



The sources of health and disease-related information predominantly used by individuals with cardiovascular risk factors or diseases in Serbia

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Introduction

Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) are the leading cause of death globally. Modern media and other information technologies have important role in promoting health (primary prevention) and disease treatments (secondary prevention).

Aim

We aimed to assess the predominant sources of health and disease-related information currently used by individuals with cardiovascular risk factors or diseases in Serbia, in order to understand to what extent modern technologies could be used presently for a more active involvement of cardiovascular patients in health-related decision-making and implementation of therapy in Serbia.

Materials and Methods

This single-day snapshot multicenter study included consecutive hospitalized patients and outpatients treated by cardiologists or internal medicine specialists in hospitals and outpatient centres in Belgrade, Požarevac, Kostolac, Veliko Gradište, Golubac, Malo Crniće and Žabari. Patients completed a questionnaire formulated by study investigators.

Results

In the cohort of 289 patients (mean age 56,6±14,4 years, 41,5% men), hypertension 162(56.4%) and hyperlipidemia 122(42.2%) were the most prevalent patient self-reported co-morbidity/cardiovascular risk factor, whilst a quarter of our patients 73(25.4%) reported that they were diagnosed with a cardiac arrhythmia. Overall, 98 (37.81%) stated that they were using internet to get information about health and disease, less than 5% of patients were using smart phones and 201 patients (69.0%) stated that they always seek additional health information from their general practitioners.

Conclusion

Only one third of our patients were using internet as an additional source of health information, whereas the dominant source of health information still was the physician. These results emphasize the necessity for a more active role of physicians and health care professionals in promoting modern media as a source of additional health information. In addition, more work is needed for developing the modern media contents in the Serbian language.