Bibliometric Analysis of Global Research Trends on Technology-Enabled Health Information Seeking Behavior in Cancer

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Abstract. Technology-enabled health information seeking behaviour (HISB) is important in cancer care as it enhances access to health information, improves patient understanding and aids decision making. However, the global research trend in this area is still underexplored. To study the global research trends, major contributors, and thematic developments around technology-enabled HISB in cancer through bibliometric analysis. A bibliometric study was performed in the Scopus database. Keywords were related to titles, abstracts and keywords. Only peer-reviewed publications and reviews written in English were considered. Publication trends, author and institutional contributions, funding sponsors and keyword co-occurrence were analysed using Scopus analytical tools and VOSviewer version 1.6.20, through network, overlay and density visualisation. A total of 80 publications were evaluated. The results indicated a steady growth in publications, suggesting an increasing interest in technology-enabled HISB in cancer research. The United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom turned the most significant contributions. The main keywords were "internet," "information-seeking behavior," and "medical information." Four clusters were identified through keyword co-occurrence analysis: patient interaction and information processing; health information seeking and decision-making; digital health and support systems; and internet-based information behaviour. Among the new trends were telehealth, mobile health, social support and patient-centred digital approaches. The research on technology-enabled HISB in cancer is growing and increasingly highlights patient-centred digital technologies. These results highlight the importance of digital health, telehealth, and mobile health in helping cancer patients get access to health information and make educated decisions.

Keywords: Technology, Cancer, Health Information Seeking Behaviour, Bibliometric Analysis.

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1 Introduction

Global health systems are challenged to respond to the large burden of cancer morbidity and mortality (Deo et al., 2022). Accurate and timely health information is critical to supporting patients, families and carers through the cancer treatment continuum (Chan et al., 2023). In this context, Health Information Seeking Behaviour (HISB) is an important factor that helps people to seek, comprehend and utilise use health information to make educated choices (Xu et al., 2024).

The sharp increase of digital technologies include social media, mobile health applications, and the internet has changed the way people can access and share information about cancer (Briggs et al., 2022). Technology-based health information systems can enhance patient-centered care, patient participation and health literacy (Pandita, 2022). In this context, the internet is increasingly being used by cancer patients as their main source of health information.

But significant barriers remain such as the digital divide, digital literacy, and health literacy that influence how individuals obtain and use health information. Such discrepancies may impact the effectiveness of technology-enabled Health Information Seeking Behaviour (HISB) especially in nations with low and medium incomes. While there are a growing number of studies in this area, the existing studies are fragmented, and a comprehensive synthesis of global trends, collaboration patterns and emerging themes is still missing. Furthermore, the role of technology-enabled HISB in the wider development of the healthcare system and patient-centered care has received little attention.

This study will conduct a bibliometric analysis to map worldwide research trends, identify key contributors, and explore the evolution of research topics on technology-enabled health information-seeking behaviour (HISB) in cancer. This study offers a viewpoint on publication evolution and research topics using keyword co-occurrence analysis also the future of digital health research in cancer treatment. The findings of this study will contribute towards identifying research gaps and encourage the development of more efficient, inclusive, and patient-centered digital health solutions.

2 Material and Methods

2.1 Research Design

This research uses a bibliometric analysis approach to systematically review the literature on technology-enabled health information seeking behaviour (HISB) in

cancer patients. This study aims to identify publishing patterns, evaluate the key contributions of countries, authors, journals, institutions and funding sponsors, and explore research themes within the field.

2.2 Data Source

This study's primary data source was the Scopus database, one of the world's biggest scientific literature databases including peer-reviewed studies. Scopus was selected for its broad interdisciplinary coverage, its high-quality indexing and its ability to provide detailed metadata for bibliometric analysis. In addition, the use of Scopus is consistent with previous bibliometric studies by Fauziah & Rochmawati, 2025; Roselina et al., 2026, which have proven that this database can systematically describe the development of research trends and scientific contributions.

2.3 Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted utilising a structured search approach that included relevant keywords and Boolean operators in the Scopus database's Title, Abstract, and Keyword sections. The keywords were selected according to basic principles of information-seeking behaviour, cancer and technology. The search string was as follows: (TITLE-ABS-KEY (health AND information AND seeking AND behaviour) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (cancer) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (technology)) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "re")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English")). The search process included all the publications from inception year to April 2026 to capture the full scope of research developments in this ever-evolving field.

We selected articles systematically using the PRISMA guidelines, which included the processes of identification, screening, eligibility evaluation, and study inclusion. The technique was used to improve the transparency, uniformity and reproducibility of the literature search process.

2.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria for this research were as follows: Peer-reviewed articles and review articles, research on cancer and health information seeking behaviour, studies that used technology-based or digital platforms, and publications in the English language. Non-peer-reviewed articles, such as conference proceedings, editorials, and letters to the editor, as well as studies that did not clearly reference health information-seeking behaviour (HISB) in cancer, were excluded, as were publications that did not provide full text access.

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using the built-in functionalities of Scopus to provide descriptive statistics on publication trends, countries with highest contributions, prolific authors, source journals, related institutions, funding sponsors and citation patterns. The outcome of this analysis was then presented as a top 10 ranking in each category to provide an insight into the main contributors to research progress.

A bibliometric analysis was then performed using VOSviewer version 1.6.20 to explore keyword co-occurrence through network, overlay and density visualisations. The term co-occurrence analysis was performed with a minimum-occurrence threshold to generate a graphic that better illustrates the main themes of the study. The full-counting approach was used to obtain the correlations of keywords, research themes and research trends in the examined dataset.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Publication Trends and Growth

Figure 1. Flowchart of selecting articles for bibliometric analysis using the Scopus database. The first search phase yielded 91 documents. One document was excluded because it did not meet the language criterion. In the second screening step, ten other documents, including conference proceedings and book chapters, were eliminated because they did not fulfil the publication type criteria specified in this research. Finally, there were 80 papers included in the analysis (67 research articles and 13 review articles), the data was exported in CSV and RIS formats. The bibliometric study was carried out using VOSviewer, with an emphasis on determining word co-occurrence using network, overlay, and density visualisations.

Figure 2. Development of publication on technology-based health information-seeking behaviour in cancer from the first year of publication to 2026. At the beginning the number of publications was quite low but it gradually increased year after year with some fluctuations. This growth reflects the growing importance researchers have placed on the usage of digital technologies in HISB, particularly around cancer research. The 2026 publication count appears to be lower than the previous year, likely because data collection was limited to April 2026. However, there could be additional increases in publications in that year. The increase in publications in general shows a growing recognition of the contribution of digital technology in cancer care and services especially in increasing patient involvement and providing better access to health information. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital health services and the usage of online sources of health information, which may have had an influence on publishing growth beyond 2020.

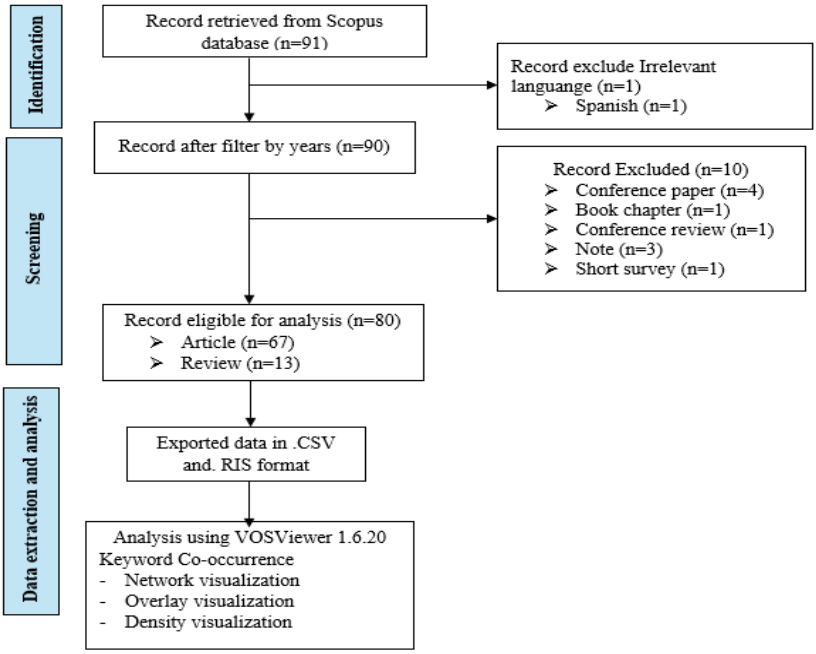


Figure 1. Flowchart of literature selection

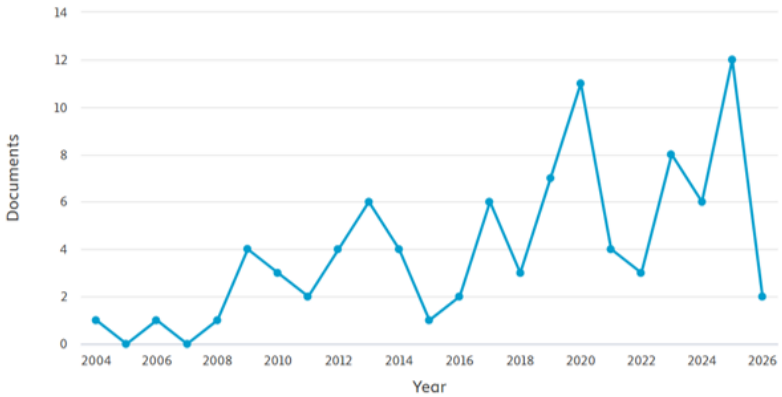


Figure 2. Document by year
Source: Scopus Data Analysis

3.2 Top Active Countries

Table 1. shows which countries have the greatest publishing rates for Technology-enabled Health Information-Seeking Behavior in Cancer. The number of papers

published influences the ranking. The United States leads the list of contributions, followed by the United Kingdom and Canada. Other countries, such as China and Australia, make moderate contributions, while other European countries, including Germany, Saudi Arabia, Finland, Italy, and Japan, make smaller contributions. These findings suggest that developed countries dominate research in this sector. This dominance may reflect disparities in research funding, digital infrastructure, and access to advanced technology. It also highlights a potential imbalance in the representation of countries with low and moderate incomes, where cancer prevalence is increasing but research on technology-enabled health information-seeking behavior remains limited. This imbalance may contribute to global inequities in access to digital health information and patient empowerment. This situation underscores the importance of expanding inclusive research that considers diverse social, economic, and cultural contexts, particularly those from underrepresented regions.

Table 1. Top 10 countries ranked by article output on Technology-Enabled Health Information Seeking Behavior in Cancer

Ranking	Country	Total Document
1	United States	35
2	Canada	9
3	China	9
4	United Kingdom	9
5	Australia	5
6	Germany	3
7	Saudi Arabia	3
8	Finland	2
9	Italy	2
10	Japan	2

3.3 Top Contributing Journals

Table 2. Top ten research journals for technology-enabled health information seeking behaviour in cancer. In terms of article count, the Journal of Medical Internet Research is ranked top with 12 publications, which indicates that it is an important resource for doing research on technology-based health information-seeking behaviour. In addition to having the highest number of publications, this journal has an SJR of 2.11, which is in Quartile 1 (Q1), which shows that it has strong scientific impact and prestige.

JMIR Cancer has an SJR of 0.8 and four articles and is ranked second in the Q2 category. Meanwhile, the Journal of Health Communication is ranked third with three articles in the Q1 category, with an SJR of 0.79. Other major highly influential publications include the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, the Journal of Cancer Survivorship and Supportive Care in Cancer, all of them in the Q1 category. This indicates that research articles on technology-based health information seeking behaviour in cancer have been published more frequently in high impact publications.

Moreover, the SJR values and quartiles for the recognised journals differ. The majority of the journals are in Q1, which shows that the research in this topic is of high academic quality and attracts a lot of attention from the international scientific community. Journals in the Q2 and Q3 categories such as JMIR Cancer, Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction and Ecancermedicalscience continue to make significant contributions to the enrichment of multidisciplinary perspectives, particularly in the areas of digital technology, health communication and cancer care support.

Table 2. Top 10 journals in research related to Technology-Enabled Health Information Seeking Behavior in Cancer

Ranking	Journal/source title	Total document	SJR	Quartile
1	Journal of Medical Internet Research	12	2.11	Q1
2	JMIR Cancer	4	0.8	Q2
3	Journal of Health Communication	3	0.79	Q1
4	Ecancermedicalscience	2	0.5	Q3
5	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	2	0.93	Q1
6	Journal of Cancer Survivorship	2	1.15	Q1
7	Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction	2	0.5	Q2
38	Supportive Care in Cancer	2	1.03	Q1
9	Acta Oncologica	1	0.95	Q1
10	American Journal of Men's Health	1	0.86	Q1

3.4 Top Contributing Author

Table 3. presents the top 10 authors who are the most productive researchers publishing articles on technology-enabled health information-seeking behaviour in cancer. Several authors have the same number of publications, two documents, and they are Kafait Ahmad, Hallie Dau, Timothy M. Hale, Maia Jacobs, Ian D. Lewis, Carol A. Maddock, and Richard Sullivan. This implies that the research area is still divided by several researchers and not dominated by one author.

Meanwhile, some writers such as Thomas Abel, Maryam AboMoslim and Paul H. Abrams have just one publication. This research adds to the growing literature on technology-enabled health information-seeking behaviour among cancer patients, which encompasses a diverse range of researchers from several disciplines.

Table 3. Top 10 authors represent the most productive researchers publishing articles on technology-enabled health information seeking behavior in cancer			
Ranking	**Author**	**Total Document**	**Institution**
1	Ahmad, Kafait	2	Tenovus Cancer Care, United Kingdom
2	Dau, Hallie	2	University of British Columbia, Canada
3	Hale, Timothy M.	2	Mass General Brigham, United States
4	Jacobs, Maia	2	Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, United States
5	Lewis, Ian D.	2	Adelaide Oncology and Haematology, Australia
6	Maddock, Carol A.	2	Tenovus, United Kingdom
7	Sullivan, Richard	2	King's Health Partners, United Kingdom
8	Abel, Thomas	1	Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine, Switzerland
9	AboMoslim, Maryam	1	University of British Columbia, Canada
10	Abrams, Paul H.	1	Southmead Hospital Bristol, United Kingdom

3.5 Top Contributing Institutions

Table 4. Top ten institutions with most publications on technology-enabled HISB in cancer. The University of British Columbia and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) had the most publications, three each. This indicates that these two institutions are quite interested in research on technology-based HISB in cancer.

Other multiple institutions such as University of Calgary, Université McGill, Guy's Hospital, King's College London, University Health Network, Sichuan University, University of Toronto and Simon Fraser University also played an important role with two publications respectively. Most of the institutions listed are universities and medical centers with a strong emphasis on health and cancer research. The results indicate that academic institutions and health research centers are increasingly studying technology-assisted health information-seeking behaviour in cancer. The involvement of these institutions also reflects the increasing interest in leveraging digital technology to enhance access to health information and cancer management.

Table 4. Top 10 institutions with the highest frequency of article publications on Technology-Enabled Health Information Seeking Behavior in Cancer			
Ranking	**Institute**	**Country**	**Total Document**
1	The University of British Columbia	Canada	3
2	National Cancer Institute (NCI)	United States	3
3	University of Calgary	Canada	2
4	Université McGill	Canada	2
5	Guy's Hospital	United Kingdom	2
6	King's College London	United Kingdom	2
7	University Health Network	Canada	2
8	Sichuan University	China	2
9	University of Toronto	Canada	2
10	Simon Fraser University	Canada	2

3.6 Top Contributed Funding Sponsors

Table 5. Shows the ten funding sponsors that contributed most to research publications on technology-enabled health information-seeking behaviour in cancer. The leading

sponsor was the National Cancer Institute (NCI) with the most publications (n=8), followed by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) (n=6). These findings imply an important role for health funding bodies in the United States to promote research on how cancer patients utilise technology to get health information.

In addition, many other financial agencies such as the National Natural Science Foundation of China, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the European Commission also contributed significantly. The sponsors from these countries are participating in this event and it shows that this issue is gaining global attention and is important for developing technology-based healthcare services.

The research in this field is supported not only by government bodies, but also by industries and educational institutions such as Pfizer and Indiana University. This implies that research on technology-assisted health information-seeking behaviour among cancer patients is being conducted in a number of sectors including academia, government and healthcare industry.

Table 5. Top 10 funding sponsor that have the most publications in research related to Technology-Enabled Health Information Seeking Behavior in Cancer

Ranking	Funding sponsor	Country	Total Document
1	National Cancer Institute (NCI)	United States	8
2	National Institutes of Health (NIH)	United States	6
3	National Natural Science Foundation of China	China	4
4	Canadian Institutes of Health Research	Canada	3
5	Pfizer	United States	3
6	European Commission	Belgium	2
7	Indiana University	United States	2
8	Institute of Education Sciences	United States	2
9	Japan Society for the Promotion of Science	Japan	2
10	National Institute for Health Research	United Kingdom	2

3.7 Top Citation Analysis

Table 6. The top ten most cited publications in the Scopus database related to Technology-Enabled HISB in Cancer Research are shown in Table 6. The most cited paper was “The Internet as a Health Information Source: Findings from the 2007 Health Information National Trends Survey and Implications for Health Communication” by Koch-Weser et al. 2010 with 197 citations and an impact score per article of 6.77. The high citation count and impact score indicate that this work has had a great scientific impact on research regarding the use of the internet to get health-related information.

The second most cited paper is Chou et al. 2011 with 157 citations and an impact factor of 3.97. Maddock et al. 2011 (84) from article Internet information needs of cancer patients. Zhang et al. 2023 (e-health literacy of cancer patients) has been cited 77 times and the impact index was 4.58.

Other highly cited studies by Dau et al. 2020; Haase et al. 2020; Jacobs et al. 2018; Kratzke et al. 2013; Mueller et al. 2017 also contributed highly referenced papers on digital technology usage, health information searching and patient decision-making in cancer care respectively. Also, Maddock et al. 2012 found that knowledge of the internet can help cancer patients to make better decisions. In summary, these highly cited publications highlight the increasing importance of internet- and technology-based health information in assisting cancer patients and advancing digital health research.

Table 6. Top 10 Most-Cited Articles in the Scopus Database Related to Technology-Enabled Health Information Seeking Behavior in Cancer

Rangking	Author	Tittle	Source tittle	Cite by	Impact Index Per Article
1	Koch-Weser et al. (2010)	The internet as a health information source: Findings from the 2007 Health Information National Trends Survey and implications for health communication	Journal of health communication	197	6.77
2	Chou et al. (2011)	Health-related Internet use among cancer survivors: Data from the Health Information National Trends Survey, 2003-2008	Journal of Cancer Survivorship	157	3.97
3	Maddock et al. (2011)	Online information needs of cancer patients and their organizations	Ecancermedicalscience	84	0.44
4	Zhang et al. (2023)	Factors influencing the E-health literacy in cancer patients: a systematic review	Journal of Cancer Survivorship	77	4.58
5	Jacobs et al. (2018)	MyPath: Investigating breast cancer patients' use of personalized health information	Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction	46	1.60
6	Kratzke et al. (2013)	Reaching rural women: Breast cancer prevention information seeking behaviors and interest in internet, cell phone, and text use	Journal of community health	38	2.53
7	Maddock et al. (2012)	Online information as a decision-making aid for cancer patients: Recommendations from the Eurocancercoms project	European journal of cancer	23	0.30
8	Dau et al. (2020)	Health information seeking behaviors among individuals with young-onset and average-onset colorectal cancer: an international cross-sectional survey	Supportive Care in Cancer	21	0.90
9	Haase et al. (2020)	The role of Internet cancer information for older adults with cancer: Perspectives of older adults and healthcare professionals	International Journal of Older People Nursing	17	1.34
10	Mueller et al. (2017)	The role of web-based health information in help-seeking behavior prior to a diagnosis of lung cancer: A mixed-methods study	Journal of Medical Internet Research	17	0.65

3.8 **Thematic Clusters Based on Keyword Co-occurrence**

Figure 3. Visualisation of links between keywords in the research on cancer technology-enabled health information seeking behaviour the study revealed four major but interrelated clusters namely, red, green, blue and yellow.

The red cluster is concerned with patient interaction, communication, social support and processing of health information. This shows that cancer patients need not only information but also support and effective communication to comprehend the health information they receive. The green cluster is associated with health information seeking behaviour, patient education and decision making, which reflects the active role of patients in seeking digital information to support their care process.

Also highlighted in the blue cluster are milestones in digital health including telemedicine, mobile health and cancer patient support systems. The findings suggest that using digital technology to increase access to health information and services is growing. The yellow cluster on the other hand, emphasises on the internet use and health information seeking of the cancer patients, suggesting that the internet is the major source of health information for them.

Overall, these inter-cluster connections illustrate that research in this field is interdisciplinary and has progressed from the usage of the internet for information has become increasingly common of digital technologies to support communication, patient engagement and decision-making in cancer treatment.

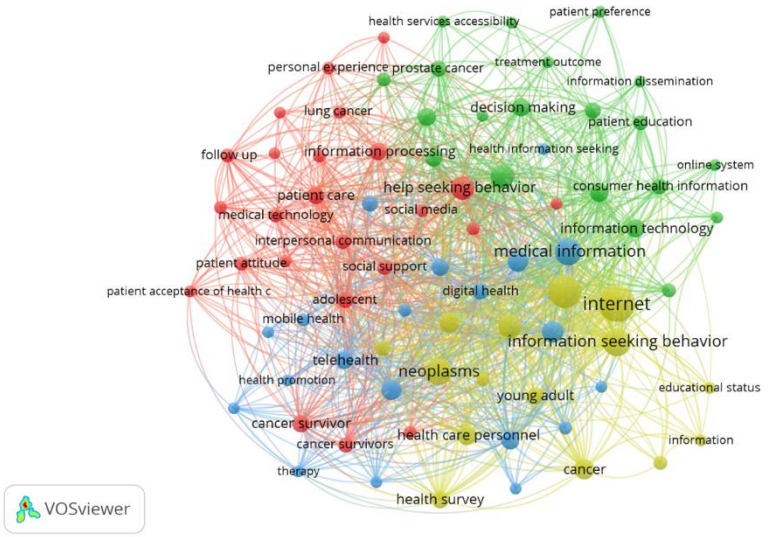


Figure 3. Network Visualization

3.9 **Temporal Evolution of Research Themes**

Figure 4. Illustrates the trend of research on technology-enabled HISB in cancer over time. Blue means study subjects in the early stage, green means developing phase and yellow means current research trends.

In the early period (2017–2018), the research was mainly concentrated on keywords such as "internet", "medical information", and "information-seeking behaviour". Such emphasis reflects that cancer patients were beginning to utilise the internet as a key source of health information source. Then, studies have been extended to such keywords as “health information seeking,” “decision-making,” “patient education” and “information dissemination in 2019–2020. This suggests active involvement of patients in the digital information to understand their health conditions and aid decision-making in cancer care.

In the meantime, research trends since 2021 have shown an increasing identification of keywords such as ‘digital health’, ‘telehealth’, ‘mobile health’, ‘social support’, ‘information processing’ and ‘help-seeking behavior’. This evolution signals a growing trend of technology adoption in cancer care that is becoming more integrated, interactive and patient centric.

Overall, the evolution of these research themes reflects a shift from the internet as a source of health information and the expanding usage of digital technology to facilitate communication, patient engagement, decision-making, and more personalised and sustainable cancer care.

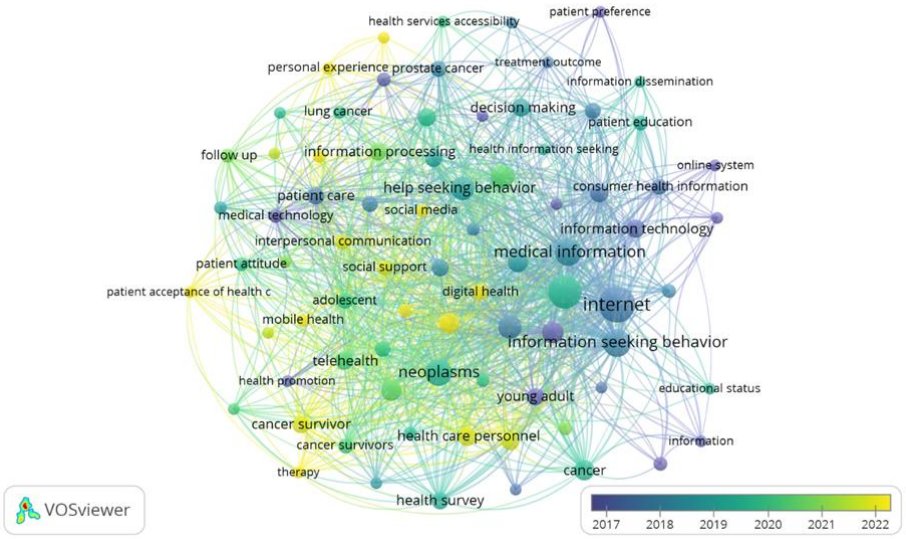


Figure 4. Overlay Visualization

3.10 **Research Density and Emerging Topics**

The most recurrent themes of study are highlighted in bright yellow in the density visualisation in **Figure 5**, those related to the keywords "internet" and "information-seeking behavior". Most of the research seems to be on cancer patients and how people utilise the Internet to get health information. Moreover, the keyword "medical information" has a high density, emphasising the significance of digital health information in assisting patients' understanding and decision-making.

Medium density (green) locations are shown with keywords like "digital health", "telehealth", "mobile health", "social support", and "decision-making". These themes reflect increasing interest in research to use digital technology to improve information availability, patient participation and support in treating cancer. Moreover, the terms "patient care," "information processing," and "help-seeking behavior" emphasise the importance of patients' perceptions and use of health information.

Low density areas (blue to purple) meanwhile contain phrases such as "patient preferences," "information dissemination," "online systems," and "educational status." This means that these issues are not well researched and may be a subject of future study development. Generally, studies in this field show a transition from internet as a source of information to the use of digital technologies more appropriate to the needs of cancer patients.

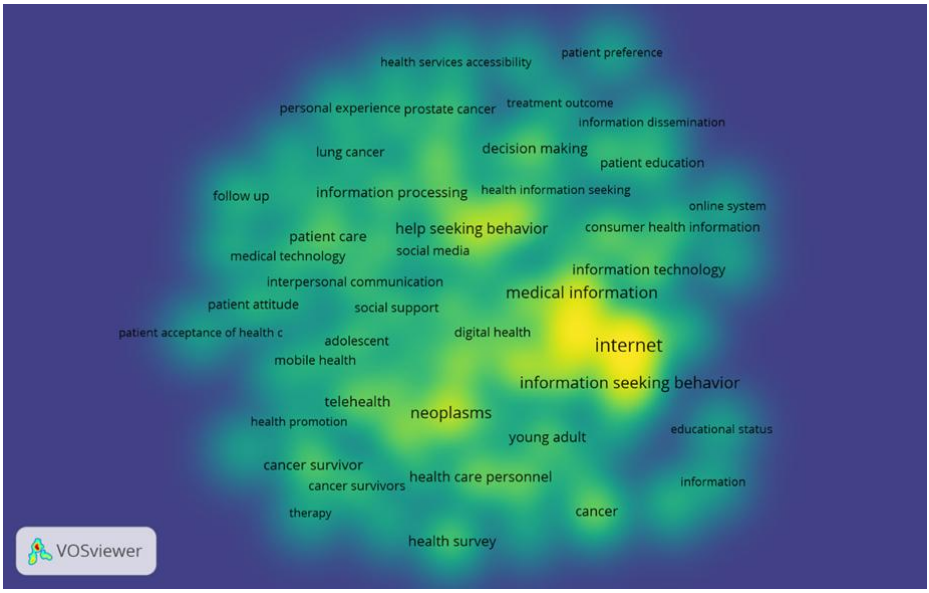


Figure 5. Density Visualization

4 Limitations

This research provides a bibliometric analysis-based evaluation of the literature on the evolution of technology-enabled health information-seeking behaviour in cancer. This approach uses visual analysis to identify trends in research, major contributions and topic development. However, this work has some important limitations, such as the use of a single database (Scopus), which can ignore relevant articles from other databases that are still to be identified. Furthermore, this study includes only publications in the English language, and the results of the bibliometric analysis are strongly influenced by the data provided by the database.

5 Conclusion

The study concludes that research on technology-enabled health information-seeking behaviour in cancer has made tremendous progress and is expanding year after year. Much study has been made done in developed countries, notably the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom and has had major input from leading journals, universities and international health sponsors. The analysis of co-occurring terms shows that the research focus has moved from the internet as a source of health information to more patient-centred applications of digital health, telemedicine and mobile health. In addition, recent research is focusing more on topics such as social

support, patient engagement, and decision-making. In conclusion, these findings suggest that digital technology is an important facilitator of access to more personalised, interactive and sustainable health information, communication and cancer care.

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