ABSTRACT

Purpose: The objectives of this study were to: 1) identify and evaluate the quality of scientifically-based information on the Internet intended for parents and families regarding rehabilitation for children with cerebral palsy (CP); 2) assess the usability of CP-Engine, a newly created website intended for lay people that presents systematic reviews of the effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions for children with CP.

Method: First, a structured search of the Internet was undertaken to identify and appraise existing websites on CP rehabilitation. Although some addressed CP rehabilitation interventions in lay terms, none discussed the numerous treatment options based on scientifically based information. To meet the second objective, a questionnaire was designed, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, to elicit information on parent satisfaction of the CP-Engine website, its usability and navigability.

Results: The structured search of websites revealed more than 30 500 sites using the aforementioned key words in the Google search engine. After analysis, none were scientifically-based websites intended for the lay public. Thirteen respondents aged from 36 to 50 years participated in the usability assessment of CP-Engine. All indicated overall satisfaction with the website. Five of the 13 participants were “somewhat satisfied” with the level of language and Links sections, where suggestions for improvement were made including the need for a virtual support group. Four themes were recommended by parents: general appearance, accessibility, content and additions to the site. Based on the feedback, changes will be brought to the CP-Engine website.

Conclusions: The structured review provided support for the development and use of CP-Engine. In pilot testing, CP-Engine was easy to use and valuable in content.