

Parents' practices and perspectives of accessing health-related information for their young children

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Background and Aims

- Digital Technology use is ubiquitous in the lives of families with young children and a concern for many parents, who find guidelines unrealistic
- Research on parents' practices of accessing health-related information for their young children frequently focuses on specific health conditions rather than health more broadly, and does not account for digital technology use
- This study aimed to explore the practices and perspectives of parents of young children accessing health-related information, particularly digital technology use

Method

- 20 parents of 0-3y/o (16 female)
- Sociodemographic survey
- Online semi structured interviewed- what health related information, from whom/where they seek information and why they choose these sources
- Audio recordings were transcribed, and inductive thematic analysis completed



Findings

Information accessibility:
“...it seems to cover all of the relevant questions that I have in the domain I’m searching about”

Relatability and trustworthiness:
“I feel like I could relate to her in terms of a person and her philosophies”

Impacted by social factors (e.g. location, # children, COVID19 restrictions):
“Covid has made it even worse up here.”

Online sources commonly utilised for accessing health information (government / organisation websites and social media)

Personal beliefs and values:
“We love the outdoors, so I guess it’s like what we value”

Mainstream media messaging impacting beliefs:
“...but it’s also the bias and prejudice that we held before having our own child”

Age of child:
“I guess we will probably change our minds when he is a toddler”

Digital technology use information was less commonly sought, and when it was focused on screen time rather than how screens are used

Discussion and Implications

- Parents practices surrounding accessing information about digital technology use differed to their practices on accessing health related information
- Sample was limited to parents of 0-3y/o, and practices are likely different in parents of older children
- Findings indicate a need for a shift towards broader sources and strategies to allow effective research translation to help inform parents' perspectives and practices surrounding digital technology use

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