

Cancer Information Seeking as a Pathway. The Supplementary Role of Cancer Information Services

Reifegerste, D.¹, Rosset, M.², Czerwinski, F.², Baumann, E.², Gaisser, A.³, Kludt, E.³, & Weg-Remers, S.³

¹Bielefeld University, School of Public Health

²Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media, Department of Journalism and Communication Research, Hanover Center for Health Communication [HC]²

³German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ), Cancer Information Service (Krebsinformationsdienst, KID)

Abstract

Understanding the role of cancer information services within the pathway of cancer information seeking. Callers (n = 6.255) who contacted the largest provider of cancer information in Germany participated in a survey in which they reported on their information sources, their information level and needs leading to the call. Persons with prior information from a physician (n = 1.507) were compared to people with prior online information (n = 901) and to people with prior information from both sources (n=2,776) in a logistic regression. Nearly all callers (96.7 %) stated prior sources, while physicians and the Internet were the most frequent ones. People who only talked to a doctor before are more likely to be a patient and in the disease stages during/after first treatment or with recurrence compared to prior Internet users. The two groups do not differ in their prior information level, but in their information needs. Cancer Information Services serves as an important supplement to other sources, while the information repertoire depends on patients' individual stage during the cancer journey. Specific characteristics and needs of callers with different prior information sources help to individualize the service of CISs and similar providers.

Keywords: cancer; cancer information seeking; cancer information service; information sources; pathway