What New Mothers’ Favorite Websites and Features Tell Us About Designing Web-based Health Promotion: A Content Analysis

Elise R. Nellsch, Undergraduate Nursing Honors Student
Lorraine O. Walker, RN, EdD, MPH, Sponsor
The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing

Purpose: Unmet health needs experienced by new mothers may potentially be reduced by the use of internet-based information, advice, decision support, and social networking. New mothers’ website preferences must be discovered in order to develop successful internet-delivered health care information. The purpose of this study is to determine the website preferences of new mothers in order to better design health resources distributed through the internet.

Methods: Data were derived from two open-ended questions in a larger survey of new mothers of varying incomes and racial/ethnic groups (N=145). The questions focused on mothers’ favorite websites and their favorite aspect of the website. Content analysis was used to condense data into descriptive categories.

Findings: Mothers most frequently chose search engines, followed by social networking sites, as their favorite websites. Mothers’ most frequently mentioned favorite aspects of the websites were (1) the ability to interact socially with other users, and (2) ease of navigation, access and use. No significant differences were found for preferable website attributes between respondents of different race/ethnicities or income level.

Conclusions: A larger sample size may have resulted in more significant results. Further study of new mothers’ website preferences, including not only the use of computers but also
smartphones and tablets, is warranted. These findings may serve as guiding principles for mothers’ website preferences when designing internet delivered health resources.