

National Health Information Portal: Gateway for Guaranteed Cancer Information



TYPE
STATUS

Fully implemented program
Development: from 06/2019. Official launch: 07/2020

LAST
UPDATE

July 2021

CZECH REPUBLIC • NATIONAL
Primary prevention & Health promotion

PROBLEM & OBJECTIVE

PROBLEM Health-related information on the internet in Czechia is fragmented and often comes from low credibility sources. This combined with relatively low rates of health literacy in the Czech population presents challenges for informing healthy behaviours and achieving improved health outcomes.

OBJECTIVE The objectives of this programme are to (1) develop a national web portal guaranteed by the Ministry of Health and medical societies that allows for the aggregation of trustworthy information sources and improved public access to them; and (2) to reduce the spread of fake news in the domain of health-related information on the internet in Czechia.

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KEY COMPONENTS / STEPS

Development of the National Health Information Portal was initiated in 2018 under the umbrella of the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic (main guarantor), National Institute of Public Health (structure, content), Czech Medical Society of Jan Evangelista Purkyně (structure, content), and Institute of Health Information and Statistics of the Czech Republic (information technologies, development, content).

- The portal represents a new platform for publishing only validated and validated articles and external sources under the supervision of the ministry and expert organizations.
- Similar national web portals focused on health issues have already been analysed and documented as a sustainable and reliable solution in some countries (e.g., Austria, Australia).
- Principles of the common web application and software development life cycle were respected: collection of features and functions, formal specification of requirements, modelling the system, design of visual style, static and functional prototype, implementation, testing, deployment, official launch, pilot operation, maintenance, development of further functionalities (based on user requirements), testing and implementation.
- The portal contains six major modules: (1) map of healthcare facilities and services, (2) life situations, (3) prevention and healthy lifestyle, (4) diseases, (5) recommended websites, (6) index of medical terms; while contributions are classified in two categories: (1) full articles and (2) recommended resources (links to other websites).
- Primary prevention is emphasized as a key point of cancer control, followed by secondary prevention (check-ups and cancer screening); further services for cancer patients include a map of healthcare services, information for their better orientation in the healthcare system and provided care (diagnosis, treatment, social support, palliative care), their rights and obligations.

KEY CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

- Health literacy of the Czech population is low in comparison to other European countries. People often rely on advice from low credibility websites and online forums rather than those from experts of trustworthy webpages dealing with health topics.
- Primary prevention faces challenges, with the Czech Republic among the top three EU countries in terms of alcohol consumption and obesity rates in adults.
- Development of the National Health Information Portal is set within the context of the Czech national Health 2030 strategy, which defines a strategic framework for actions to support healthy lifestyles and improved health for all citizens of all ages.

MAIN IMPACTS / ADDED VALUE

- The National Health Information Portal should become a stable and sustainable communication channel between Ministry of Health, medical experts, and the general public (including future patients) that increases health literacy of people and promotes responsibility for their own health.
- The cancer patients are provided guaranteed information and links to trustworthy websites with over 600,000 users accessing the website from July 2020 to April 2021, 1042 people following the portal's Facebook profile and 175 people following the Twitter profile.

LESSONS LEARNED

Extensive user testing has been performed on various target groups:

- It is important to distinguish between searching for information about a particular health topic and between searching for a specific type of health service or facility.
- Title of articles should closely correspond to their content to avoid confusion (e.g., breast cancer screening vs. general information about the disease).
- User testing indicated that full articles were found to be more trustworthy than links to other websites (which were still identified as a source of reliable information).
- User testing also showed that the portal is often perceived and used as a way to other websites that deal with a particular topic (e.g., Czech Society for Oncology's website for cancer patients, cancer screening websites).

REFERENCES & DOCUMENTATION

[National Health Information Portal](#)
[Czech Medical Association of J. E. Purkyně](#)
[National Institute of Public Health](#)
[Institute of Health Information and Statistics of the Czech Republic](#)

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