As a patient you can choose the care that best fits your personal situation, but only if you have the right information to make a good decision. The purpose of this survey is to learn how seniors and their caregivers stay informed about their health – both general health information (such as tips for staying healthy), and how you look for answers to specific questions or information about health problems. Then we will know how to best reach you and other seniors with important information about health.

Section 1: demographics and general health
Your information is analyzed anonymously and cannot be used to identify individuals.

- **Year of birth**: 
  - **Gender**: M | F
- **Postcode (numbers only)**: 
- **Highest education level**: primary school | high school | vocational/housekeeping | associate’s degree | bachelor | university/master
- **Country of birth**: 
- **Marital status**: married | divorced | widowed | cohabitating | single
- **Housing status**: cohabitating (partner | friend | family) | living alone | nursing home

**Are you the primary caretaker for someone with a serious or chronic health condition?**
- yes | no

**In general, how is your health?**
- very good | good | fair | bad | very bad

**I can make an appointment for routine care (e.g. with my primary care doctor) as soon as I want**
- strongly agree | agree | disagree | strongly disagree

**Rating of all health care received in the last 12 months:**
1....2.....3......4......5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
unacceptable.........................average........................................outstanding

Section 2: API
The questions for the Autonomy Preference Index were drawn from Simon et al.7, which were in turn based on Ende et al.8.

Section 3: Sources of health information
Health information is information about preventative care (such as vaccinations or good nutrition), specific conditions (such as diabetes or cancer), and medications or other forms of treatment. This section is about the ways you stay informed about your health.

**How much of your health information do you get from each of the following sources?**

- **direct contact with a health professional**
  - a lot | some | a little | none
- **pharmacy**
  - a lot | some | a little | none
- **leaflets at the doctor’s office (such as in the waiting room)**
  - a lot | some | a little | none
- **telephone help line**
  - a lot | some | a little | none
- **television**
  - a lot | some | a little | none
- **radio**
  - a lot | some | a little | none
- **newspapers**
  - a lot | some | a little | none
- **magazines specifically about health**
  - a lot | some | a little | none
- **other magazines**
  - a lot | some | a little | none
- **friends /family**
  - a lot | some | a little | none
- **church/religious group**
  - a lot | some | a little | none
- **courses and lectures**
  - a lot | some | a little | none
- **internet**
  - a lot | some | a little | none
- **self-help/patient groups**
  - a lot | some | a little | none
- **books/encyclopedias**
  - a lot | some | a little | none
Please indicate how much you trust health information from each of the following sources:\(^1\):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>a lot</th>
<th>some</th>
<th>a little</th>
<th>none</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct contact with a health professional</td>
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<td>Pharmacy</td>
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<td>Leaflets at the doctor's office (such as in the waiting room)</td>
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<td>Telephone help line</td>
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<td>The library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other/comments</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Section 4: Searching for health information
People often have questions about health. This section is about searching for information beyond what your doctor provides to you. You may have asked a health professional for more information, or asked someone other than a doctor (such as family, friends, classes, or a patient support group). You may have searched on the internet, or looked for written information (such as in magazines or at the library). Please tell us if you have sought additional information, even if you didn’t find what you were looking for. Check all that apply.

In the last 12 months, I have sought health information:

- **H\(^{1}\)** to decide whether I need to see a doctor
  - no | yes [If yes, how?: asked a health professional | asked other people | on the internet | written materials ]

- **H\(^{1}\)** to prepare for an appointment
  - no | yes [If yes, how?: asked a health professional | asked other people | on the internet | written materials ]

- **H\(^{1}\)** to look up information after an appointment
  - no | yes [If yes, how?: asked a health professional | asked other people | on the internet | written materials ]

I have sought health information about:

- **D\(^{1}\)** specific symptoms, to find out what might be causing them
  - no | yes [If yes, how?: asked a health professional | asked other people | on the internet | written materials ]

- **G** prognosis
  - no | yes [If yes, how?: asked a health professional | asked other people | on the internet | written materials ]

- **G** treatment options
  - no | yes [If yes, how?: asked a health professional | asked other people | on the internet | written materials ]

- **D** prescription drugs
  - no | yes [If yes, how?: asked a health professional | asked other people | on the internet | written materials ]

- **G** side effects of treatment or medication
  - no | yes [If yes, how?: asked a health professional | asked other people | on the internet | written materials ]

- **G** coping with a disease
  - no | yes [If yes, how?: asked a health professional | asked other people | on the internet | written materials ]

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\(^{1}\) Respondents commented that the phrasing of this question did not distinguish between “I don’t use this source because I don’t trust it” and “I don’t know if I trust this source, because I don’t use it.” The authors suggest adding a “not applicable” option to these questions.
A. Practical care information (e.g. bathing, first aid, etc.)

B. Nutrition/physical exercise

N. If I have a need for information, I prefer to (please choose 1 option):

F. I often want more health information but don’t know where to find it

C. I expect my doctor/health professionals to provide me with all of the information that I need.

E. I have had difficulty finding health information in my primary language

Section 5: Consequences of health information seeking (Results previously published in [L])

1 Has the health-related information you found led to:

D. Deciding to see a doctor

H. Deciding not to see a doctor

D. A conversation with a doctor about what I found

H,J. Willingness to change diet/lifestyle habits

H,J. Change of medicine without consulting a health professional

H,J. Feelings of anxiety

H,J. Feelings of reassurance or relief

H,J. Suggestions/queries about a diagnosis

H. Suggestions/queries about a treatment

E. More knowledge and understanding of a specific condition, disease or treatment

N. Feeling more confused about a specific condition, disease, or treatment

Other/Comment

[] Someone helped me with filling in this questionnaire

References


D1. modified from (D)


Questions in this study were derived from Baker L, Wagner TH, Singer S, et al. Use of the Internet and e-mail for health care information: results from a national survey. JAMA 2003;289:2400 –2406.


N. new