

# Elsevier survey highlights challenges faced by physicians in finding trusted clinical search engines

September 3, 2015

*Majority of doctors in APAC use consumer search engines to answer clinical questions*

Nine out of 10 physicians in Asia-Pacific use some form of online search to aid clinical decision-making, with Google being the most popular and frequently used non-evidence based search engine. Yet searching for the "most trusted" and "most updated content" emerged as a priority for majority of those surveyed, highlighting a gap between what physicians are really looking for and the information sources they use to search, a survey amongst 210 Asia Pacific healthcare professionals reveals.

The survey - *Clinical Search - An understanding of healthcare professionals' attitudes, needs and challenges* - conducted by Global Growth Markets (GGM) and commissioned by Elsevier, a world-leading provider of scientific, technical and medical information products and solutions, underlines the integral role of the internet and online search to the way healthcare decisions are made today, while highlighting the challenges physicians face in their quest for clinical information.

Some of those surveyed (11 percent) also indicated that there is "too much published information available," with 10 percent of the respondents saying they "need more training on how to search for clinically-relevant information."

Findings from the survey were presented today, at the 14<sup>th</sup> Hospital Management Asia (HMA) conference in Yangon, Myanmar, which was attended by more than 800 hospital and healthcare leaders across the region.

A study conducted by Google found that doctors perform an average of six professional searches a day during their course of work.<sup>[1]</sup> Furthermore, it was estimated that by 2020, it will only take 73 days for medical knowledge to double in volume; knowledge is expanding faster than people can assimilate or apply.<sup>[2]</sup>

"As physicians, we are increasingly aware that to consistently provide our patients with the best care, we must not only know where to look for the information we need to solve complex medical questions, but more importantly, we must find information sources that we can trust as evidence-based, current, and reliable," said Dr. Peter Edelstein, M.D., FACS, FASCRS, Chief Medical Officer, Elsevier Clinical Solutions, who was also a plenary speaker at HMA. "Almost anyone can publish anything today on the internet. Thus we as doctors and healthcare professionals need to be careful and use only clinical search engines that quickly and easily deliver trusted and updated content to support our critical patient care-based clinical decisions.

The survey also found that 8 in 10 physicians indicated that having "instant access" to the latest reference content is "very" or "extremely important" in influencing their clinical decisions. However, the two most common challenges listed were limited subscriptions to clinical information services by hospitals or healthcare facilities and issues with Wi-Fi or network access.

### **Point of care where clinical information is used**

The top reason cited for the search of clinical information was to "stay abreast of latest developments in their field," followed by "reference during treatment and surgery." Physicians also use online search to plan treatment therapy, diagnostic tests, ensure best care is delivered at the lowest cost, establish clinical standards of patient care, and to prepare for a patient interaction. The clinical specialties most reliant on search include cardiology, internal medicine, general surgery, neurology and oncology.

Survey results also showed that 58 percent of physicians prefer to access information from their computers while 14 percent still refer to printed sources of information. One in three physicians said they use a mobile device at the point of care, especially during patient consultation or treatment.

"Findings from this survey reveal that, regardless of which country and background doctors and healthcare professionals come from, their objectives and priorities with regards to clinical search is very much the same - trusted content and quick access to the most recent information," said Pete Read, CEO, Global Growth Markets, who presented the survey findings at HMA together with Elsevier. "It would be valuable for healthcare providers to

evaluate the effectiveness of their current clinical information services and tools, and see where they can direct their spending on information and technology to help fill the gap that doctors face when searching for clinical information."

SOURCE Elsevier