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Health Related Web Site Usage by Persons with Serious Mental Illness: Design and Use of a Health Literacy Survey Tool

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Health-Related Website Usage by Persons with Serious Mental Illness: Design and Use of a Health Literacy Survey Tool

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**THE SURVEY**
- A literature review identified scholarly research on website design as well as validated health literacy evaluation tools for persons with SMI that formed the basis of the survey.
- A survey tool of 64 questions was developed using pre-existing, validated health literacy instruments, e.g., DISCERN (Rees, 02).
- Questions sought feedback on format, navigation, usability and credibility as well as content of each site.
- 20 health-related websites on topics of physical health issues experienced by persons with SMI (cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes and smoking) were chosen using simple searches through the Google search engine.

**THE RESULTS**
- Highest consistency obtained by Smokfree.gov followed by Wikipedia pages and government websites (i.e. MedlinePlus).
- For overall weighted score, Wikipedia, CDC/Cardiovascular Diseases and the Mayo/Clinic Heart Diseases pages performed the highest.

**DISCUSSION**
- Survey was successful in identifying websites that we can use as a template for completion of the project goal.
- The websites that obtained highest consistency scores were government websites and Wikipedia, in which less bias may be present.
- Lowest consistency scores were found in some medical society sites as well as in sites such as WebMD. We hypothesize that advertisements or the specific mission/voice of the society may be more biased.
- Those results correlate well with patient, librarian and mental health professional views obtained through focus groups also conducted as a part of this project.

This survey demonstrated:
- The successful creation and use of a survey instrument designed to evaluate websites with the framework of best-practice usage for persons with SMI.
- Reviewers consistency scoring matched formatting guidelines for SMI users recommended in existing research.
- Provided clear guidance as to initial design methodology for the next phase of this project – creation of a health literacy training website designed for persons with serious mental illness.

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**GOAL OF THE PROJECT**
- Create a new health literacy training website specifically for persons with serious mental illness (SMI) to empower them to recover-use online health resources about both their mental and physical health.

**PROVIDING RESOURCES TO THIS POPULATION**
- Persons with SMI are more often not able to make a “mental map” of a webpage and may not comprehend that additional material is available simply by scrolling or re-reading the page (Deitel, 00).

**WEIGHTED SCORES**
- Weighted scores measured overall content questions (e.g., Is data presented that supports the likelihood of developing the condition based on these risk factors?)

**CONSISTENCY**
- Consistency primarily measured formatting of each website (e.g., Does navigation remain clear whether viewed on a large or small screen?)
- Clear, concise, compact home page
- Separate “pathway” pages from “content” or “destination” pages (Rotondi, 13).

**CONTRIBUTORS**

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**Additional Resources**
- Review more about the project here
- Read more about the project here
- View the full poster here
- Read the poster abstract here
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- View the full poster here

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**
- The successful creation and use of a survey instrument designed to evaluate websites with the framework of best-practice usage for persons with SMI.
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**REFERENCES**
- Rotondi, D. (2013). A literature review identified scholarly research on website design as well as validated health literacy evaluation tools for persons with SMI that formed the basis of the survey.

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**INDEX TERMS**
- Health literacy
- Website design
- Serious mental illness

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**IMPLICATIONS**
- The successful creation and use of a survey instrument designed to evaluate websites with the framework of best-practice usage for persons with SMI.
- Reviewers consistency scoring matched formatting guidelines for SMI users recommended in existing research.
- Provided clear guidance as to initial design methodology for the next phase of this project – creation of a health literacy training website designed for persons with serious mental illness.