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Half of Belgian internet users checks doctor's diagnosis on the web

Half of the Belgian surfers check their doctor's diagnosis on the web. Medical information is one of the most requested types of information on the web. The most popular websites are those dealing with specific symptoms and medical portal sites. 10% ask their doctor for a specific drug based on information they have gathered on the internet. Half of the doctors respond to such requests. All this is shown in a European survey executed by InSites Consulting.

50% of Belgian internet users check doctor's diagnosis on the web

50% of Belgian internet users check their doctor's diagnosis on the web. This trend is apparent in all age groups and is even slightly more pronounced for over-55s. 20% of Belgians look for additional information about a prescribed medicine. 17% of Belgians look up information even before they go to the doctor to make a diagnosis themselves.

73% of Belgian internet users look for medical information on the web

Medical information is one of the most requested types of information on the internet. Almost three quarters of Belgian surfers roam the internet to find in-depth medical information. Websites on specific symptoms and medical portal sites are consulted most. 12% of online Belgians also look for information on patient blogs and 13% read information on online patient communities.

Despite people's active investigative behaviour, they do remain fairly critical about the information found. Only 40% of Belgians trust the information found. People have least faith in information they found on the websites of pharmaceutical companies. Only 19% of Belgians trust information given on the pharmaceutical companies' own sites.

10% of Belgian internet users request specific medicines

One in ten patients has at one time requested a specific medicine to a doctor based on information they found on the internet. According to the InSites Consulting survey, half of the doctors respond to such patient requests. "Experience has taught us that this 10% is very variable. For some types of medicine, the patient's influence is as high as 30%, whereas for other conditions patients rely completely on the doctor's view. However, it is clear that the times of the naive patient and the all-knowing doctor are over for good," says Magali Geens, Director Pharmaceutical Research at InSites Consulting.

These research data resulted from a survey set up by the Knowledge Center Health Care at InSites Consulting. This survey was carried out at the beginning of this year in 7 European countries. The used method was an online survey. The survey aims to convey trends in the healthcare and pharmaceutical sector. It was carried out in Belgium, The Netherlands, France, Germany, the UK, Spain and Italy. In each country, a total of 300 respondents participated in the survey. The results represent the online population in each country with respect to sex and age (15+).

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