

NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS: A PATIENT PERSPECTIVE

D. M. Bonifati¹, E. Torri², N. Pace³, W. Di Napoli⁴, G. Nollo³

¹Cà Foncello Hospital, ULSS 9 (Treviso); ²Health and Welfare Department, Province of Trento (Trento);

³BIOTech, Industry Engineering Department, University of Trento; ⁴Mental Health Service, Santa Chiara Hospital, APSS (Trento)

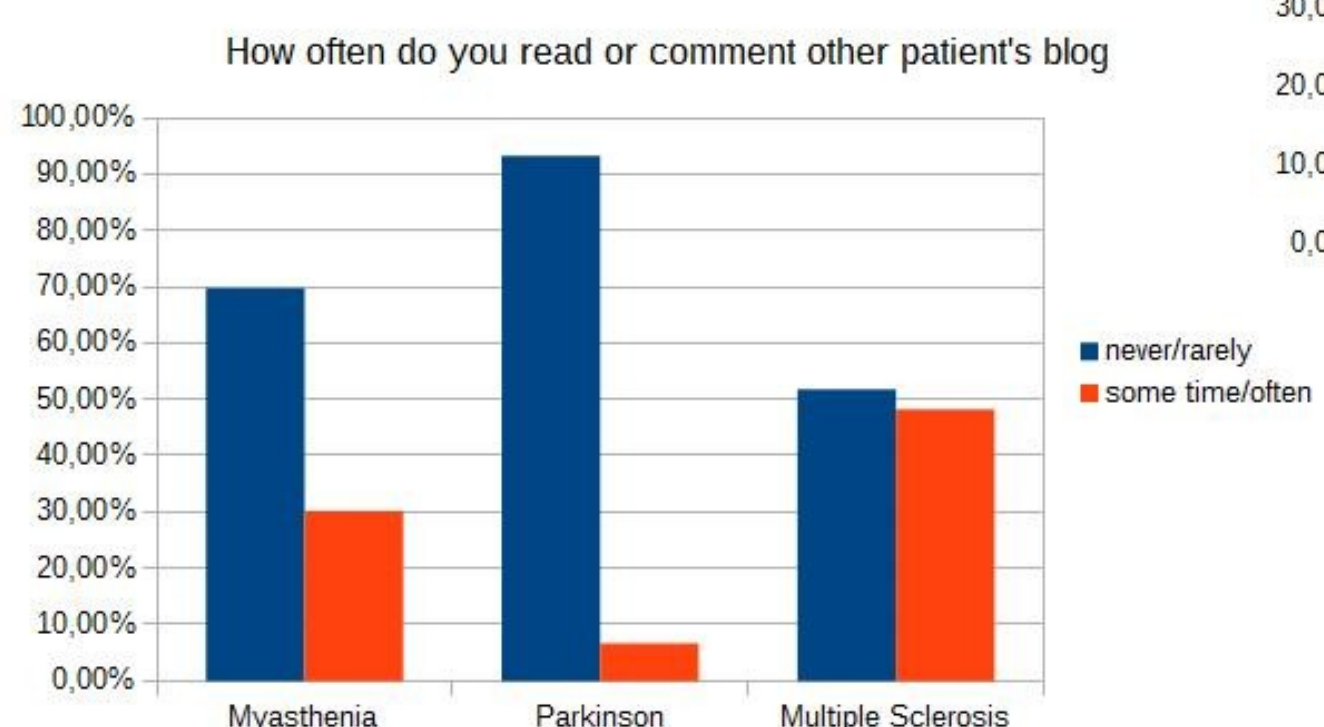
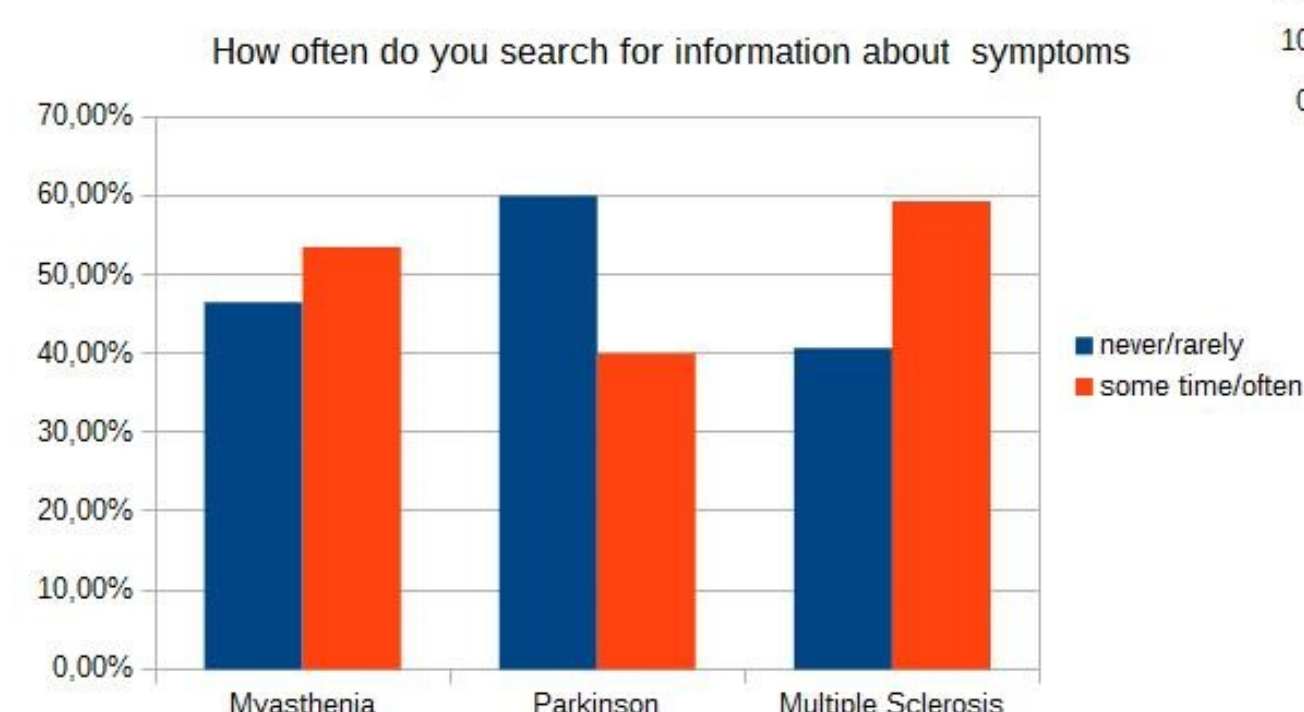
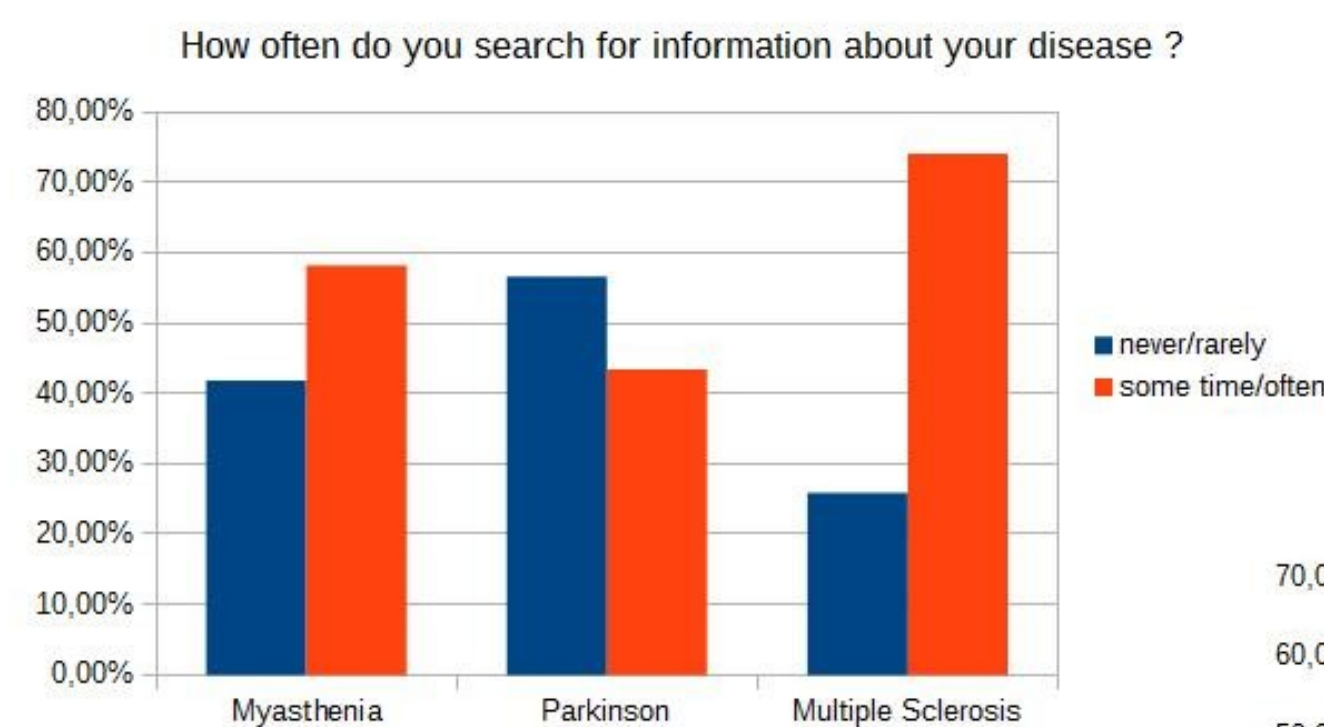
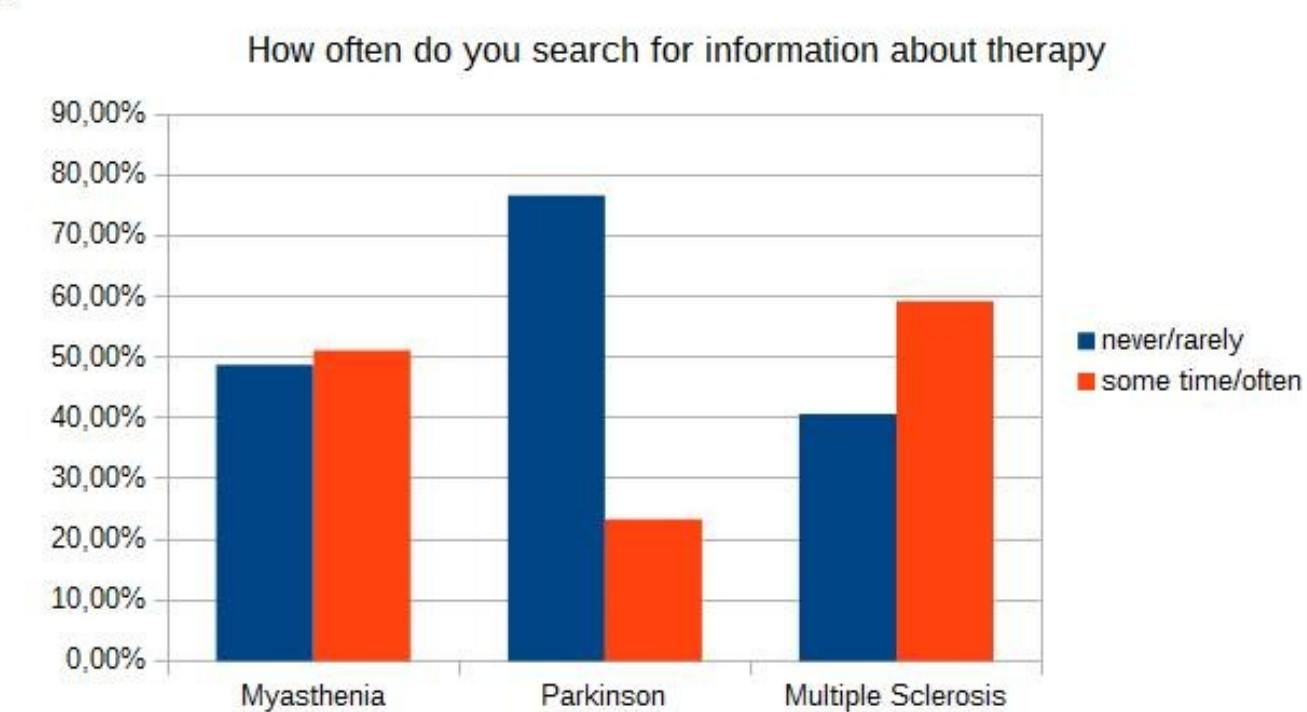
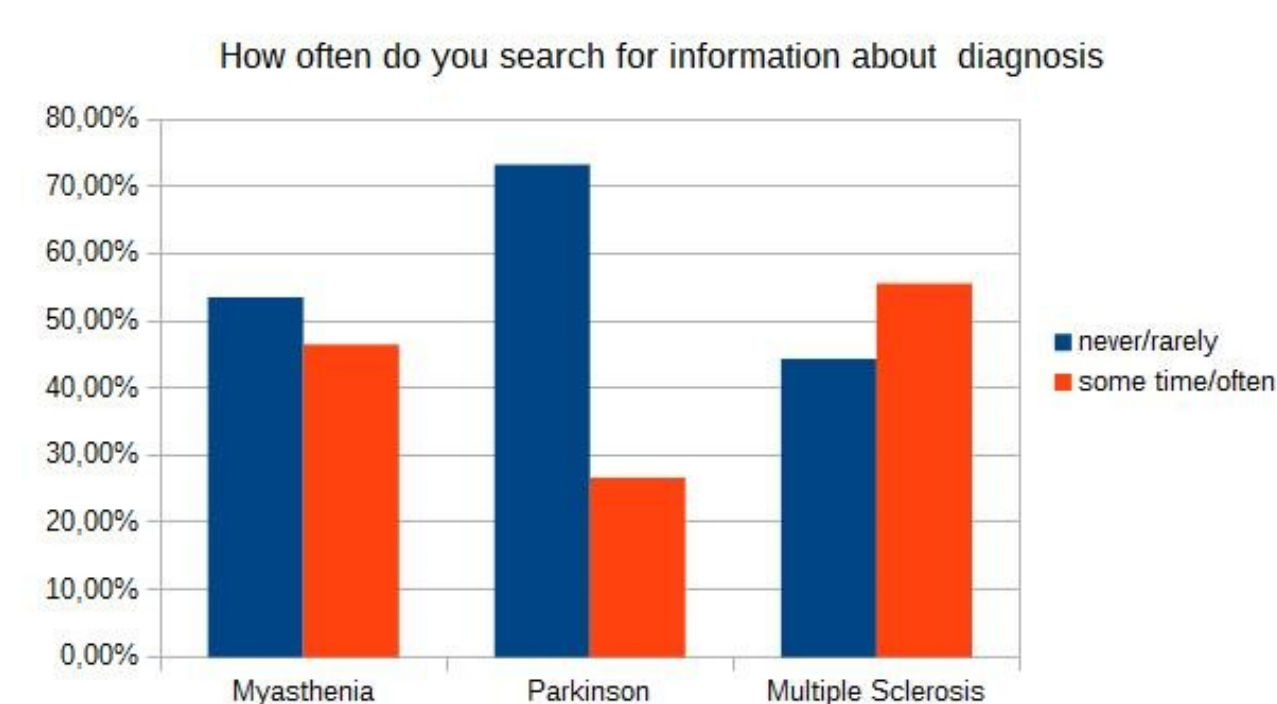
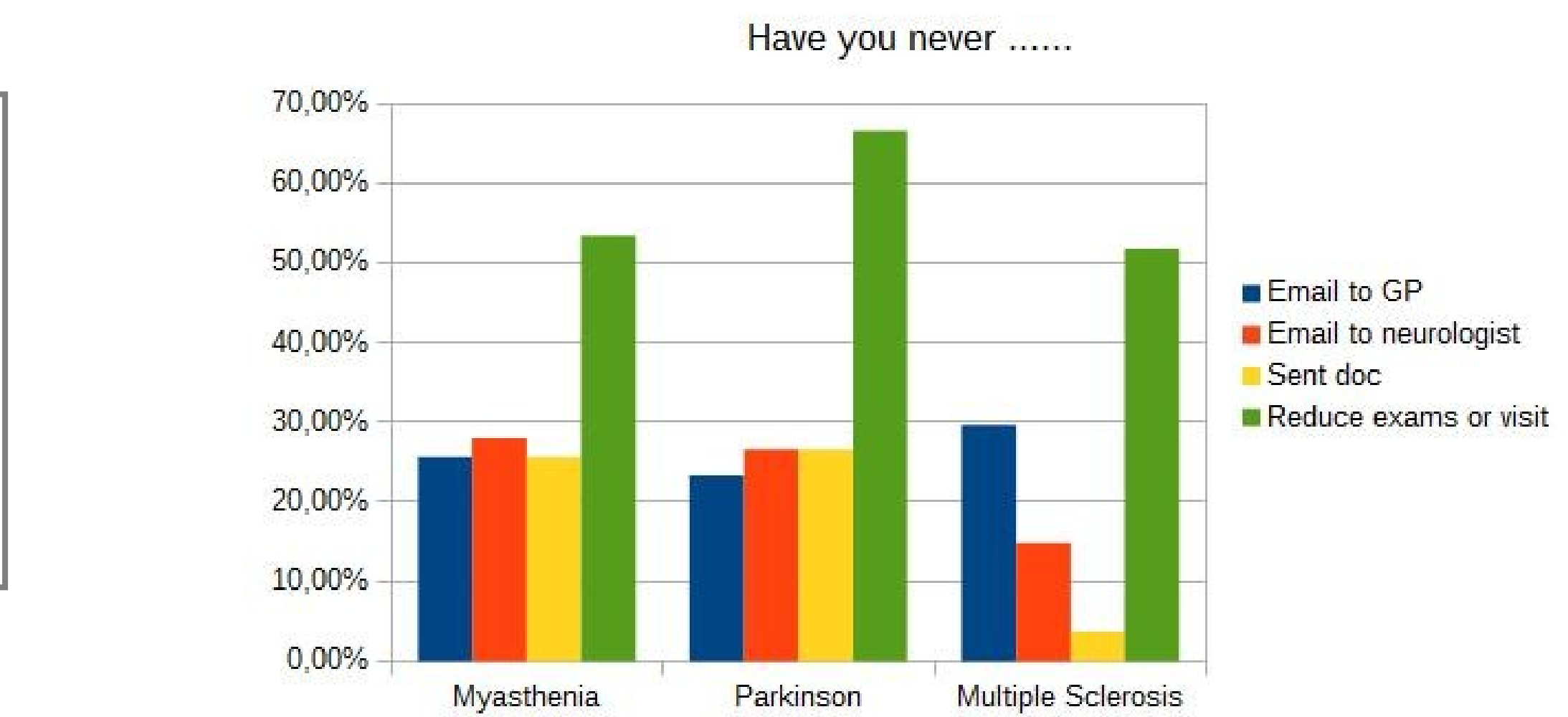
Introduction: Chronic neurological disorders have a high epidemiological and cost burden. Telemedicine projects are often sponsored by physicians but it is not clear what is patient's opinion.

Aim: To evaluate the actual use of informatic devices and internet in the management of chronic neurological disorders.

Materials and Methods: A questionnaire to evaluate the use of new technologies and the trust that people has in the possibility of manage their disease with them has been administered to a population of patients affected by myasthenia gravis (MG), Parkinson's disease (PD) and multiple sclerosis (SM).

Results: We collected 100 questionnaires from 93 patients with MG (42), MS (30) and PD (21) and from 7 caregivers (1 with MG and 6 with PD). The responders were women in the 55%, 40% and 60% in MG, PD and SM respectively. Mean Age was 55.6 yrs (range 27-85), 64.4 yrs (range 29-81), 40.7 yrs (range 18-74) for MG, PD and SM. Responders held a high school diploma (42%), lower secondary school diploma (34%) or degree (24%).

Results 2: Most of the responders indicated to use regularly pc for email (65%), followed by internet surfing (39%). Less frequent is the access to social networks (14%). Interestingly 27% of MG and PD and 20% of SM responders has sent an e.mail to his own general practitioner or neurologist.



Results 3: MAs a whole the use of internet to manage the disease was more frequent ≤ 50 years ($p < 0.0000001$). 79%, 60% and 70% of MG, PD and SM responders think that his/her own disease could be managed at least partly and with more empowerment with the use of new technologies.

Conclusion and discussion: Our study shows that many patients already use new technologies to manage their own disease, age is an important limiting factor but also older people is confident about the usefulness of telemedicine. Previous studies have shown safety, efficacy, and cost-effectiveness of telemedicine in chronic neurological disorder. Our study shows that patient are ready for it.

