
IMPACT OF MEDICAL INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET ON THE BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS, STUDYING AT THE MEDICAL COLLEGE – CITY OF PLOVDIV

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Abstract: The search for health and medical information online ranks third among Internet activities.

The aim of this study is to establish the attitude and readiness of students from the Medical College at the Medical University in the city of Plovdiv, majoring in various medical specialties, to use the Internet as a source of specialized medical information

Keywords: medical information, Internet activities, students

INTRODUCTION

The search for health and medical information online ranks third among Internet activities. According to a US study conducted in 2013, the average American visits the doctor three times a year but spends 52 hours a year on the Internet searching for health information. These studies demonstrate something very important, namely that the Internet is creating a new generation of patients.

According to data on the Internet, about 174 million Google users have searched for some kind of health information on the web in the last year. Of these, direct users of health information were about half a million people, and about 140,000 virtual space users have already become "addicted" E-patients. The E-patient term encompasses both people who seek online information about their own illnesses and people who self-educate themselves on other health topics they choose.

Although there is no statistical data on what percentage of Bulgarian Internet users read online health information, the fact that we have well-established health information exchange sites and many publications on health topics on the Internet shows the presence of such interest and activity in Bulgaria.

The aim of this study is to establish the attitude and readiness of students from the Medical College at the Medical University in the city of Plovdiv, majoring in various medical specialties, to use the Internet as a source of specialized medical information.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

the study included 73 students, majoring in various courses of the specialties: Public Health Inspector (PHI), Nutrition and Food Safety Instructor (NFSI), Physical Therapist (PT), Medical Laboratory Technicians (MLT) and Assistant Pharmacists (AP). Women are predominant among surveyed persons because of the prevailing feminization in medical specialties.

We developed our own questionnaire for the purpose of the study. We conducted an anonymous survey in September-October of this year, with subsequent debates on the subject. The results obtained were processed using mathematical and tabular methods.

For the analysis of the study we used the following methods: reading of available scientific periodicals, statistical and documentary method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 shows study participants.

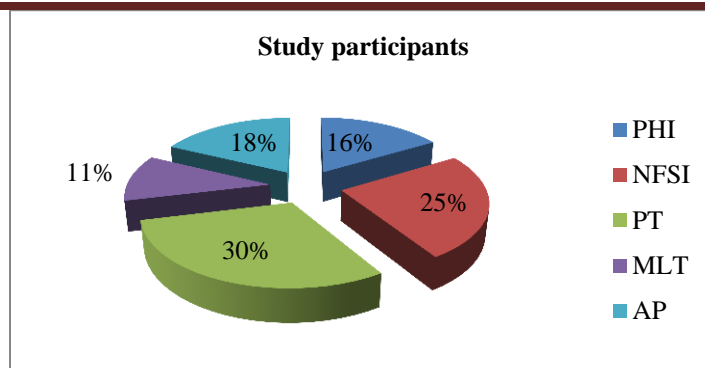


Fig.1

Of these, 62 respondents (84.9%) use the Internet as a source of specialized medical information, but only 17.7% of them believe unreservedly in this information. The rest of respondents prefer to obtain information from existing academic and scientific medical literature.

We were concerned by the fact that 45.4% do not question the information they read on the Internet.

We asked the respondents: Would they pay for access to paid scientific sites? Responses were distributed, as follows:

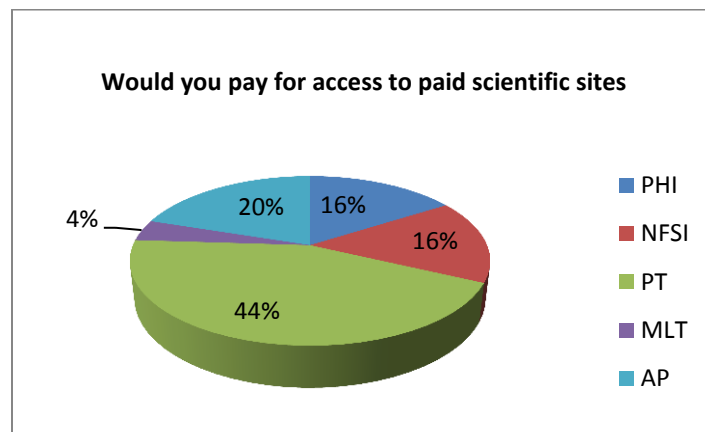


Fig. 2

CONCLUSIONS

The relative share of young people using the Internet as a source of specialized medical information is high; Only 16.4% of people surveyed would have trusted the information on social networks regarding the issue, and 80.9% would consult a medical professional by direct contact and a visit;

20.4% resort to self-treatment as a result of information read on the Internet and social networks.

The sole use of Internet sources for therapeutic purposes has difficulties and risks. Young people are not always aware of the risk they take, by dealing with their own health problems by themselves. Given the possible contradictions in the sources, the use of the Internet for health information is far from secure. In many cases, it is important to discuss these differences with a physician.