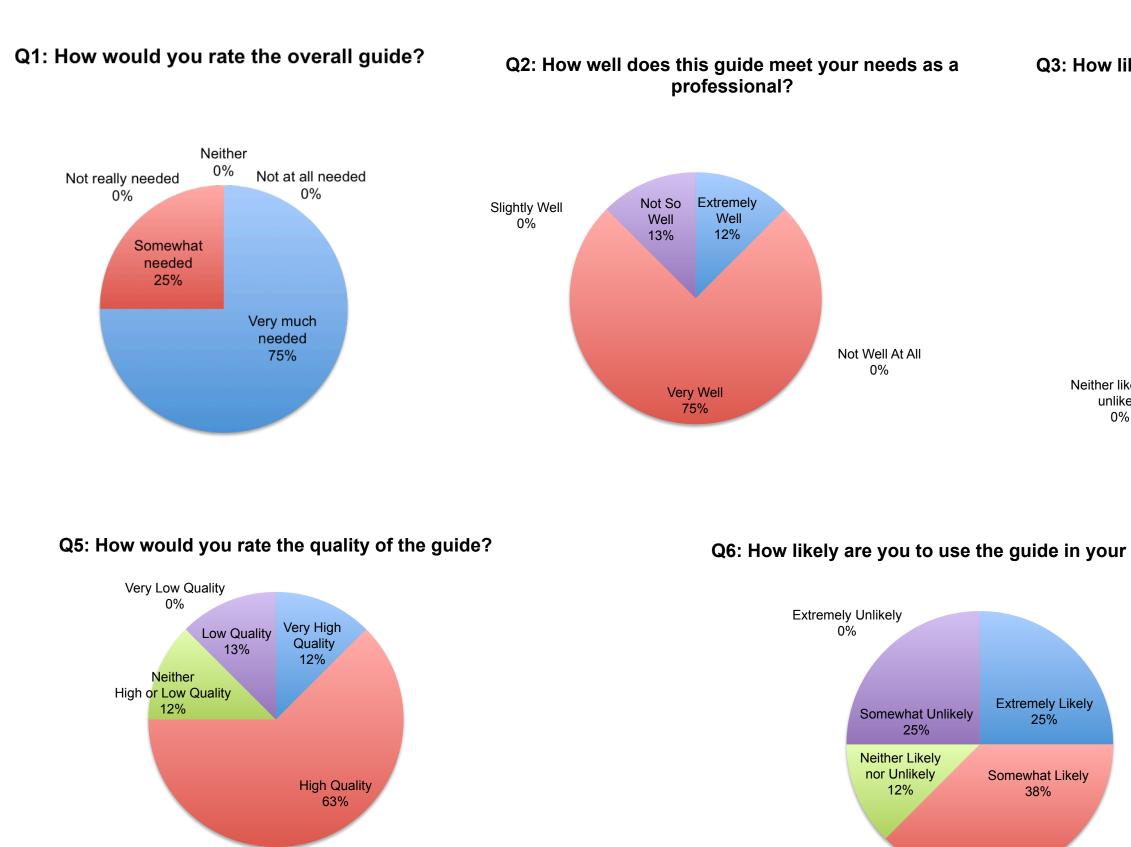


Table 2: NHPRC Responses to Question 8.

Evaluation Item	Excerpt of Si
Do you have any comments,	"I will use the guide now I am better able
questions or concerns regarding the	"Excellent resource for colleagues to us credible studies quoted in the media."
guide?	"Who really is the audience? A "profession this guidewould benefit more from an ela provided."

"Its practical use...great reminder for keeping up standards as a professional..."standard professional practice" sharing it with colleagues would be socially inappropriate...this is a hand out I would give my students."

	Discus
rofessionals ticipation in this research study. eview Committee Selection Criteria r at least 3 years ials aimed at nutrition and health professionals alth trends, news, policy updates and the nutrition r sharing or educating consumers and patients via	 Created a the Intern Final eva NHPRC ta and high NHPRC's use of an credible, Newer Ni recent ed resources Some me expectation
 ed resources on the Internet Measures Committee Selection Questionnaire - 12 questions Pre-Questionnaire - 5 questions Post-Questionnaire - 8 questions 	to both pr Figure 1 A GUIDE SCIENCE-BA The Internet is wher reference. While a po science-based conter
Data Analysis • SPSS Statistics Version 24 At the work of the following words would you use to best or colleague?	potential material? Questions to c 1. Is the source of 2. What are the c does the author 3. Are there spon 4. Are the referent What t PURPOSE OF COO When reviewing conta Are they trying to info or brand? Fundraise? for being published. <u>AUTHOR QUALI</u> The author's name wilikely a website that is professional affiliation employed? Are they a or is the appropriate a available. <u>PROFESSIONAL</u> Does the site disclose approval? Is the author the author affiliated w <u>DISCLOSURE ST</u> Is the author providin reimbursement and o ads, brands or market
Neither likely nor unlikely 0% Somewhat Unlikely 0% Somewhat likely 0% Somewhat ikely 37% Somewhat likely 0% Somewhat ikely 37% Somewhat ikely 37%	A responsite nutrition and practice. Ov tips and rec
e in your profession? Q7: Overall, how effective do you think the guide will be to other professionals?	 Challenges Limited r and what Limited r presence Future Res For comparison of the second secon

Single Response, n=4 le to pick and chose websites that are reliable.'

se with clients...teaching them to identify

onal" should know most of the points presented in elaboration of the points discussed in the links

E: HOW TO IDENTIFY CREDIBLE **ASED RESOURCES ON THE INTERNE** ere we all go to find information that we can share, post and powerful resource, there are challenges in identifying credible, ent. How do we determine the accuracy and credibility of the onsider when evaluating Internet content the information clearly stated? dentials and professional affiliations of the authors? How qualify to write on the subject? sors of the website? es appropriate? When were they published? to look for when evaluating content ent, target audience and main objectives should be clearly stated form the public? Provide insight to professionals? Market a product are personal experiences, opinions, or advice? Know its purpose credentials and qualifications is a must. If not listed, then it is not a reliable resource. If author is listed, check credentials and as. Have they published in peer-reviewed journals? Where are the iffiliated with a reputable institution? Are they the original author thor cited? Answers to these questions should be readily

supporting institutions or companies? If so, do they have official or an employee or consultant? What professional organizations is sure details? This would include sponsorship r financial ties with industry or non-profits. If the author ha ng on their website, there should be a disclosure statement to with those forms of marketing. **DRMATION** a should be clearly identifiable and easy to access.

S:

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the organizations assisting in the recruitment process for the research project, to the nutrition and health professionals completing the questionnaires; and to the NHPRC for helping to design the guide.

References

Internal Medicine. 2008. Nutr.& Dietetics. 2016. 2014.

ssion

a guide using existing guides, toolkits available on net and literature.

aluation results showed that the majority of the thought the guide was very much needed, useful ، quality.

s feedback reflected their years of work experience, nd involvement in research and ability to identify science-based resources on the Internet,

HPRC members had more feedback reflecting their ducational experience with research and identifying

embers felt the final guide did not meet the ions; more of a reminder or review but was beneficial rofessionals and students.

: The Final Guide

- A few RED FLAGS
- Does the website contain anecdotal musings or use emotion o personal opinion as foundation for informati
- Are there grammatical errors? Are included references current and appropriate? Are broad generalizations used to conclude content?
- Recheck references and resources To ensure the content provided on a website is credible, go to the original source. Don't rely on the author's interpretation.
- Contact website authors and ask questions.

Resources for disclosure, evaluating scientific evidence and ethical responsibilities for blogging and social media https://www.ftc.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/press-releases/ftc-staff-revises-onlir advertising-disclosure-guidelines/130312dotcomdisclosures.pdf

http://www.foodinsight.org/sites/default/files/pictures/IFIC%202013%20FNCE%20Broch re%20-%20Evaluating%20Evidence%20-%20Web%20Version.pdf https://nccih.nih.gov/health/webresource

http://www.foodinsight.org/evaluating-nutrition-science-media-headline

This guide has been prepared to help you identify and use credible, science-based resources on the Internet. Following these tips may prevent sharing and publishing misinformation while directing consumers to accurate information.

usion

bility of a professional is to educate the public on nd health-related information within their scope of verall, the NHPRC thought the guide included useful d flags when searching the Internet.

research on how consumers interpret website content at is considered a credible, science-based resource. number of health professional with social media e or use the Internet as reference for clients. search:

parison, recruit professionals in other fields and how they determine credibility on the Internet.

Arora, N. K., et al. Frustrated and confused... Journ. of Gen.

Helm, J.et al. Practice Paper: Social Media...Journ. Academy of

Nagler, R. H. et al. Adverse outcomes... *Journ. of Health Comm.*