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Using the Internet as source of information during pregnancy - a descriptive cross-sectional study among fathers-to-be in Sweden

Marie Gunnel Oscarsson Associate Professor ,  
Ida Holmström Reg Nurse Midwife, MSC ,  
Erica Medin Reg Nurse Midwife, MSC ,  
Lena Lendahls Reg nurse midwife, PhD

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## **Using the Internet as source of information during pregnancy - a descriptive cross-sectional study among fathers-to-be in Sweden**

Marie Oscarsson<sup>a</sup>, Erica Medin<sup>a,\*</sup>, Ida Holmström<sup>a,\*</sup>, Lena Lendahls<sup>a,b</sup>,

<sup>a</sup> Department of Health and Caring Sciences, Linnaeus University, Stagneliusgatan 14, 392 34 Kalmar, Sweden

<sup>b</sup> Department of Research and Development, Region Kronoberg, Växjö, Sweden

\* E Medin and I Holmström contributed equally to this work.

E-mail addresses for the authors:

Marie Oscarsson: [marie.oscarsson@lnu.se](mailto:marie.oscarsson@lnu.se)

Erica Medin: [ericamedin@icloud.com](mailto:ericamedin@icloud.com)

Ida Holmström: [Ida\\_450@hotmail.com](mailto:Ida_450@hotmail.com)

Lena Lendahls: [lena.lendahls@lnu.se](mailto:lena.lendahls@lnu.se)

### **Corresponding author:**

Marie Oscarsson, Department of Health and Caring Sciences, Linnaeus University, Stagneliusgatan 14, 392 34 Kalmar, Sweden, Telephone: +46 480446080 E-mail:

[marie.oscarsson@lnu.se](mailto:marie.oscarsson@lnu.se)

### **Abstract**

**Objective:** The aim of this study was to identify how fathers-to-be used the Internet as a source of information during their partners' pregnancy and how it affected them.

**Design and setting:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted. Data were collected through a questionnaire and distributed at a maternity clinic in south of Sweden. The data were analysed descriptively.

**Participants:** Ninety-two Swedish fathers participated in the study, and the response rate was 98.9%.

**Findings:** Of all the fathers-to-be, 76% sought pregnancy-related information on the Internet. One sought information on a daily basis, 40.6% every week and 58% every month or more rarely. The fathers-to-be who participated at all/most visits at antenatal care searched for information on the Internet more often than those who only attended few/no visits ( $p = 0.012$ ). A total of 33.4% of fathers-to-be had been recommended a web page by the midwife at the antenatal care. The main reason for using the Internet was to find information about pregnancy-related subjects and read about people in similar situations. More than half of the fathers-to-be (61.8%) had at some point been worried by something they read online. These concerns were commonly addressed by asking the midwife at their next appointment (33.9%). Almost 26% of the fathers-to-be chose not to take any action at all to address their concerns.

**Conclusion:** The majority of all fathers-to-be searched for information on the Internet, and more than half of the fathers were, at some point, worried about the information they read on the Internet. One way to address questions and concerns could be for the fathers-to-be to ask and discuss with the midwives what they read online so that midwives can recommend appropriate and credible websites. To achieve this, there must be opportunities for midwives to gain knowledge on how best to use the Internet as a tool.

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