Web-based health information plays an increasingly vital role in spreading health information. Many patients interested in aesthetic surgery study the procedure on the Internet. This study aims to evaluate the quality of online health information on injectable fillers using the modified "Ensuring Quality Information for Patients" (EQIP) tool. Nine different search terms, including "fillers," "fuller cheeks," "wrinkle removal," and "antiwrinkle treatment" were identified and queried on Google. Unique links from the first three pages of each search term were identified and evaluated if the contents were in English language and were for general non-medical public use. A total of 172 websites were analyzed, with a median EQIP score of 20. In total 129 websites belonged to aesthetic practitioners, of which 81 were operated by medical doctors. Eighty-three percent of websites disclosed some forms of postoperative complications, most commonly edema (74%) and bruising (73%). Blindness and tissue necrosis were only mentioned by 12 and 10% of the websites, respectively.
The current health information available on injectable fillers is of poor quality. While many do provide some information on risks, the majority of websites fail to disclose severe complications and quantifying risks. This poses a barrier against informed decision-making and may lead to unrealistic expectations. Patient satisfaction and expectations may be improved by developing better online education resources on fillers.