
MedCIRCLE
Collaboration for Internet Rating, Certification,
Labeling and Evaluation
of Health Information

European Safer Internet Action Plan

Deliverable 4.1

Report of Current Rating Procedures and
Vocabulary

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1. Introduction

As a joint institution of the German Medical Association and the National Association of the Statutory Health Insurance Physicians the German Agency for Quality in Medicine (AQUMED) has been established to concentrate and coordinate the nation-wide statutory function of the State Medical Associations in the field of quality assurance, develops quality-assurance within the medical profession and arranges the cooperation between sickness funds and hospital associations to fulfil the legal tasks.

In 1999 the AQUMED established in cooperation with the Department of Epidemiology, Social Medicine and Public Health Research of the medical Academy Hannover, the German Cochrane Center and the Centre of Quality Management in Health Service of the Medical association of Lower Saxony an internet-based patient information system with the following aims:

- systematic appraisal and presentation of consumer health information (so-called German Clearinghouse for Patient Information), based on HON and Discern-instrument
- improving the quality and transparency of medical information for lay person on the Internet,
- to support the communication between physician and patient by providing pre-selected, quality-tested and problem-related consumer health information.

2. Current Rating Procedure + Workflow

So far, available information has been searched for and selected according to the following criteria:

- accessible on the Internet,
- reliable as regards content, form and presentation,
- free of commercial interest,
- based on HON-Code, regarding authorship, funding and source data references.

Therefore the gateway initiates the search, sometimes based on recommendations from external partners.

3. Rating Vocabulary

3.1 Overview about the current metadata elements

Meta-Element Name	Values	Description	Question	HIP / Evaluator
infoprovider_identity_address	free text	HIP has to enter his postal address	What is your postal address?	HIP – level 1
infoprovider_identity_address_Step2	· · · · ·	· · · · ·	· · · · ·	· · ·

	Valid Invalid	given by the health information provider	valid address?	expert – level 2

The rating vocabulary is based on the HON-principles and the discern-instrument, which is freely available.

3.2 Evaluation Procedures

In the past the reviewing process was undertaken by AQUMED-staff, personally Sylvia Sänger and Anette Huth under the supervision of the physician staff at AQUMED, in order to test the practicability of this approach. Future plans are to have the information assessed by a group comprised of patients, methodologists and physicians who will be appointed by the Patient Forum.

Background of AQUMED-staff:

Sylvia Sänger, qualified engineer and MPH, who has been working in the AQUMED since Oct, 2000, has a lot of working experience within the medical field, e.g. as a coordinator of the German Cancer Society .

Anette Huth, qualified remedial educationalist, who has been working in the AQUMED since Jun, 2001, has also a great experience within the AQUMED where she has been working for many years as a student.

4. Technical details

4.1 Data storage

Data are stored as pdf or html-files. There is an access-data-base currently under construction to store the annotated links including a link description and the results of the discern evaluation.

4.2 Software

4.2.1 Workflow modelling

No software is used to evaluate the workflow.

4.2.2 Software properties

4.2.3 System requirements

5. Results and experiences

So far about 180 patient informations have been reviewed; most of them can be seen completely with their protocols on our website. It takes two to four hours to review one patient-information.

There are several categories to search, including diseases alphabetically, diagnostic and therapeutic proceedings, emergencies as well as a divisions for women, men, Children and so on.

Other categories contain links to self-help-groups, scientific medical societies, patient rights, drug information as well as links to our partner organisations and current projects.