Interventions to assist pet owners in online health information seeking behaviour: a qualitative content analysis literature review and proposed model

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Abstract

Objective: Veterinarians and their clients are using online information to improve pets’ health. There are no comprehensive frameworks, theories and models to intervene and evaluate online health information seeking behaviour (HISB) of pet owners. The objective of this paper was to provide a comprehensive review of the literature and propose a model for evaluating and intervening pet owner’s HISB.

Methods: The framework emerges from a systematic literature review and qualitative content analysis. NVivo 10 was used in this paper as an analysis tool for coding text and for supporting framework generation through identifying patterns.

Results: We indicate the most influencing factors on online HISB of pet owners, types of interventions for enhancing pet health information consumer skills and possible pet health outcomes. The themes identified from the literature review have been resulted into the development of a model for investigating pet owners’ health information behaviour interventions.

Discussion: We strengthen our findings further by learning from health behaviour models. Based on adaptation of the interaction model of client health behaviour, we developed our initial model.

Conclusion: This model serves as an initial step to engage health librarians and veterinarians for planning on pet health information outreach. However, future studies need to test the proposed model in various case studies and populations.

Keywords: health information need; information seeking behaviour; Internet; libraries, health science; libraries, veterinary

Key Messages

- When dealing with pet health information issues, veterinary librarians should draw on models identifying and quantifying specific aspects of human–animal bond, veterinarian–client relationship and pet owner’s health literacy.
- The findings suggest that pet health outcomes of information interventions should be measured by assessing pet owners’ health information evaluation skills, self-efficacy for health information seeking, number of times client discussed online health information with vet and their pet health status.
- A successful pet health information intervention not only requires a multidisciplinary model but also requires attention to partnerships of libraries with animal health organisations and veterinary centres.
- Further studies are needed that provide evidence of the efficacy of the proposed model in engaging information scientists and veterinarians for planning and evaluation of pet health information outreach.