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Role of Internet in Healthcare

By Dr. Adnan Ahmed Qureshi

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Health information and medical advice on the Net have set a new trend of self-help and online support and supplements the traditional direct healthcare available from physicians and hospitals.

The last time you were ill and went to your family doctor, did you get a patient hearing? Maybe you did, maybe you didn't. But chances are you were left totally in the dark regarding the nature of the pills and mixtures stuffed down your throat. And what of your illness? Were you in any way enlightened as to its cause, the prognosis or even the diagnosis. Not likely. Most doctors, while their intentions may be good, are so overworked that they have hardly a minute to spare to deal with you on human level.

Consequently if you enter the Internet, millions of people are turning to the tens of thousands of health related web sites on the Net for information, advise, support and more. It's a great feeling to be able to keep yourself informed on the myriad medical problems you may face in the life – in some cases, patients are quite happy to help themselves rather than run to the doctor at first sniffle. With better-informed patients, doctors can make better diagnosis of illness and the doctor-patient relationship could then be on more equal terms.

What role does the Internet play in health today? First, it's a medium by which health education can be easily disseminated. Whether you want to learn how your heart works, how to prevent heart attacks, how to recognize the onset of a heart attack, what first aid to administer to a heart attack victim, or how to cope with life after a heart attack, you'll find it all on the Internet. Through the multimedia wonders of the web, the heart and its beat can be experienced in all its glory.

An area in which the web is gaining credence is online medical advice. And in many cases, the advice is of extremely high quality, as it is being provided by established experts rather than amateur agony aunts that pop up from time to time in newspaper classifieds. On the World Wide Web what you do is read the already answered questions in a medical forum or submit a question or two of your own by e-mail and then wait for the designated expert at the web site to respond.

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The Internet has long ago proved that it is an excellent medium for counseling – the anonymous face it provides to a troubled soul, through its chat forums and Usenet newsgroups, fabricates a therapeutic cocoon that even a qualified psychiatrist would be hard-pressed to duplicate.

Another fallout from medicine on the web has been the attention that non-conventional medical approaches have been getting – homeopathy, ayurveda, acupuncture, aroma-therapy, and a whole lot of alternative healing methods have been able to put forth their case to an eager new generation of Net surfers who are discerning and intelligent enough to understand that there may indeed be more than one way to skin a cat.

For physicians and healthcare professionals the Net is quite a boom. They can get up to speed on the latest research with a minimum of fuss, interact with their peers around the world and generally ensure that they're providing the best service and care to their patients. Doctors are already using the Internet

as a means of interacting more frequently with their patients – doctors use e-mail and their web sites to schedule appointments; patients who need to monitor themselves daily (such as diabetes or hypertension) can now upload results to their doctor's web site for treatment advice.

Yes, the Internet is changing the doctor-patient relationship and the way medical care is given; increasing the layman's knowledge of health and diseases; and, making us all more aware of how our bodies work and how to take care of them. But let's not get carried away. There is too a downside to the epidemic of online medicine that's sweeping through the web. When browsing through medical information, never make the mistake of taking what you read as gospel – least of all in unmoderated chat forums.

Guidelines for proper medical advice

1. Just because a doctor puts up a photograph and resume on the web page, don't conclude that he's a reputed physician.
2. Connect only to recognizably reputed sites. Reasonably safe sites include reputed hospitals, well-known medical colleges, respected medical journals, top news agencies, and national associations of medical practitioners or healthcare professionals.
3. Medical sites which have been reviewed and recommended by well-known medical associations are likely to be safer.
4. Always corroborate information and advice through more than one source.
5. Be wary of sites that ask you to purchase a proprietary medicine or some strange medication.
6. Sites offering psychiatric advice after payment of a one-time fee are often fraudulent and rip-off.
7. Advice from fellow-sufferers, especially if they recommended medication/dosage has to be treated with extreme caution. Always double-check with your family doctor before implementing advice you

receive on the Net.

8. Don't take seriously any web site which ridicules traditional medicine and offers unique miracle cure with promises of eternal life. Listen to them and you may well land up at heaven's angel.

In the final analysis, you cannot expect to use the web as a replacement for your doctor, who is after all a trained professional who understands you and your needs far better than some CyberDoc in Cyberspace who would perhaps not even be legally liable if his negligence or advice were to kill you.

Dr. Adnan Ahmed Qureshi holds a Ph.D. in IT with specialization in the induction of information technology in developing countries. He is the former Editor of Datalog, Computech, ISAsia and columnist for The News International. At present he is working as Senior Industry Analyst and IT Consultant.

Why to register md–domains

By Hans Peter Oswald

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What is .md?

.md is the web address that identifies you, your company or your organization with the healthcare industry. Thousands of professionals and companies in the healthcare industry are already utilizing .md for their branding and marketing efforts, including some of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies. .md is a valuable and unique asset that can be used as an intuitive and dynamic communication tool.

.md is the perfect web address for medical professionals and healthcare companies

.md is a permanent professional address

.md is a dynamic communication tool and distribution channel for participants in the healthcare community

.md may be used to protect your brands and trademarks to prevent international cyber–squatters from purchasing your domain names and using them for other purposes

.md may be used as a unique, intuitive, and available promotional tool to market prescription and OTC drugs

.md Focus: Healthcare

We are developing an Internet domain for the global healthcare community where participants in the healthcare sector can acquire valuable .md domain names that correlate precisely with the marketing of their core business practices and new products. .md permits corporations and individuals to establish a unique Internet presence that carries an automatic, intuitive association with healthcare and other medical services and applications.

Growth of the .md Registry

Since becoming operational, there has been significant interest in the .md TLD. The wide adoption of

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.md, prior to launching a formal .md marketing campaign confirms the need and desire for a top level healthcare centric domain. The number of .md registrations continues to grow exponentially with this exposure.

The leading adopters in the .md registry are:

- Physicians
- Medical Schools
- Private Practices
- Health Clinics
- Drug Development Companies
- Pharmaceutical Companies
- Health Insurance Companies
- Medical Laboratories

Additionally, Fortune 1000 companies have adopted .md as part of their global brand marketing strategy. These include companies from the following industries:

- Telecom
- Banking and Finance
- Entertainment
- Media
- Consulting
- Automotive
- Travel
- Insurance
- Retail
- Technology

Hans Peter Oswald

<https://www.domainregistry.de/md-domain.html>

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