



A study of online consultations for paediatric renal patients in Russia.

<https://arctichealth.org/en/permalink/ahliterature138590>

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Source: J Telemed Telecare. 2011;17(2):99-104

Date: 2011

Language: English

Publication Type: Article

Keywords: Child
Computer Communication Networks - standards
Consumer Satisfaction
Female
Humans
Internet
Kidney Diseases - diagnosis - therapy
Male
Nephrology - education
Parents - education
Remote Consultation - standards
Russia

Abstract: We developed an educational website for parents of paediatric patients with kidney diseases in Russia. Parents could ask questions regarding their child's illness and submit information, including medical summaries and scanned or electronic images. A US-trained specialist in paediatric nephrology reviewed the information provided and advised about further evaluation or referral, as well as discussing possible treatment plans. In the first nine months, 141 distinct users communicated through the website. Fifty-eight percent of patients were female. An analysis of 70 cases suggested that in 45% there had been overdiagnosis of common paediatric problems, such as urinary tract infection and pyelonephritis. Users completed an anonymous satisfaction survey. The response rate was 84% (n = 59/70). The majority of respondents found the consultation useful (mean = 4.6 on a 5-point scale). The online consultation answered the questions of most respondents, provided useful information and relieved uncertainty regarding a follow-up. The majority of the respondents (>90%) confirmed that they trusted the online consultation and would recommend the technique to other parents. Online consultation for parents can provide reliable information that results in improved parental satisfaction and education. This approach may be useful in improving care and providing patient education in underserved areas in the USA and elsewhere.

PubMed ID: 21163814 [View in PubMed](#)