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Online Medical Information How much is it trusted by consumers?

Asia Pacific – With the proliferation of information on medicine and healthcare on the internet, Ipsos conducted a study to understand what behaviour is exhibited by consumers in Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand and Japan, when it comes to accessing online medical information.

The latest study conducted by Ipsos APAC and Toluna among those aged 18 to 50 years old in these 4 Asian markets, found that nearly 9 in 10 search for medical information online to help themselves diagnose or treat an illness. This is much more pronounced in Thailand (94%) and less in Japan (85%).

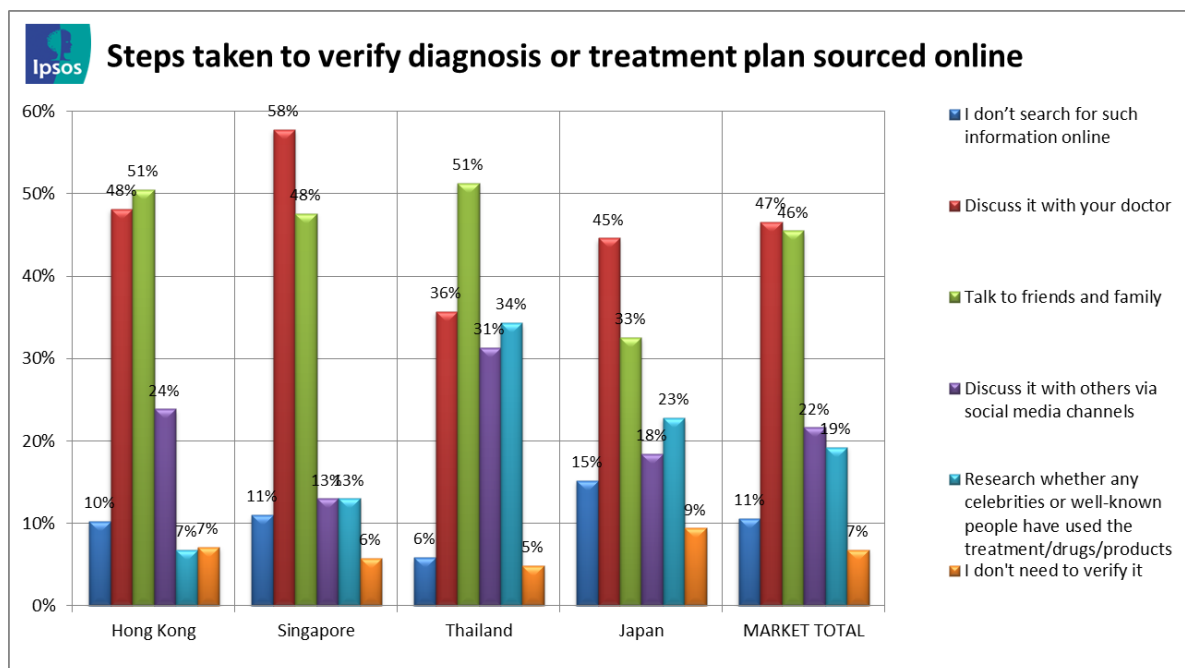


Chart 1: When you find information online to help you diagnose or treat an illness, which of the following steps do you typically take to verify your diagnosis or treatment plan?

The study further found that people in APAC seem to place almost equal importance on hearing out both their doctor and friends or family with 47% verifying diagnosis found online with their doctor and 46% doing so with their family and friends. Another 22% say they would discuss the medical information that they have found online, with others via social media. A good 7% feel that they don't need to verify the information at all.

Amit Kumar Ghosh, Associate Research Director of Ipsos Healthcare Thailand comments: *"In general, people are more health conscious today than they were before. Consumers are bombarded everyday with numerous options of OTC [Over-the-Counter] healthcare products, health food items and drinks. In addition, there is so much buzz on social media and television about health products that Thai consumers are increasingly curious about health related issues. The increase in ownership of smart devices also makes information a lot more readily accessible today."*

Market Highlights:

- In Thailand, more than 1/3 (34%) go on to research whether any celebrities or well-known people have used the treatment/drugs/products. Interestingly, only nearly the same percentage (36%) of Thais feel compelled to discuss it with their doctors.
- Singaporeans are most likely to discuss the information found with their doctors, with 58% most likely to do so as compared to rest of the markets surveyed.
- 16% of Hong Kongers aged 40 – 50 years old state that they do not need to verify the information found online.
- All markets consistently show that women are more likely than men to talk to their friends and family to verify the diagnosis. (48% women vs 40% men). This is particularly distinct in Japan with only 25% of men willing to discuss it with friends and family, whereas 40% of the women do.

When asked if they had ever misdiagnosed themselves based on what they've found on the internet, 13% of APAC stated that it frequently or always happens. Among the 4 markets surveyed, more Thais (20%) tend to misdiagnose themselves than the other markets. Between the genders, more Hong Kong men (19%) have misdiagnosed themselves than the women (10%).

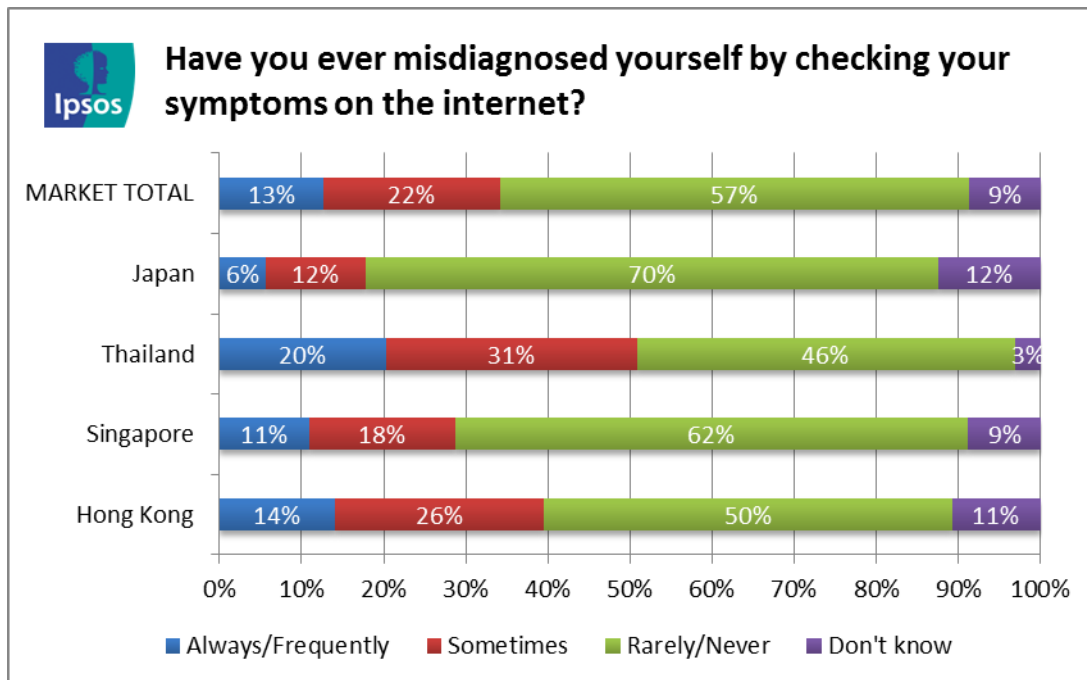


Chart 2: Have you ever misdiagnosed yourself by checking your symptoms in the internet (ie, you only learn about your true disease after doctor consultation)?

The study went on to see if consumers would further confirm or verify a doctor's diagnosis even after a doctor's consultation. While there is a strong trust in the doctor's recommendation, 28% of APAC still frequently or always go online after a professional diagnosis is given. This is more strongly observed in Thailand at 36%, and much less in Japan with only 17% who verify it further with online sources.

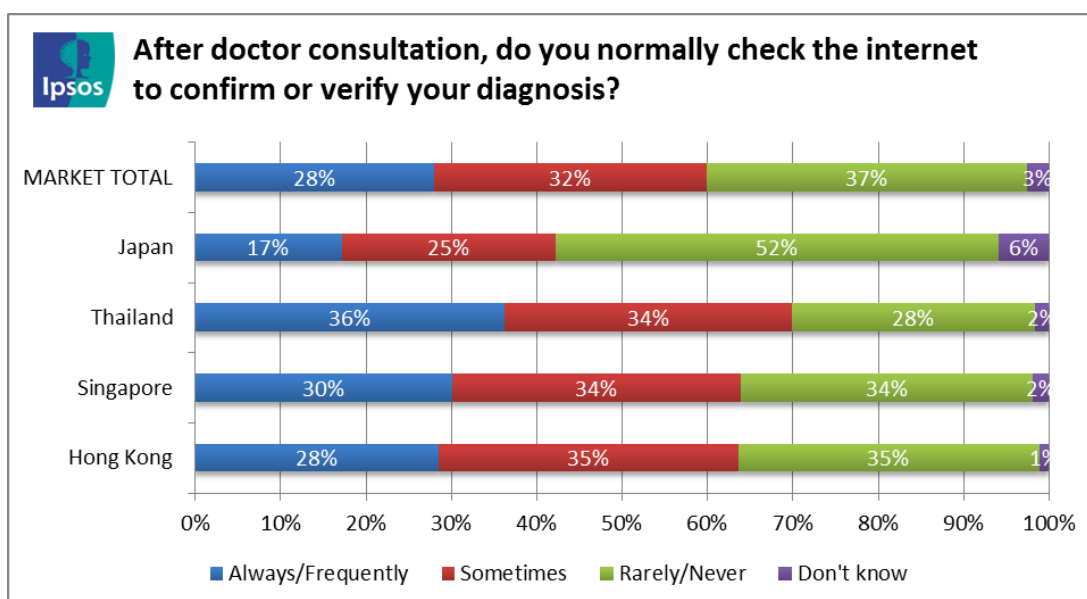


Chart 3: After doctor consultation, do you normally check the internet to confirm or verify your diagnosis of your disease, prescribed drugs and dosage and other treatment types?



Joseph Chua, Director of Ipsos Healthcare Singapore comments: *"Social media has always been a challenge for pharmaceutical companies to engage in, especially with the constraints of adverse events reporting protocol. However, it may be something that the healthcare industry cannot avoid any more as a third of the consumers sought confirmation or verification online. This is seen even in Singapore where people tend to have a high level of trust towards the healthcare authority and doctors in general."*

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About the Study

The figures shown are findings from a study conducted by Ipsos Asia Pacific via an online survey provided by Toluna, among a total of 1,500 respondents across Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan and Thailand, aged 18 – 50 years old. The fieldwork was conducted in March 2014.

About Ipsos www.ipsosasiapacific.com

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With offices in 86 countries, Ipsos has the resources to conduct research wherever in the world our clients do business. Working both on a global scale and in local markets, our expert teams give our clients the benefit of high value-added business solutions including qualitative, forecasting, modeling, market knowledge and consumer insights.

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With 17 offices in Europe, North America and Asia Pacific, Toluna works with many of the world's leading market research agencies, media agencies and corporations.