

Researchers warn adolescents seeking treatment for pain on internet

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Centre for Pain Research has warned of the potential dangers to adolescents who use internet forums as a means of information and advice to treat pain.

(Medical Xpress) -- Researchers from University of Bath's Centre for Pain Research have warned of the potential dangers to adolescents who use internet forums as a means of information and advice to treat pain.

A team of researchers has analysed websites aimed at young people suffering with pain such as [headaches](#), abdominal pain and dysmenorrhoea (period pain) and found that few websites had

professional medical advice.

The research found the quality of the information available was generally poor and inaccurate, and where sites were of higher quality, they became less accessible to many adolescents of a younger reading age.

The risks associated with relying on such self-management techniques include users failing to identify a potentially serious medical condition or taking medical advice from a non-professional. Poor information from ill-informed websites could lead to worsening pain for the adolescent, taking the wrong [pain medication](#) or going ahead with unnecessary treatments for conditions they do not have.

Ellen Henderson from the Centre for Pain Research, who led the study, said: “It is a worrying trend that those web sites which aim to inform adolescents about pain are often too difficult for them to read, leading to adolescents possibly taking advice from other less reliable sites, as these are aimed at their level of understanding.”

The study which included 63 websites: 24 related to headache, 16 to [abdominal pain](#) and the remaining 23 related to dysmenorrhea, produced a number of findings.

It also looked at online forums where [adolescents](#) could share their experiences and views on pain management by posting questions and reading responses from other forum members. It found that much of the information posted on these forums was misleading.

More information: The full paper can be viewed here: [jpepsy.oxfordjournals.org/cont ... jsr100.full.pdf+html](http://jpepsy.oxfordjournals.org/cont...jsr100.full.pdf+html)

Provided by University of Bath

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