

# A website on nutrition and cancer: patients perspective

M. van Veen<sup>1,2</sup>, S. Beijer<sup>1</sup>, A. Adriaans<sup>1</sup>, J. Vogel<sup>3</sup>, E. Kampman<sup>2,4,5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Netherlands Comprehensive Cancer Organisation (IKNL), Utrecht; <sup>2</sup>Wageningen University, Wageningen; <sup>3</sup>Dutch Dietetic Oncology Group, Tilburg; <sup>4</sup>VU University, Amsterdam; <sup>5</sup>Radboud University Medical Centre, Nijmegen; the Netherlands

## Introduction

Scientific knowledge is often not used in the routine care of patients resulting in inefficient, inappropriate or even harmful care. Therefore, the website [www.voedingenkankerinfo.nl](http://www.voedingenkankerinfo.nl) was developed to make scientific evidence on nutrition and cancer available to the general public, to cancer patients and cancer survivors. This makes this website a unique concept. The aim of this study was to evaluate the use of the website.



## Methods

The development and evaluation of the website followed the next steps:

- Development of a draft version with information from scientific literature answering commonly asked questions from daily practice from dietitians and oncology nurses.
- A pre-test of this draft version in cancer patients and healthcare professionals to evaluate whether the website fits the target group.
- After the launch, collecting questions of website visitors and answering these questions by dietitians and nutritional scientists with evidence or eminence based information on nutrition and cancer.
- Questions and answers were added weekly and answers were updated when new evidence became available (dynamic website).
- Once the website was online, question categories and website statistics were recorded.
- Focus group meetings with cancer patients were organized to identify patients' information needs regarding nutrition and cancer and to explore whether the website suits these needs.

contact Merel van Veen | [m.vanveen@iknl.nl](mailto:m.vanveen@iknl.nl)



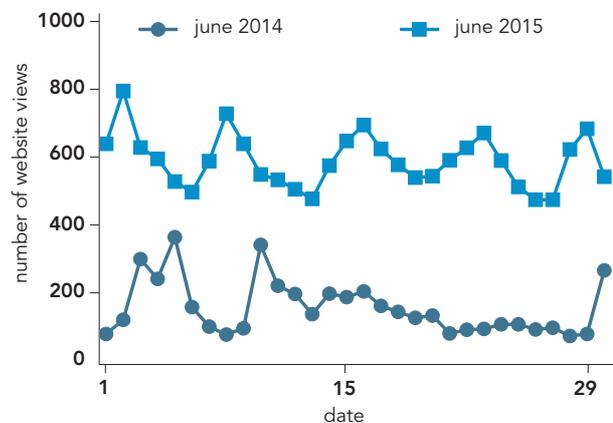
## Results

After the pre-test, key areas for improvement like navigation, categorisation and missing information were identified and adjusted.

User statistics first fourteen months of the website:

- A total of 120.093 visitors who were on the website for 2.03 minutes.
- An increase of 150 visitors per day at the start up to 560 visitors per day at this moment (figure).
- Answers to 128 questions were posted on the website.
- 335 questions on nutrition and cancer were submitted, with many questions being asked multiple times.
- Most questions were on prevention of cancer and nutrition during the treatment of cancer.

Results of the focus group showed that main patients' needs were on nutrition during treatment and trustworthy information in general and that those needs were met by the website.



## Conclusions

The new website with evidence based information on nutrition and cancer fills a gap on the internet, both for patients as for healthcare professionals.

The website gives information about many facts and myths such as:

- Does it help to prevent cancer if I take antioxidant supplements?
- Can açai berries cure my cancer?

Also, nutritional advice to help coping with complaints such as nausea and fatigue can be found on the website.

## Further reading

M. van Veen; S. Beijer; A. Adriaans; J. Vogel-Boezeman; E. Kampman. The development of a website providing evidence-based information about nutrition and cancer: fighting fiction and supporting facts. *JMIR Res Protoc* (forthcoming). doi:10.2196/resprot.4757 <http://dx.doi.org/10.2196/resprot.4757>