Had percutaneous coronary intervention, now what? Searching the internet for health information

Ramstad KJ[1], Brørs G[2], Pettersen TR[1,3], Deaton C[4], Wentzel-Larsen T[5], Rotevatn S[1], Norekvål TM[1,3]. On behalf of the CONCARD Investigators.

[1]Department of Heart Disease, Haukeland University Hospital, Bergen, Norway, [2]Clinic of Cardiology, St Olav University Hospital, Trondheim, Norway, [3]Institute of Health and Caring Sciences, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Bergen, Norway, [4]Department of Public Health and Primary Care, University of Cambridge School of Clinical Medicine, Cambridge, UK

Background: Internet is a source to ever-growing amounts of information. However, whether patients after percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) are digitally active and have sufficient electronic health literacy (eHL) remain unclear.

Purpose: To determine the extent to which patients after PCI are health-related digitally active at baseline, two and six months after PCI, and determine association between patients' eHealth literacy and health-related digital activity.

Methods: This is a multicentre cohort study including patients after PCI at three large referral PCI centres in Norway (N=1970). Sociodemographic factors and digital activity were obtained by self-report, clinical characteristics from medical records and the Norwegian Registry of Invasive Cardiology. The eHealth Literacy Scale assessed patient's eHL. Regression analysis determined associations between eHL and health-related digital activity.

Results: Most participants were men (78%), mean age 66 years (range; 20-96 years, SD 11). At baseline 67% had used internet to find health information and 54% had used the national health portal. Use of health applications increased with 32% from 2- to 6- month follow-up (P<0.001). There were substantial association between eHL and use of internet to find health information at baseline (10.90, CI 8.05-14.57). At two-month follow-up there were substantial association between baseline eHL and use of internet for health information (OR 1.19, CI 1.14-1.24) and use of health applications (OR 1.15, CI 1.08-1.22).

Conclusions: This study provided evidence that higher eHL predicts use of internet to find health information and indicates that eHL impact how patients use, and can make use of, eHealth technology.