

MEDICAL CROWDSOURCING

WHAT ARE PHYSICIANS COMMUNICATING DURING COVID-19?

Qualitative analysis of G-MED's Global
Physician Online Community

Period: April 12th – May 17th 2020

Wave 4

27th May 2020

This is a complimentary report

Bringing you a regular pulse on what physicians around the globe are discussing about COVID-19



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Welcome to wave 4 of our report, focussed on physician needs.

About this report:

During a global crisis – and in unpredictable times – data is more important than ever. As part of our commitment to the healthcare industry, Ipsos and G-MED are working together to bring the voice of physicians from around the world to you through social data analytics and medical crowdsourcing (problem solving through sharing online).

The data analysed for this short report comes from organic, unprompted and authentic posts from physicians across the globe. Doctors are using closed communities to share case examples, get advice and share experiences.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE:

This research is based on qualitative analysis of a select number of posts from a closed healthcare professional forum. The findings do not represent the experiences of all physicians, nor represent any market-level findings.

Methodology

Qualitative analysis on a collection of physician posts, accessed from G-MED's Global Physician Forum*

Selected posts concentrate on COVID-19 only. They are all unmoderated exchanges with no external probing, with questions posted by physicians themselves to generate content. Physician also answer polls posted by G-MED/Ipsos.

2,456 total posts for this analysis between 24th March – 15th May 2020 of which 574 posts analysed for this report.

Physicians from the following countries contributed to the posts:

Brazil, US, France, Greece, Colombia, Spain, Poland, Mexico, Italy, Germany, Ukraine, Austria, Argentina, France, Switzerland, Belgium, Israel, Vietnam, Portugal, Jordan, Turkey, Romania, Canada, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Chile, Ecuador, Czech Republic, Russia, Netherlands, Sweden, UK, Peru, Panama, Tunisia, Denmark, Philippines, Algeria, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Lebanon, Honduras, Guatemala, Monaco, South Korea, El Salvador, Lithuania, Kuwait, Egypt, Bahrain, Hungary



*G-MED medical crowdsourcing platform with verified physicians from all over the world. Physicians “opt in” to participate on this forum.

Just like everyone else, physicians are having to deal with a range of emotions whilst continuing with their day jobs

INFORMATION OVERLOAD

Physicians receive an abundance of information, which is at times, conflicting. This leads to confusion over which sources are the most trustworthy. Some physicians fear this will lead to them burning out.



Media is spreading a bad influence on people. Our human minds weren't made for an avalanche of information.

Physician, Brazil



The most frustrating thing is the non-scientific opinion given everywhere and from anyone.

Physician, Switzerland

FEAR AND INSECURITY

Physicians don't feel secure at work, due to insufficient resources, such as PPE. They have seen what can happen in a worst-case scenario, with some feeling they are putting their lives on the line and their families at risk, which could arguably have the most long-term impact on their mental health.



The scenario of what would happen if I die is frightening. I feel angry when the employers claim we are protected and we are not.

Physician, UK



It is hard due to a lack of PPE and test. I fear that people in the front line will die fighting this pandemic

Physician, Sweden

Reduced patient contact, information overload and fear are taking their toll on physicians

Physicians on the G-MED forum are sharing emotive posts, which reflect that...



Physicians are feeling overwhelmed by the quantity of information



There are concerns about reduced face-to-face patient communication



Unsafe conditions mean that physicians go to work feeling fearful

Care available to chronic patients may be compromised; reduced appointments = fewer reviews of treatment / diagnosis

Vulnerable groups
shielding / self-
quarantining
(where possible)



Appointment /
treatment delays,
postponement due
to patient
reluctance or
hospital protocols



Other mental
health issues
triggered by
isolation

*“you have to put the most
vulnerable in quarantine.
However, the most
vulnerable are exactly those
who need care? Especially in
our aging society, a lot of task
shifting is ongoing to home
care, family care, etc. So
virtually impossible”*

Physician, Belgium

**Prescription supply
issues**
(Medication being
used to treat COVID-19
sometimes causes to
supply issues)

*“Non covid 19 patients are
afraid to come to the hospital
and contract covid 19. Non
covid 19 cardiovascular or
cancer patients are the one
who are affected the most
by this pandemic and I see
their mortality rising.”*

Physician, Lebanon

**Subsequent
anxiety of the
unknown
consequence of
treatment delay**

*“It is a particularly difficult
period for our patients and
ourselves because the impact
of the confinement is
stressing and depressing...I
have already had to address
three psychotic episodes
related to the confinement.”*

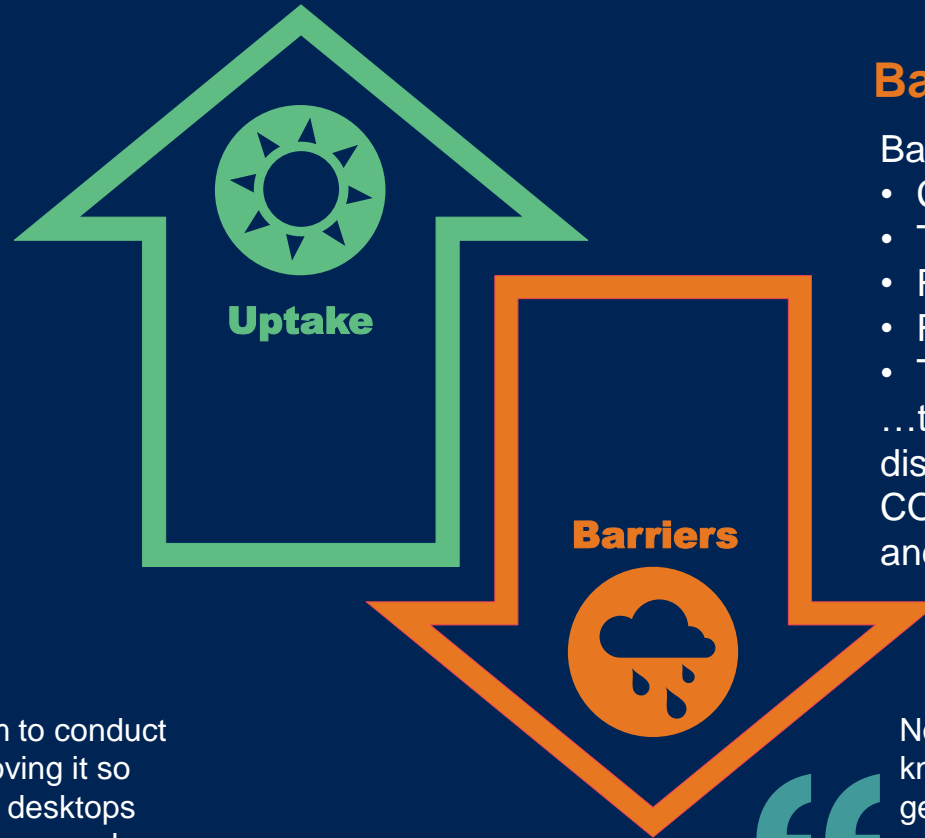
Physician, France

COVID has necessitated the shift to telehealth, quickly reducing previous barriers

Uptake has increased

Physicians on the G-MED community are using telehealth to remotely monitor patients with existing chronic conditions, those under new treatment and to monitor COVID-19 patients.

Physicians on the community do not feel this shift toward virtual is just a temporary one, with 76%* saying they believe they will do more virtual visits in the future, post pandemic.



Barriers have decreased

Barriers, such as

- Cost
- Time
- Reimbursement
- Resource availability
- Technology infrastructure

...that existed prior to the pandemic have dissipated, as multiple countries have declared COVID-19 to be a national state of emergency and opened up new ways of working.

“ We are now using a third-party platform to conduct our telehealth visits. Our patients are loving it so far. We have installed webcams on our desktops for the providers and are realizing that we need noise cancelling headphones and microphones.

Physician, USA

“ Now I urge people to use common sense and to know the limitations of this tool. But at the same time getting a little of reimbursement for our work that we normally do it for free on the phone it is not a bad idea, I hope that all payers will pay attention to this”

Physician, USA

Telehealth experiences vary on the forum and pose a variety of challenges



Feeling ill-equipped

Across the globe, physicians have mixed experiences with some feeling ill-equipped, due to preconceptions of telehealth, lack of experience and training (or tools) at their disposal



Patient barriers

Physicians perceive patients have their own uncertainties around telehealth, having not had much experience and/or easy access to equipment that allows for remote monitoring at home



Technology platform barriers

There is vast difference between the solutions physicians on the G-Med community have access to. Some are supported by third-party specialist platforms, designed for virtual health offerings, whilst others cope with less suitable (and less secure) ad-hoc alternatives

Helping physicians deal with the burden of COVID-19 impact

It is clear that for many physicians who are coping with (and adapting to) the “new normal,” there are unmet needs that companies could help address during this difficult time.

Challenges identified among physicians posting on the G-MED forum:



Quickly adapting to new standards of care, including adjusting to telehealth platforms



Reduced contact with patients, especially those in at risk groups, and worrying about potential long-term impacts this may have on treatment reviews, diagnosis etc.



A lack of support systems to help with their emotional health and stress, including information overload

THANK YOU.

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About

Ipsos

Ipsos' Healthcare team partners with pharmaceutical, bio-tech and medical device manufacturers to inspire better healthcare. Operating in over 50 countries, our 1000+ experts support key business decisions for our clients throughout the commercial lifecycle, from early-stage strategy, to launch, to performance optimisation.

We do this through a uniquely integrated combination of therapeutic and market expertise, gold standard real world evidence, and market-leading custom research approaches – all underpinned by a global footprint and unprecedented access to today's healthcare stakeholders.

G-MED

G-MED is the largest global physicians only community, reaching over 1 million verified physicians from more than 120 countries and 100 specialties. G-MED medical crowdsourcing platform enables physicians from all over the world to talk real-world medicine, collaborate together to solve patient cases, and earn honorarium from surveys and market research.

G-MED's business solutions offer a unique digital bridge to connect life science companies and healthcare partners in order to drive physician awareness and gain deep insights about brand perceptions.