Prostate Cancer on YouTube: Accurate and unbiased information is hard to find.
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Introduction and Objectives
Over 800 million people visit the video-sharing site YouTube each month. The relative ease of posting a video and availability of a mass audience make the site an ideal platform to connect with the public about prostate cancer. The site offers many videos in this area, yet the information is not vetted for accuracy and appropriateness. Although some videos provide useful information supported by evidence, others may be misleading as they are posted by entities promoting a product or service. This variety of sources makes it difficult for the consumer to distinguish between accurate and misleading information and thus may lead to significant misinformation by the user. The goal of the present study was to evaluate the content of the most popular YouTube videos featuring prostate cancer-related content.

Methods
Using the search term ‘prostate cancer’ in September, 2012 yielded 44,800 results. We analyzed the first two pages (n=38) produced by the search based on evidence that 95% of users will only click through a link on the first 2 results pages (Optify Inc., 2012). Evaluation criteria were type of video (e.g., instructional, testimonial, etc.), source, literacy level, information quality, video attributes (e.g., music, humor, narrator, etc.), length, viewer ratings, and view count. These variables were used to predict information quality as measured by the correct fact ratio (correct facts/total number of facts).

Results
Videos were most often posted by news stations (38%), medical professionals/hospitals (24%) or other sources, were on average 3 min, 54 sec long, and had an average count of 1,919 views per month. Videos contained an average of 10 facts, or 2.8 facts per minute; 28% provided outright incorrect, misleading and/or incomplete information. In addition, 62% of the videos contained biased information (e.g., favoring a particular treatment option) and 76% were categorized as a marketing effort. Although there were no significant predictors of view count, preliminary analyses showed that biased videos (β = -.44, p < .01) and videos advertising a service or product (β = -.58, p = .001) were significantly more likely to provide inaccurate and misleading information, compared to nonbiased, non-marketing videos.

Conclusions
Existing information on YouTube about prostate cancer is often incomplete, misleading, and biased. View count is not a sufficient indicator of quality information. Guidelines are needed to help patients identify information from credible and not credible sources and are suggested based on our analyses.