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INTERNET FOR PROVIDING HEALTH INFORMATION AND EDUCATION TO PATIENTS -
KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN
NORTH WALES UK

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Introduction: Internet is the fastest growing medium and more than 50 million people seek health information online¹. Almost a third of internet users with history of psychiatric disorder had used the internet to seek mental health information².

Method: A survey was conducted amongst North Wales, UK mental health professionals to understand their knowledge, attitude and practice about this topic. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed out of which 71 responses were received.

Result: About 39% mental health professionals believed that consultation is the best way to give mental health related information to the patients. Only 5% of mental health professionals always and 46% sometimes advised patients to look at internet for mental health related information. About 50% felt that internet will increase patient's understanding of their illness and 37% felt that it will improve their compliance. Sixty percent people felt that mental health information on internet is evidence-based. About 30% of the mental health professionals thought that the use of internet by mental health patients will increase the patient's anxiety and will increase their visit to the doctor. Majority did not have enough knowledge of websites to suggest to the patients.

Conclusion: Most professionals thought that it is a useful concept but further awareness about evidence-based website for professionals is needed.

1- Cline RJW and Haynes KM. Consumer health information seeking on the Internet: the state of the art. *Health Education Research* 2001,16(6):671-692.

2- Powell J, Clarke A. Internet information-seeking in mental health. *British Journal of Psychiatry* 2006,189:273-277.