DOI: 10.21088/cphn.2455.8621.11126.8

Community and Public Health Nursing
Volume 11 Number 1 January - April 2026

Letter to Editor

The Internet Effect on Self-Prescription Practices: Highlighting the Challenges of Case Management: A Letter to the Editor

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How to cite this article:

Sneha Pawar, Rita Sangtani. The Internet Effect on Self-Prescription Practices: Highlighting the Challenges of Case Management: A Letter to the Editor. Community Pub Health Nurs. 2026; 11(1): 51-52.

ABSTRACT

In an effort to take a more active role in managing their own health in collaboration with the doctors, patients have started looking for and using Internet health information more lately. The relationships between patients and the doctors are impacted by this tendency in both positive and bad ways. Thus, it's critical to comprehend how patients' adherence to treatment plans and the patient-physician relationship are affected by the growing use of Internet health information.

Objective: The study employs a theoretical model based on principal-agent theory and the information asymmetry perspective to investigate how patients' use of Internet health information influences many facets of their relationships with their physicians.

KEYWORDS

• Collaboration • Internet health information • Patient compliance • Patient-physician concordance • physician quality

INTRODUCTION

Overall, this study found that doctors can relax about their concerns regarding patients using the Internet for health information because, when compared to the influence that Internet health information quality has on these same variables, physician quality has the greatest impact on patients and their physician agreeing on their medical situation and recommended treatment regimen as well as patient compliance with their physician's advice. The results also show that perceived information gaps between

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➢ **Received:** 08-10-2025 ➢ **Accepted:** 15-12-2025

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the patient and the doctor that is, the doctor having more knowledge than the patient have little bearing on compliance compared to the patient and doctor's agreement regarding the medical condition and course of treatment. Furthermore, the degree of consensus between a patient and their doctor about their medical condition is determined by how well they trust their doctor rather than how well they believe the health information they obtain online. The results of this study indicate that the perceived information gap between a patient and their physician is significantly correlated only with the physician's perceived quality; the perceived information gap is not correlated with the quality of health information accessible on the Internet.[2,3]

Patient use of the Internet in searching for and gathering health information is growing and has now become somewhat common place. According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, millions of people look for Internet health information every day, and 80% of American Internet users have done so at some point[4] However, relationships between patients and physicians can become strained as the use of the Internet for health-related information increases.[1,5-7] This strained relationship brought on by Internet health information may have an impact on patient compliance and physician-patient concordance. Drawing from the previous discourse, it is imperative to ascertain the precise effects of patients' growing use of online health resources on the doctor-patient relationship and patients' adherence to treatment plans via rigorous theoretical and empirical research.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the study concludes that doctors can relax about their concerns about patients using the Internet for health information because, when compared to the influence that Internet health information quality has on these same variables, physician quality has the greatest impact on patients and their physician agreeing on their medical situation and recommended treatment regimen as well as patient compliance with their physician's advice. The results also show that perceived information gaps between the patient and the doctor that is, the doctor having more knowledge than the patient have little bearing on compliance compared to the patient and doctor's agreement regarding the medical condition and course of treatment, also the degree of consensus between a patient and their doctor about their medical condition depends on how well they believe their doctor to be than how well they believe the health information they find online. Thus results showcase that the perceived information gap between a patient and their physician is significantly correlated only with the physician's perceived quality.

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