

Patients increasingly seeking information online

A study conducted on behalf of Swisscom has found that increasing numbers of patients check their diagnoses online and ask their doctor about the information they discover on the Internet. The survey also found that people recognise the benefits of electronic records for consulting their own health data, with older generations rating this ability as particularly important.

Swisscom commissioned a representative survey on the use of the Internet and social media platforms for health purposes. The study showed that the Internet and social networks are increasingly influencing patients' choices of treatment, drug usage and health-insurance models. For example, 84 percent of all respondents said that they had researched health-related information on the Internet at least once. Information is most commonly sought on symptoms, diseases and treatment options. Digital communities on health portals and discussion forums are particularly significant for those seeking information.

People of all ages are using the Internet as a source of information, although different age groups use the Internet differently. Those between the age of 16 and 30 primarily look up information on Wikipedia. The study found that younger people are more critical about the information they find, suggesting that "digital natives", as they have been dubbed, are better able to evaluate sources on the Web. Older people tend to put more faith in personal conversations with a doctor and mostly seek information online only after seeing a physician.

Researched information and first-hand accounts directly affect patient behaviour. More than a third of respondents say that this has already led to them making or cancelling a doctor's appointment or changing their drug intake – even though the source of their information may not necessarily have been medically well-founded. More than half of all respondents talk to their doctor about the information they have found on the Web. This behaviour, therefore, also provides the healthcare system with an opportunity. After all, a strong presence on the Internet and in social media can provide patients with qualified information.



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Press release

Patients want greater autonomy in managing their own health data

The survey also looked into Swiss attitudes towards electronic storage of their health data. Two-thirds of respondents said they would welcome an opportunity to take medical findings, x-ray pictures and blood-pressure readings with them when seeing other medical personnel. Indeed 70% of respondents said they would like to be able to view their own health data online via a secure connection. The study also found that interest in digital storage of personal medical records increases significantly with age.

For further information, please visit:

Swisscom in the healthcare market: <http://www.swisscom.ch/en/connected-health.html>

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