

The increased [availability](#) of [web-based medical information](#) has encouraged patients with chronic pain to seek healthcare information from multiple sources, such as [consultation](#) with healthcare [providers](#) combined with web-based information. The type and [quality](#) of [information](#) that is available on the web is very heterogeneous, in terms of [content](#), [reliability](#), and [trustworthiness](#). To date, no studies have evaluated what information is available about [neuromodulation](#) on the web for patients with [chronic pain](#).

The study of Moens et al. aims to explore the type, quality, and content of web-based information regarding [spinal cord stimulation](#) (SCS) for [chronic pain](#) that is freely available and targeted at healthcare consumers.

Methods: The social listening tool Awario was used to search [Facebook](#) (Meta Platforms, Inc.), [Twitter](#) (Twitter, Inc.), [YouTube](#) (Google LLC), [Instagram](#) (Meta Platforms, Inc.), [blogs](#), and the web for suitable hits with “[pain](#)” and “[neuromodulation](#)” as keywords. [Quality](#) appraisal of the extracted information was performed using the [DISCERN](#) instrument. A thematic analysis through inductive coding was conducted.

The initial search identified 2174 entries, of which 630 (28.98%) entries were eventually withheld, which could be categorized as web pages, including news and blogs (114/630, 18.1%); Reddit (Reddit, Inc) posts (32/630, 5.1%); Vimeo (Vimeo, Inc) hits (38/630, 6%); or YouTube (Google LLC) hits (446/630, 70.8%). Most posts originated in the United States (519/630, 82.4%). Regarding the content of information, 66.2% (383/579) of the entries discussed (fully discussed or partially discussed) how SCS works. In total, 55.6% (322/579) of the entries did not elaborate on the fact that there may be >1 potential treatment choice and 47.7% (276/579) did not discuss the influence of SCS on the overall quality of life. The inductive coding revealed 4 main themes. The first theme of pain and the burden of pain (1274/8886, 14.34% coding references) explained about pain, pain management, the individual impact of pain, and patient experiences. The second theme included neuromodulation as a treatment approach (3258/8886, 36.66% coding references), incorporating the background on neuromodulation, patient-centered care, SCS therapy, and risks. Third, several device-related aspects (1722/8886, 19.38% coding references) were presented. As a final theme, the patient benefits and testimonials of treatment with SCS (2632/8886, 29.62% coding references) were revealed with subthemes regarding patient benefits, eligibility, and testimonials and expectations.

Healthcare [consumer](#) have access to web-based information about SCS, where details about the surgical procedures, the type of material, working mechanisms, risks, patient expectations, testimonials, and the potential benefits of this therapy are discussed. The reliability, trustworthiness, and correctness of web-based sources should be carefully considered before automatically relying on the content <sup>1)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup>

Moens M, Van Doorslaer L, Billot M, Eeckman E, Roulaud M, Rigoard P, Fobelets M, Goudman L. Examining the Type, Quality, and Content of Web-Based Information for People With Chronic Pain Interested in Spinal Cord Stimulation: Social Listening Study. *J Med Internet Res*. 2024 Jan 30;26:e48599. doi: 10.2196/48599. PMID: 38289645.

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