



Press Release

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Internet is changing Hong Kong doctors' behavior in diagnosing medical problems

Online information is changing the healthcare practice in Hong-Kong and will play a bigger role in the doctor-patient relationship.

- **Physicians integrate online resources in their professional practice, including diagnosis and treatment**
- **E-channels with pharmaceutical companies are not yet used frequently among physicians**
- **Patients have high degree of trust in physicians' diagnosis as they never or seldom go online to verify doctor's consultation**
- **Hong-Kong physicians agree that easier access to online medical information has a positive impact on the overall doctor-patient relationship**

Hong Kong, January 15, 2013: According to a survey by Ipsos Healthcare and Ruder Finn Asia Health & Wellness released today, 75 per cent of doctors in Hong Kong use the internet to check health information and medications, to stay current on industry news, and to connect with their peers. And 86 per cent of physicians think online tools help to improve their diagnosis or treatment practice. At the same time, 60 per cent of doctors surveyed said they had changed a diagnosis based on information accessed online.

The survey was conducted online in the last quarter of 2012 and drew more than 100 responses in Honk-Kong, more than 150 in Taiwan and 300 in Mainland China.

It also examined how consumers search for medical information and the role of

pharmaceutical companies in providing advice on digital and social media channels.

The main findings of the survey for Hong-Kong included:

- 75% of doctors browse the internet several times a day at work
- 88% of doctors look online for health information when at home
- 86% of doctors agree online resources for diagnosis and treatment have a positive impact on the quality of healthcare
- 60% of doctors have changed a diagnosis after checking online. This is especially prevalent among doctors aged 45 and under
- Those over 45 tend to get their information from professional journals and conferences

These results are showing Hong-Kong doctors as very net savvy, especially compared to doctors in Mainland China, where only 30% of physicians will browse the internet several times a day at work or at home.

Ms Carmen Li, Director of Ipsos Healthcare Hong Kong, said: “The internet is an important part of all our daily lives. It is changing the behaviours of all people, including professionals, and it is clear from the responses we received that the internet is having a major impact on the relationship between doctors and their patients. It enables them to work more efficiently and provides them with more accurate and up to date information.”

Ms Mai Tran, Executive Vice President, Health & Wellness, Ruder Finn Asia, said: “While doctors are showing an increasing reliance on the internet to supplement their professional training, consumers are not so readily accepting of the information. While there is widespread acceptance of the usefulness of medical information that can be found on the internet, the bulk of people prefer a physician’s diagnosis.”

Results show that two-thirds of the Hong Kong physicians agree that easier access to online medical information has a positive impact on overall doctor-patient relationship, while patients remain very respectful of a doctor’s decision, as supported by following findings:

- Only 48% of people go online for media information, indicating they may be skeptical about it
- People in Hong Kong are conservative about self-diagnosis using online information with only 42% saying they do so
- At the same time, 35% agree that looking up medical information before a doctor’s visit is helpful and makes them better informed
- While there is high usage of social media channels in Hong Kong, only 10% of respondents would use this platform for disease diagnosis or treatment plan discussion.

The survey also looked at the relationship between doctors and pharmaceutical companies. Two-thirds of those surveyed said they would increase the usage of E-channels to communicate with pharmaceutical companies in the future. But they also said that they prefer personal contact.

E-channels such as drug websites and company websites have top of mind recall among doctors aged 46 and over who are practicing in clinics, while smartphone medical apps have higher awareness among those under 46.

Overall, pharmaceutical companies need to develop and leverage on useful digital channels to physician to provide access to information, save time and cost but also to support physicians to help their patients.

The complete survey is covering Hong-Kong Taiwan and China and is available for sale from IPSOS Healthcare and Ruder Finn.

About Ipsos Healthcare: Ipsos Healthcare is a global business focusing on research in the pharmaceutical, bio-tech, and medical device markets. It is also the leading provider of global syndicated prescribing data and analysis in more than 20 disease areas. Operating in over 40 countries, the team of 600 healthcare market research experts, marketers and client-side brand-builders focus on delivering outcome-oriented research for its' clients. Drawing from a broad range of qualitative and quantitative techniques, Ipsos Healthcare offers custom and syndicated research programs to evaluate motivations, experiences, interactions and influences of stakeholders forming the multi-customer markets which increasingly drive business success in the healthcare industry. For more information, please visit www.ipsoshk.com

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