

Use of link to mammography screening information and link sharing strategies

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Introduction

The internet is increasingly being used to disseminate knowledge in the health care system. Often this is done by a 'Uniform Resource Locator' (URL), better known as a (hyper)link.

There are three ways of sharing a link:

- Verbally
- In print
- Electronically

Furthermore, timing and exposure may play a role.

General practitioners (GPs) often need specific information in specific clinical situations. E.g. when the GP is to inform a woman about screening for mamma cancer. Although Danish GPs use computers with an internet connection in their clinics every day, the best link sharing strategies remain unknown.

Aim

To evaluate GPs' use of links in relation to information about mammography screening.

Methods

In connection with the mammography screening programme in Central Denmark Region, we constructed a website containing screening programme information for GPs. We inserted the link to this website in a paper letter and in the electronic test result sent to the GP after every individual mammography screening. Furthermore, we divided the GPs into three groups: (Figure 1)

| | Paper Letter | E-mail #1 | E-mail #2 |
|-------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| Group 1 GPs | + | | |
| Group 2 GPs | + | + | |
| Group 3 GPs | + | + | + |

Figure 1: Group overview incl medias in which the GPs recieved the link:

A paper-based survey was conducted among the 330 involved GPs on self-reported use of the link.

Results

In total, 242 (73%) GPs returned the questionnaire. The mean age of the respondents was 54 years (36-70 years), and 63% were men.

The proportion of GPs who used the link from the paper letter was **22%** (95% CI: 17-27%). When the link was inserted in the electronic test result to the GP, **37%** (95% CI: 31-43%) reported use of the link. The difference between the two strategies was **15%** (95% CI: 8-22%) ($P < 0.001$) (Figure 2).

28% (95% CI: 22-35%) used the link prior to the screening event, and **37%** (95% CI: 30-43%) used the link afterwards. The difference was **9%** (95% CI: 0-17%) ($P = 0.035$). (Figure 3).

Among the GPs in group 1, **40%** (95% CI: 29-50%) used the link. In group 2, this proportion was **51%** (95% CI: 39-62%). In group 3, **44%** (95% CI: 33-56%) used the link. All regardless of the medium.

We found trends of a positive effect on GPs use of the link in test results, when priming the GP with e-mails containing the link. These findings however, were not significant. (Figure 4).

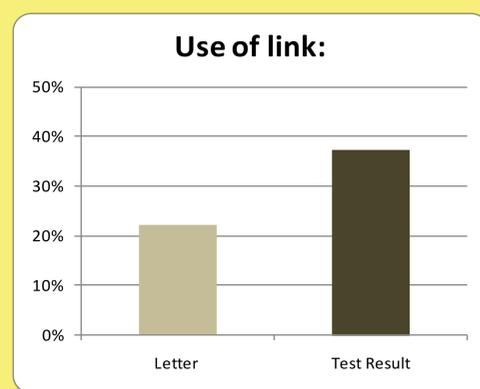


Figure 2: Illustrating the self-reported use of links in the two different medias.

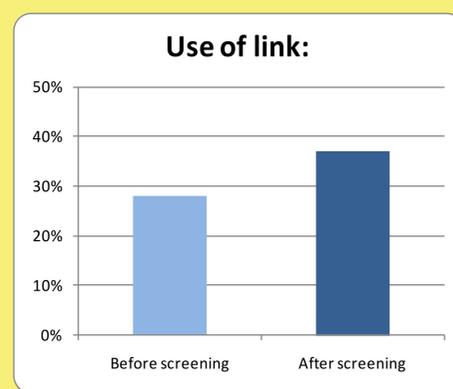


Figure 3: Illustrating the use of links before and after the screening event.

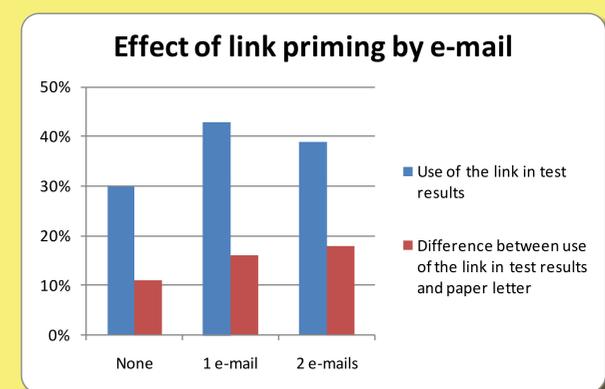


Figure 4: Use of link in test results and difference in use between paper letter and test result.

Conclusion

Links in electronic test results are more efficient than links in paper letters. GPs more often used the link after the screening event. Priming the GPs with a electronic letter with the link might increase the use of the link in the test results.