

A STUDY ON EFFECT OF DIGITAL MEDIA IN SELECTION OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

Dissertation Submitted to



The IIHMR University, Jaipur

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Master of Business Administration (MBA)

in

Hospital and Health Management

By

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Under the Supervision and Guidance of

Dr Neetu Purohit

2024



HEALTHCARE
CONSULTANTS

Date: 21.06.2024

TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that **Ms. Manya Saraswat**, a student from IIMHR Jaipur MBA Batch 2022-2024 has successfully completed her internship programme with **Trizone Healthcare Consultants LLP** from **18th March 2024** to **15th June 2024**.

She demonstrated a positive attitude and enthusiasm towards learning new things.
We wish her all the best in all her future endeavors.

Cheers,

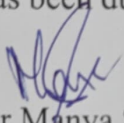
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**Senior Human Resources Executive
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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this dissertation titled **A study on role of digital media in selection of healthcare provider** is the bonafide record of my original research work. I declare that it has not been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been duly acknowledged in the text.

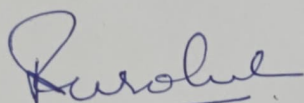


Dr Manya Saraswat

18th June 2024

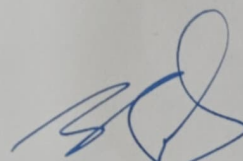
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that dissertation titled **A STUDY ON ROLE OF DIGITAL MEDIA IN SELECTION OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDER** is a record of the research work undertaken by Dr Manya Saraswat in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MBA (Hospital and Health Management) from the IIHMR University, Jaipur under my guidance and supervision and her approach to the research study has been sincere, scientific, and analytical.



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ABSTRACT

Submitted by: Dr. Manya Saraswat

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Title of study: **A study on role of digital media in selection of healthcare provider**

The burgeoning influence of digital media has significantly reshaped how patients in India select healthcare providers. This study explores this complex and evolving trend, investigating the factors that shape patient decision-making through digital platforms.

The objectives of this study were

- a. To identify the key factors that shape the selection of Healthcare Providers through digital channels
- b. To understand how digital media influences patient selection of healthcare providers in India.

Using a descriptive research approach, the study examines information gathered from 201 respondents who often use digital media to look up healthcare providers online. The results show that digital media, which includes elements of accessibility, information collection, and trust-building, has a complex impact in patient selection.

Patients place a high value on the standard of the facilities and technology provided by the providers (44.6%), reputation and experience (29.7%), and other factors. Other important variables include cost and affordability (10.9%) and convenience of location and appointment availability (12.9%). Only a tiny portion of respondents base their decisions on prior affordability experiences (0.5%) and personal acquaintances (0.5%).

The survey also looks at how often patients use the internet to look up healthcare information; 36% of respondents said they use it occasionally, and 33.2% said they use it frequently. However 30% of respondents do not use digital media to look for healthcare providers.

A considerable proportion of respondents (67.3%) said they had selected a physician or clinic purely on the basis of their online presence, indicating that online platforms

are thought to have a reasonably large impact (54.5%) on public opinion regarding healthcare providers.

Most people (71.1%) think that having access to internet reviews is a good thing because it makes choosing a service easier. Nevertheless, worries about the accuracy and fairness of online representations persist; 57.4% of respondents said that internet platforms give a reasonably accurate picture of a healthcare provider's caliber.

According to the result of respondents' social media involvement, more than half (52%) think it improves accessibility and transparency. Instagram (26.7%) and YouTube (30.2%) are the two most important social media channels for healthcare information. Lastly, based on their own internet research, 33% of patients said they would be somewhat likely and 26.5% said they would be very likely to refer healthcare providers to their friends and family. This shows how open people are to share their experiences online

In conclusion, the participants of the study heavily considers digital media. Although the internet provides a wealth of information and convenience, it is important to recognize that there may be drawbacks related to biased and inaccurate online information. This study emphasizes that although digital media is providing a easy and convenient approach to search about healthcare providers, it still has not generated a large impact.

Keywords: Healthcare provider selection factors, digital media, social media, healthcare information, India

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"Gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the soul." - Henry Ward Beecher

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Dr Manya Saraswat

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1: INTRODUCTION

Healthcare providers play a significant role of ensuring and promoting both personal and public health by providing services which include diagnosing, treating and providing health information. Earlier, they were chosen on the recommendation of friends, nearby doctors, their popularity, recommendations from insurance companies and association. Today, due to technological innovations, it has become easier for the patients to seek medical service and they use the internet in form of online reviews, telemedicine, healthcare apps, social media platforms, and insurance provider's portal to seek for healthcare providers.

The choice made on a health care provider determines a person's overall health. Thus, in the decision-making process whether to choose a general practitioner or a specialist, the patient's comfort with the chosen healthcare provider is essential. However, from this perspective, it is important to know that, if a patient and doctor are on friendly terms, getting quality treatment along with managed cost is not a big thing.

Ask the internet that you want visit to consult with a doctor and that they establish a list of the several doctors. Interactive digital media's impact on healthcare provider choice in India is a very dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon which has significantly altered the nature of consumer choice-making. In present times, thanks to easily accessible social media, online presence and health information, clients are provided with quite numerous and diverse sources to form their opinions or make decisions regarding health care providers.

New media has greatly influenced the quest for, reception, and appraisal of health related information. Today, consumers turn to the internet seeking information about physicians, read other people's experiences, and learn about the quality of the services rendered. This makes it easier for the patient to be knowledgeable, being able to request for results, or report any issues and this contributes to increased efficiency in the health sector enhancing the status or power for patient. These accounts include Instagram Youtube, LinkedIn, and Facebook to mention but a few as they have significant roles in determining how the population perceives the healthcare providers. These act as online communities that seek to create a place where patient can gather, compare their experiences and provide recommendations. They negotiate, advise, and provide satisfaction or concern over the health facilities, and thus

act as the multipliers of the patient testimonies on influence provider choices. The use of online reviews is attributed to have played a significant role in patient decisions. For it is on these sites including Google Reviews and Practo and others that the patients source reputation, credibility and overall satisfaction in as regarding the providers of the health care services. As a result, review on social media sites has emerged as important variables that can shift the patient's attitude and decisions. Moreover, through the open engagement of patients through social media and other online platforms, the practitioners are already altering the perception of patient-clinician relationship. They disseminate educational content, provide health tips and engage in responding to patients' questions and complaints, thus creating rapport and gaining patients' trust and believability. (1)

1.1 Evolution of Digital Media in India in Relation to Healthcare

The evolution of digital media in India has helped to introduce some drastic changes in the healthcare industry affecting the way consumer's choose and get access to the health care practitioners. This evolution can be delineated through several distinct phases:

Early Adoption and Internet Expansion In India, the conceptualization of the digital media is stated to have happened towards the late 1990 and early 2000s. This is the first-time information on health care was on the internet mainly on sites and discussion forums. This initial stage also entailed that information was scanty and skewed, but it was the first-time people started looking for health related information. A consequence of the development of Social Websites and Social Networking In the mid-2000's various Social Media Channels like Face book, twitter and linkedIn were developed this led to enhanced sharing of health related information. People and their caregivers tend to organize and provide each other with tips and experiences concerning different healthcare facilities. At the same time, practitioners relied on social networking sites as means of interacting with the patients as well as spreading healthcare information.

Introduction of Other Facilities of Health Care The other facility that emerged in the 2010s is the specialized healthcare portals and mobile applications for such services. On-demand healthcare applications like Practo, 1mg, and Lybrate came up where patient got every kinds of services from consulting doctors, appointments, diagnostic,

getting diagnostic tests done, and medicines at their doorsteps. It totally shifted the dynamics of the patient's engagement with healthcare providers due to ease and variety the presented platforms offered.

Telemedicine & Remote Consultations Telemedicine and remote consultations on health could be estimated as an essential breakthrough of the Indian healthcare sector's digital advancement. Originally popularized in metropolitan areas, telemedicine allowed people suffering from illnesses to engage in a doctor's services while avoiding face-to-face visits. This innovation therefore helped mainly in solving the issue of the unavailability of health facilities in distant rural areas with little or no infrastructures. Being aware of the situation the Indian government implemented various guidelines that could regulate the growth of telemedicine. (2)

1.2 Government of India's Initiatives to Transform Digital Media in Healthcare

The GOI recognises the impact of digital media in the improvement of the existing and future healthcare system and its availability. In due course, it has launched several programs launched to implement e-Health system in the country for improving the corresponding quality of healthcare in different areas of the country. Below are key initiatives illustrating the GOI's commitment to revolutionizing the role of digital media in healthcare: Below are key initiatives illustrating the GOI's commitment to revolutionizing the role of digital media in healthcare:

National Digital Health Mission (NDHM): Introduced in April 2020, the NDHM's proposed target is to build the digital architecture of an agile, people-centric health system aligned with UHC values. Key components include:

- **Health ID:** A digital individual record containing an authorized widespread of a patient's health data that link and are accessible by various care givers.
- **Health Facility Registry:** An informational system formed based on all the actors of healthcare including hospitals, clinics, and laboratories.
- **Personal Health Records (PHR):** In a way this means to provide people with tools and means for managing and having access to their health records on their own.
- **DigiDoctor:** A health care provider listing service that vets and authenticates all of the people listed.
- **Telemedicine Services:** Effective remote consultations and follow-up through the use of technology. (4)

Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM): While NDHM draws a framework for consolidating and improving the scheme for states and central health authorities, ABDM continues constructing a stronger foundation for connecting up health services within Ayushman Bharat's overall structure. Focus areas include:

- Interoperability: In this case, all healthcare systems and platforms should be able to easily interface with each other.
- Digital Health Records: Supporting providers' efforts to implement optimal, even if not the most advanced, electronic health records (EHR).
- Health Information Exchange: Creating a safe environment for the exchange of health information in the most effective manner.

Telemedicine Guidelines and E-Sanjeevani: Due to the rising need for telemedicine facilities that could address people's needs that cannot be met by physical visit, GOI unveiled Telemedicine Practice Guidelines in 2020. The following are measures that keep the provision of health care safe, private, and of good quality: Additionally, the e-Sanjeevani platform was launched, offering telemedicine services through: Additionally, the e-Sanjeevani platform was launched, offering telemedicine services through:

- e-SanjeevaniOPD: A telemedical platform for outpatient consultations carried out via the internet.
- e-SanjeevaniAB-HWC: Coordinating the health and wellness centres with specialized physicians via the hub-and-spoke care delivery system to strengthen the reach of specialist care in the affected regions.

Digital India and Healthcare: The Digital India initiative lays the foundation for the larger part of the transformation of healthcare to boost the system. Key components include:

- Broadband Connectivity: Broadening the internet coverage in the rural and unserved locations for the provision of telemedicine and health related applications.
- Digital Literacy: Efforts that have been put in place to increase the awareness of the users of healthcare both the patient and the healthcare providers in using the available digital health tools.

- **Mobile Health (mHealth):** To achieve this the following interventions will be used; sender and receiver:- unhealthy mobile phones to communicate health information, reminders and health services to patients.
- **National Health Stack (NHS):** NHS is a very large scale project to create a united environment for health care based on the IT technologies, including:
 - **Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Stack:** Technology enablers in the execution of health schemes and health insurance systems.
 - **Health Data Analytics:** Applying big data to advance the application of health care policies and the determination of appropriate health procedures.
 - **Health Claims Exchange:** The application of an innovative solution to the actual problem of expediting the handling of health insurance claims.

Other Initiatives:

- **mHealth Platforms:** Encouragement of the use of mobile health applications such as Aarogya Setu, proved to be very essential during the COVID-19 outbreak for tracking the spread and sharing of information.
- **Digital Health Literacy Campaigns:** Activities that are focused on raising awareness of potential users concerning the advantages and correct application of eHealth services.

1.3 Benefits of Digital Media in Healthcare Provider Selection

In the current society, patients have been empowered through digital media when choosing their healthcare providers. Here are some key benefits of using digital media:

Enhanced Accessibility and Convenience

1. **24/7 Availability:** This asserts that through these digital platforms, patients are able to acquire information concerning the providers anytime regardless of office hours.
2. **Geographic Reach:** It makes an opportunity through pointing out healthcare providers outside the available areas to remote or underserved patients.
3. **Appointment Scheduling:** Online booking also leads to having to spend a lot of time on the phone scheduling an appointment.

Informed

Decision-Making

1. Comprehensive Information: Social media provides comprehensive information about healthcare providers and includes their credentials, areas of practice, and practice experience, and patients' feedback.
2. Transparency: Relevant information regarding a provider's past experiences, his ratings on the patient satisfaction data bank and the outcomes are easily accessible and improve patient empowerment.
3. Comparative Analysis: The patients are also able to select a particular healthcare provider, based on, services offered, the cost and the location.

A common benefit of utilizing social media in healthcare organizations involves enhancing the actual interactions and online education of the patients.

1. Patient Reviews and Ratings: From the perspectives of other patients, therefore, reviews and ratings of doctors on the WWW imply useful information over the standard of medical care offered to them.
2. Educational Content: M Health Minute is a blog that healthcare providers create and post new information; patients need to be educated at one point about their health.
3. Interactive Tools: Active platforms promote patient participation and give consumers more power. Tools such as health calculators, symptom checkers, and chatbots are available.

Personalized Healthcare Experiences

1. Individualized Medical Experiences1. Tailored Recommendations: Online resources suggest physicians and clinics based on patient preferences, medical conditions, and location.
2. Patient Portals: Most of them have given patients the ability to get an account through which they can view their records, test results, and other plans of treatment.
3. Telemedicine and Virtual Consultations: Telemedicine services are covered in patients' choices for providers, which makes it possible to consult from the comfort of one's home.

Cost-Effectiveness

1. Price Transparency: Technological intervention leads to the disclosure of consultation fees, treatment charges, and insurance details that help the patients to be wise on charges.
2. Reduced Travel Expenses: Telephone or internet based appointments do not require the client to travel hence are time and cost saving.
3. Competitive Pricing: Cross-subsidization serves competition pressures to reduce the price of service delivery among providers hence decrease the overall health costs to the patients.

Improved Healthcare Outcomes

1. Continuous Monitoring: Smartwatches and m-Health apps help to monitor the status of patients as well as help with timely actions.
 2. Follow-Up and Reminders: Reminders for follow-up appointments and medication prompt clients of when and how often they should be consulting a doctor hence improving their health status.
 3. Data-Driven Insights: E-Health systems help patients and other stakeholders in the provision of patients' information and advice as well as enhancement of best practices to facilitate positive health at the individual and aggregate level.
- (5)(6)

2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Title	Author	Study location	Sample Size	Year of Study	Salient Features
Choosing a Provider: What Factors Matter Most to Consumers and Patients?	Andrzej Kozikowski, PhD, Dawn Morton-Rias, EdD, PA-C, Sheila Mauldin, MNM, Colette Jeffery, MA, Kasey Kavanaugh, MPH, and Grady Barnhill, MEd	N/A	N/A	2022	Selecting a healthcare provider is a significant and challenging decision for people. The aim of this investigation was to verify the the importance of using a variety of criteria when choosing a practitioner, and how these criteria change based on the patient's background experiences with different clinical specialties (physicians, nurse practitioners, and assistants). Participants

					placed greater emphasis on medical qualification, insurance acceptance, and medical license than they did on online reviews, provider type, or recommendations. Based on patient characteristics, significant disparities were seen, with prior provider experience having a major impact on factor importance. Patients prioritize different aspects based on their individual requirements, histories, and experiences. (9)
Healthcare Marketing in India with special reference to	Abhinav Sharma	N/A	N/A	2020	The number of private hospitals in India is rising quickly, and this is making the

Hospital: Challenges, Opportunities and Strategies					health care sector more competitive on a daily basis. Due to significant private and foreign direct investments, market expansion is expected to expand by 15% over the next five years. Despite these advancements, both new and existing hospitals continue to encounter significant obstacles in their efforts to promote healthcare services. This study looks into this using secondary data and literature in an effort to determine how healthcare marketing in India could be improved
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					(10)
Social Marketing in Healthcare	Radha Aras	N/A	N/A	2011	Successful healthcare service delivery depends on social marketing, which calls for engaged consumer and community involvement. By going through research and indexing services, this study of the literature inquires the advantages of social marketing in the healthcare sector. Results show that good things happen when community needs are met with the right product, placement, promotion, and price. Success also depends on institutional, financial, and market sustainability. In

					order to effectively promote health, the analysis indicates that healthcare professionals need to comprehend and address the demands of the public by utilizing consumer research. Building relationships with customers is made easier by social marketing, which eventually improves public health and promotes better lifestyles. (11)
Exploring patient choice in India: A study on hospital selection	Vishakha Chauhan, Anand Sharma & Mahim Sagar	Delhi & Chandigarh	285	2019	As it recognizes the critical role that patient empowerment and involvement play in assisting the patient's in selecting the finest service providers, this

					study examines the factors influencing patients' decisions when choosing a hospital for treatment. Understanding patient choice is most important in poor countries like India, where providing public funded healthcare services is a challenging task. In this paper, patient data from public and private hospitals in Chandigarh and New Delhi are measured using empirical analysis. This poll identifies important factors that patients ought to consider, such as the hospital's reputation, cleanliness,
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					standard of treatment, and amenities like food & beverages and payment options. It also gives importance to the fact that patients frequently perceive the reactions given by healthcare providers to these variables inadequate, highlighting the necessity of better service delivery in hospitals. (12)
Determinants of Hospital Choice among Patients and Perceptions of the Same among Hospital Employees in a Tertiary Care	Swati Singh, Vani Lakshmi, G Somu and Rajesh Kamath	Mumbai	308	2022	Patients are taking a more active role in their healthcare decisions by comparing hospitals and providers with the information at their disposal in order to make well-informed

Corporate Hospital in Mumbai, India					selections. Key selection criteria for hospitals included skilled staff, emergency and laboratory services, hospital reputation, service pricing, and location. The study was done at a tertiary care corporate hospital in Mumbai, with a sample size of 252 patients and 56 workers. It is essential to look at these factors from the standpoints of the patient and the physician. Hospitals can work on improving patient happiness and loyalty by taking these aspects into consideration. (13)
The impact of marketing	Professor Eng. Victor	N/A	N/A	2019	The article argues that healthcare

strategies in healthcare systems	Lorin Purcarea, PhD, Executive Editor				marketing is crucial for health brands, focusing on patient needs and satisfaction through targeted communication and digital platforms. It emphasizes a shift from mass marketing to building patient relationships and loyalty through improved health outcomes.(14)
Applying Digital Marketing Methods in the Healthcare Industry	Andrée Lindgren, Daniar Mohidin	Uppsala, Sweden	N/A	2020	A Swedish study (Immuneed, Uppsala) examined digital marketing in healthcare. The mixed-methods approach (combining theory and real-world data) explored the industry's digital marketing lag. Surveys and interviews

					provided a comprehensive analysis. The study emphasizes strong findings and offers practical recommendations for healthcare organizations to improve their digital marketing and compete more effectively.(15)
Healthcare Industry Sales Performance : How The Role of Social Media and Digital Marketing?	Mochammad Jasin	N/A	190	2022	This research examines the effect of social media marketing and overall digital marketing on the sales performance of healthcare organizations. Researchers utilized quantitative methods, conducting online surveys distributed through social media platforms.

					A simple random sampling technique was employed to select a sample of 190 healthcare industry professionals. Data analysis was performed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS software. The results indicate that both social media marketing and general digital marketing strategies positively and significantly impact sales performance in the healthcare sector. (16)
‘Make In India’ For Healthcare Sector in India: A SWOT	Lakshmanan Ganesan, Senthamizh Veena	N/A	N/A	2019	The "Make in India" initiative seeks to establish India as a centre for global

Analysis on Current Status and Future Prospects					manufacturing through regulatory and policy reforms, including the healthcare sector. Despite attracting medical tourists with quality, cost-effective services, a significant portion of India's population lacks accessible, affordable healthcare. This initiative offers the private sector opportunities to invest in healthcare, addressing capital needs. This paper explores the initiative's impact through a SWOT analysis, concluding that while promising, its success in improving healthcare access relies on effective
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					policy development and implementation. (17)
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Several general conclusions can be derived from the synthesis of the research papers regarding the source in the choice of healthcare providers and the role and functions of marketing in health-care system. On the choices of guarantors in the selection of health providers, it is evident that it depends on clients' needs, their experiences, and the value they attach to credentials and insurance acceptance over recommendations and online ratings. Expanding number of private hospitals in India, the practice of competition in the market for healthcare services, therefore there is a need to develop efficient system of healthcare marketing communication that would involve consumers and communities. Social marketing has been found to be effective in addressing the needs and changing lifestyles of the community since it entails developing marketing relationships and consumer needs. Thus, it can be concluded that digital marketing, particularly, social media has a highly positive effect on increasing sales of healthcare products and services and customer satisfaction. While traditional marketing is based on the needs and satisfaction of patients, new ideas and concepts in marketing have moved a step further toward the building of more standardized relationships and patient loyalty. In the area of the health sector, 'Make in India' holds prospects for the private players to invest in which if backed by proper policies would enhance access and affordability in healthcare.

3: RESEARCH QUESTION

What factors determine the selection of healthcare providers by patients in India?

4: OBJECTIVES

- a. To identify the key factors that shape the selection of Healthcare Providers through digital channels.
- b. To understand how digital media influences patient selection of healthcare providers in India.

4 : METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design to examine the influence of digital media on the selection of healthcare providers in India. This approach provides a thorough understanding of the factors affecting individuals' choices when opting healthcare providers online.

Sample Selection

Participants in the study included individuals who use a mobile device and use it to enquire for healthcare providers online. A non-probability sampling method was used to reach a wide followership through online channels. The form included replies who freely shared, giving a different representation of individuals meeting the selection criteria.

Total 350 people were approached for this study, from which 204 people responded. 3 participants did not use digital media to enquire about doctors / clinicians, were excluded from this study. And the final sample size was 201.

Data Collection

For primary data collection, a questionnaire was created using Google Forms, featuring 10 questions that include both open-ended and closed questions. The form was designed to gain detailed perceptivity into the factors impacting healthcare provider selection through digital media. The form was circulated online, fastening on individuals who use mobile bias to search for healthcare providers. To cover participants confidentiality and reduce bias, no dispatch addresses or particular identifiers were collected.

Secondary data collection involved reviewing being literature, papers, and reports on digital media and healthcare provider selection. This exploration helped in casting applicable and comprehensive form questions.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the unrestricted- concluded questions were anatomized using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics, similar as frequentness and probabilities, were calculated to epitomize the data, with pie-charts and graphs employed to visually represent the findings.

Qualitative data analysis involved rendering responses from open- ended questions to identify common themes and patterns related to the factors impacting healthcare provider selection.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were rigorously followed throughout the study. Actors were informed about the study's purpose, and concurrence was attained before they completed the check. To ensure confidentiality, no dispatch addresses or particular identifiers were collected, keeping all responses anonymous. By avoiding the collection of identifiers, the study aimed to minimize bias and encourage honest responses.

5: RESULT

The responses to a Google Form survey, which attempted to include participants of all ages in healthcare decision-making, were used to generate the study's results. The following are the salient features of the survey and its respondents:

The results obtained are illustrated in the figure below:

Fig 4.1 illustrates the important factors in choosing a healthcare provider. It shows that the majority of respondents (44.6%) indicated that the quality of facilities and technology is the most important factor. This was followed by reputation and experience, which was significant for 29.7% of the participants. 12.9% of respondents ranked location convenience and appointment availability as important factors, while 10.9% gave cost and affordability top priority. Only 0.5% of respondents cited prior affordability experiences, and another 0.5% said they chose their healthcare provider based on familiarity and trust.

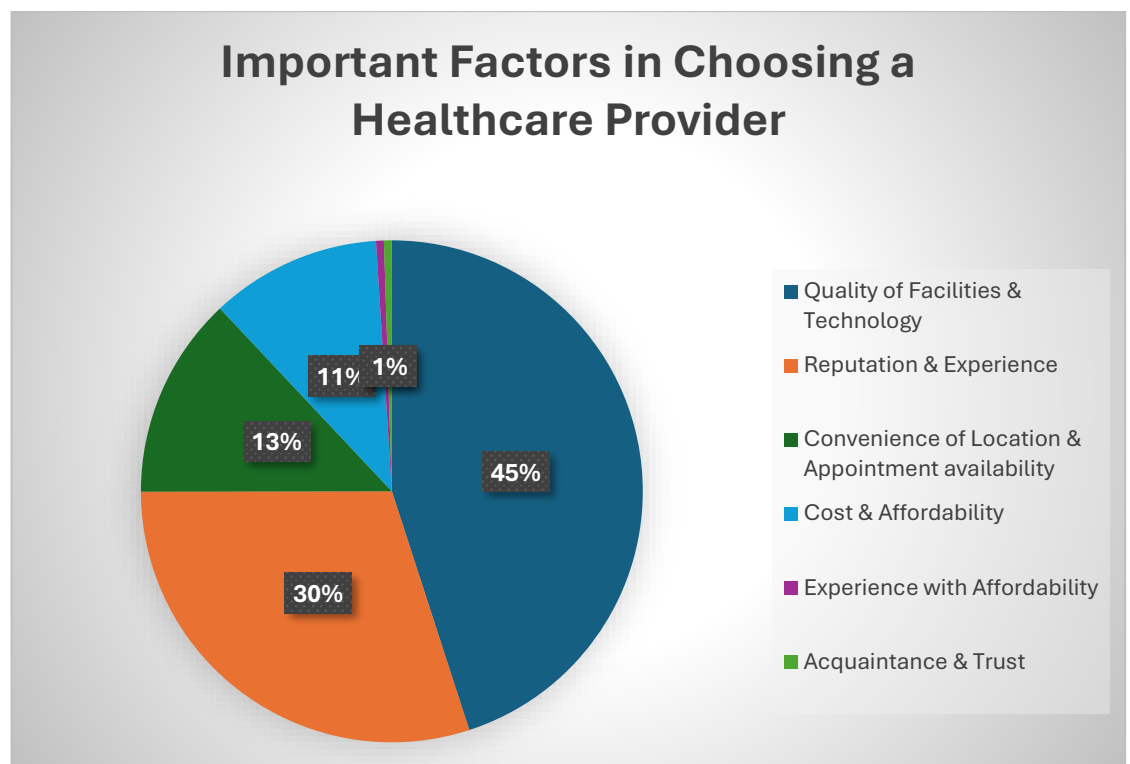


Fig 4.1 : N = 201, Importance of different factors in choosing a Healthcare Provider

Fig 4.2 examines how often respondents seek healthcare information online. The data reveals that 36% of participants occasionally seek healthcare information online, whereas 33.2% do so very often. Additionally, 29.2% rarely use online sources for healthcare information, and only 1.5% never seek healthcare information online.

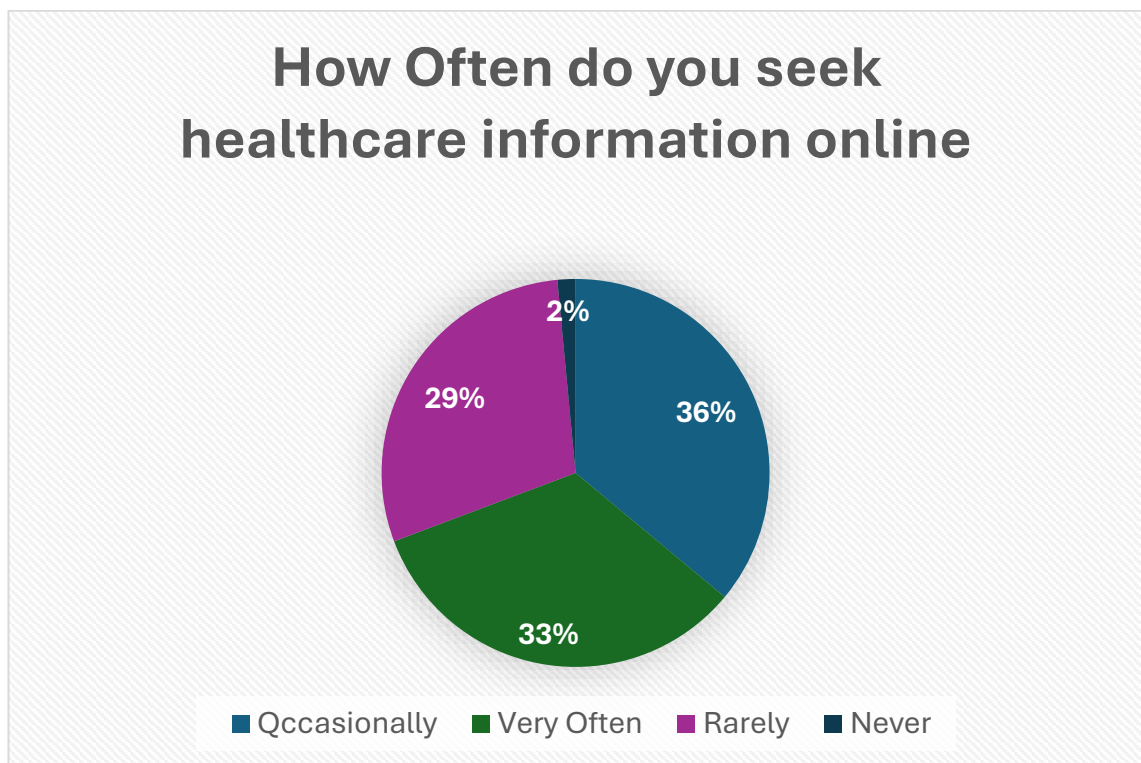


Fig 4.2: N = 201, % of how often the participants seek healthcare information online

Fig. 4.3 exhibits the impact of internet platforms on public perception toward healthcare providers in India. The data shows that 24% of respondents think internet platforms have a significant influence, while 54.5 percent think they have a moderate influence. Another 18.3% think they are slightly influential, and a small minority of 3% feel they are not influential at all.

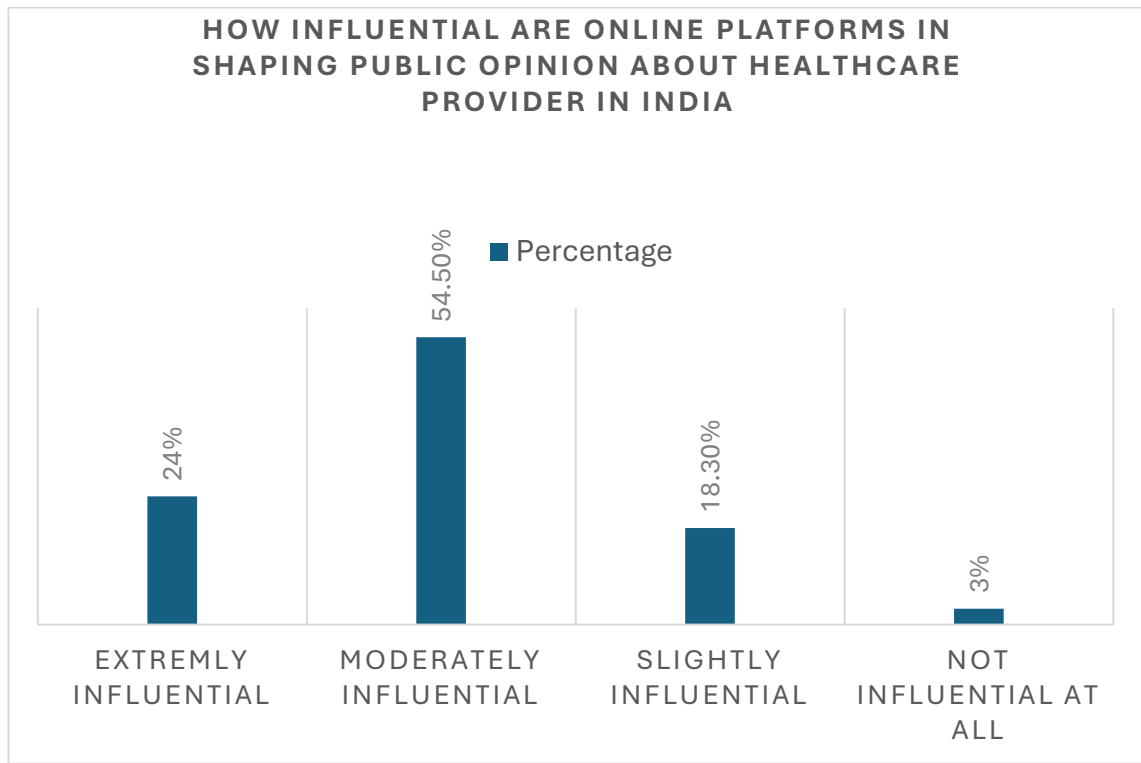


Fig 4.3: N = 201 ,Influence of Online Platforms in shaping Public Opinion about Healthcare Provider in India

The graph in Fig. 4.4 asks respondents if they have ever selected a physician or clinic without first receiving a recommendation or reference based just on that professional's internet presence. It shows that although 32.7% of respondents have not made such decisions, a significant majority (67.3%) have done so solely based on their online presence.

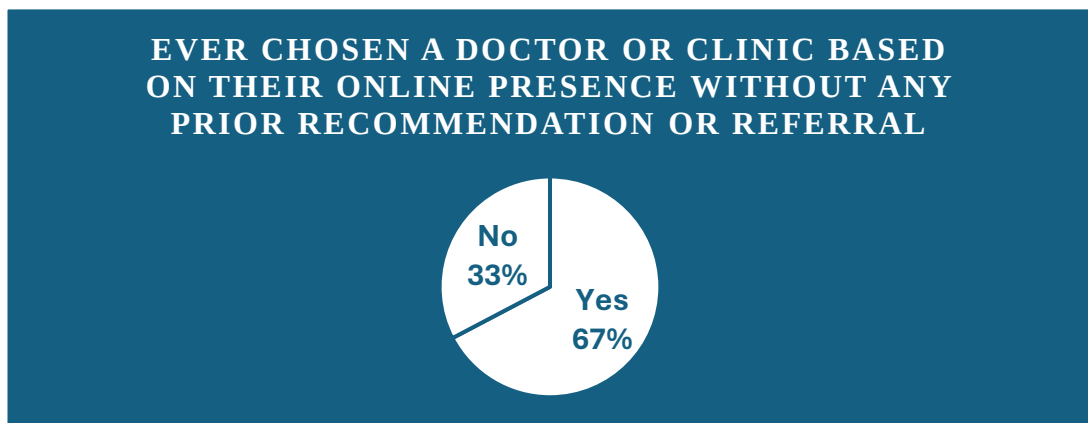


Fig 4.4 : N=201 ,Percentage distribution of Participants Ever chosen a Doctor or Clinic based on their online presence without any prior recommendation or referral

Figure 4.5 shows whether respondents' ability to choose a healthcare provider has been simpler or harder as a result of the availability of internet reviews, as indicated in Fig 4.5. According to the findings, 71.1% of respondents said that choosing a provider has been made simpler by reading online evaluations. On the other hand, 9.5% thought it was harder, and 19.4% said there was no difference.

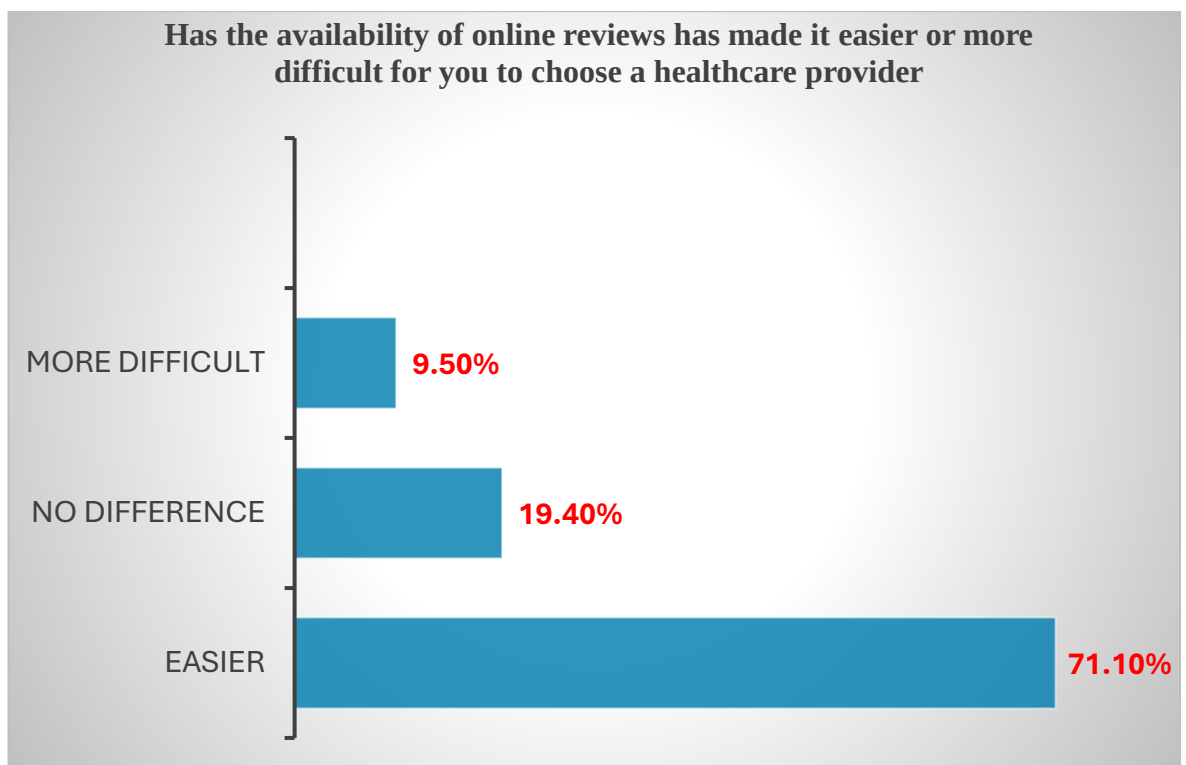


Fig 4.5: N=201 ,Percentage of how the availability of online reviews has made it easier or more difficult for participants to choose a healthcare provider

Fig 4.6 focuses on the time spent researching healthcare providers online. A large proportion of respondents (62.2%) spend less than an hour on this task. About 26.9% spend between one to two hours, 6% spend between two to four hours, and only 5% spend more than four hours researching healthcare providers online.

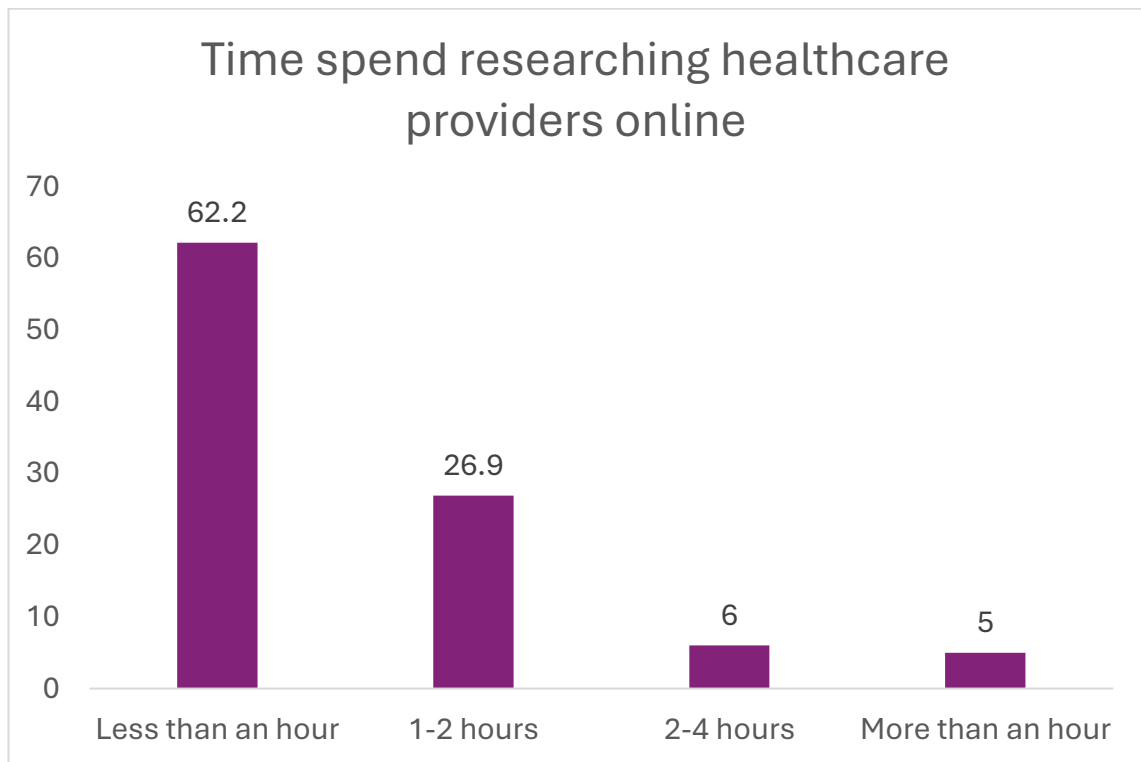


Fig 4.6:N=201, Percentage of Time spend researching healthcare providers online

The seventh graph examines whether healthcare providers should actively engage with patients through social media and online platforms as seen in Fig 4.7. Over half of the respondents (52%) believe that such engagement enhances transparency and accessibility. However, 16.5% think it may compromise professionalism and privacy, while 31.5% feel it depends on the nature of the engagement.

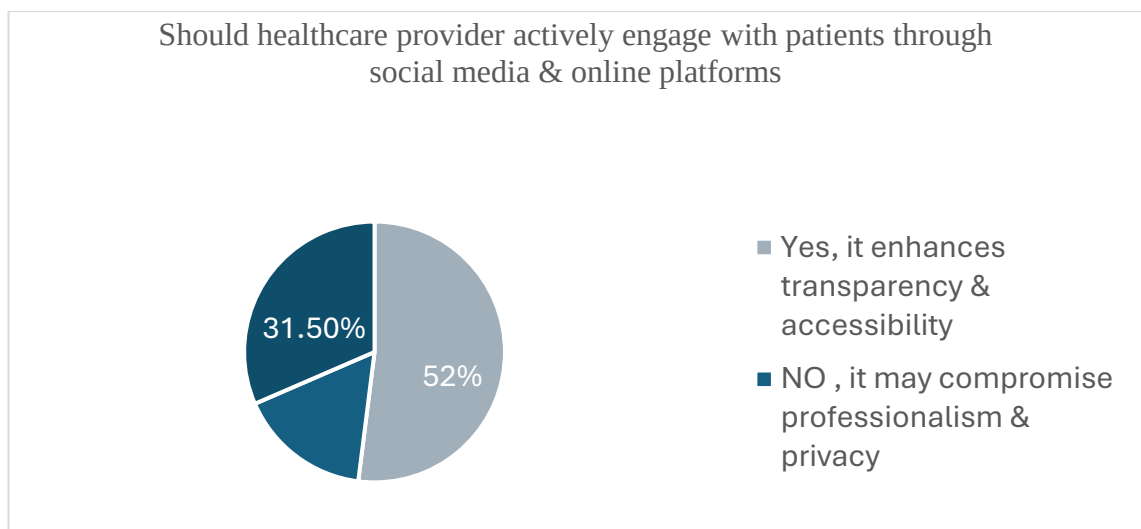


Fig 4.7: N=201,Percentage distribution of Should healthcare provider actively engage with patients through social media & online platforms

Fig 4.8 shows the most important social media sites for healthcare information are shown in Fig. 4.8. The study indicates that 30.2% of respondents thought YouTube was the most influential, followed by Instagram with 26.7%. 19.3% of respondents said Facebook is influential, 8.9% said LinkedIn, and 8% said Google Search

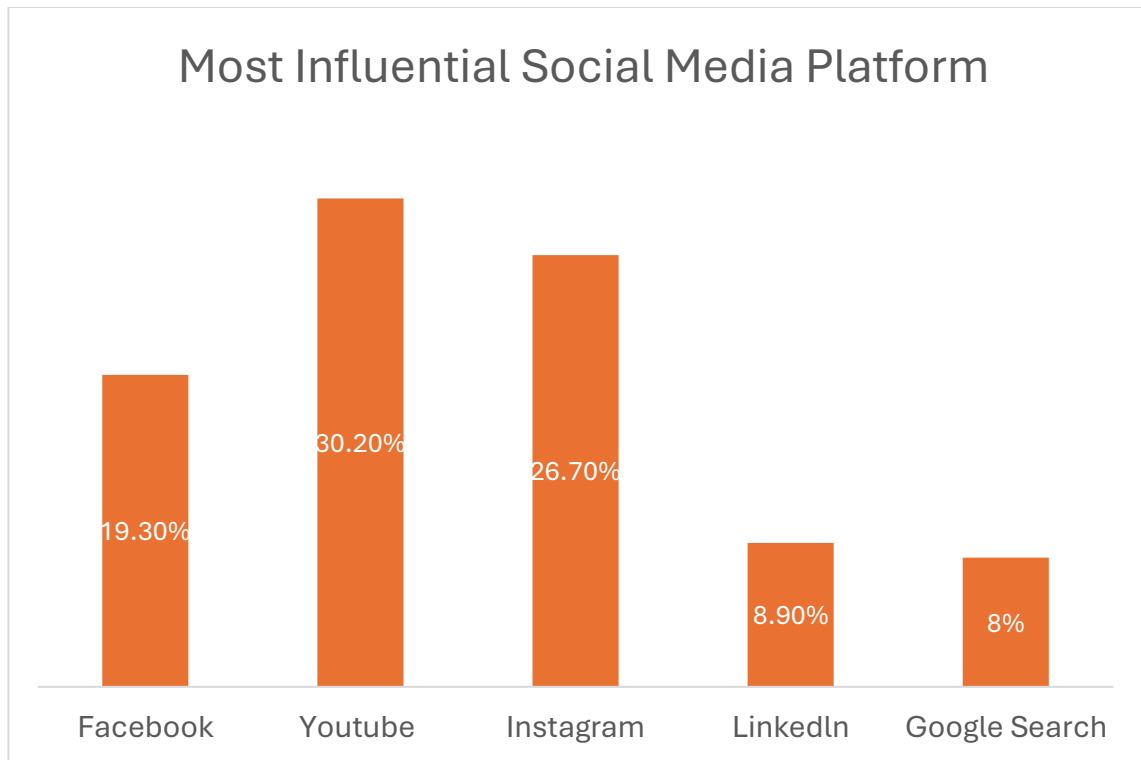


Fig 4.8: N=201, Percentage distribution of Most Influential Social Media Platform

The next graph reveals the likelihood of respondents recommending a doctor or clinic to others based on their own online research and experience which can be seen in Fig 4.9. The data shows that 33% are somewhat likely to recommend, 29.5% are neutral, 26.5% are very likely, and 11% are unlikely to make such recommendations.

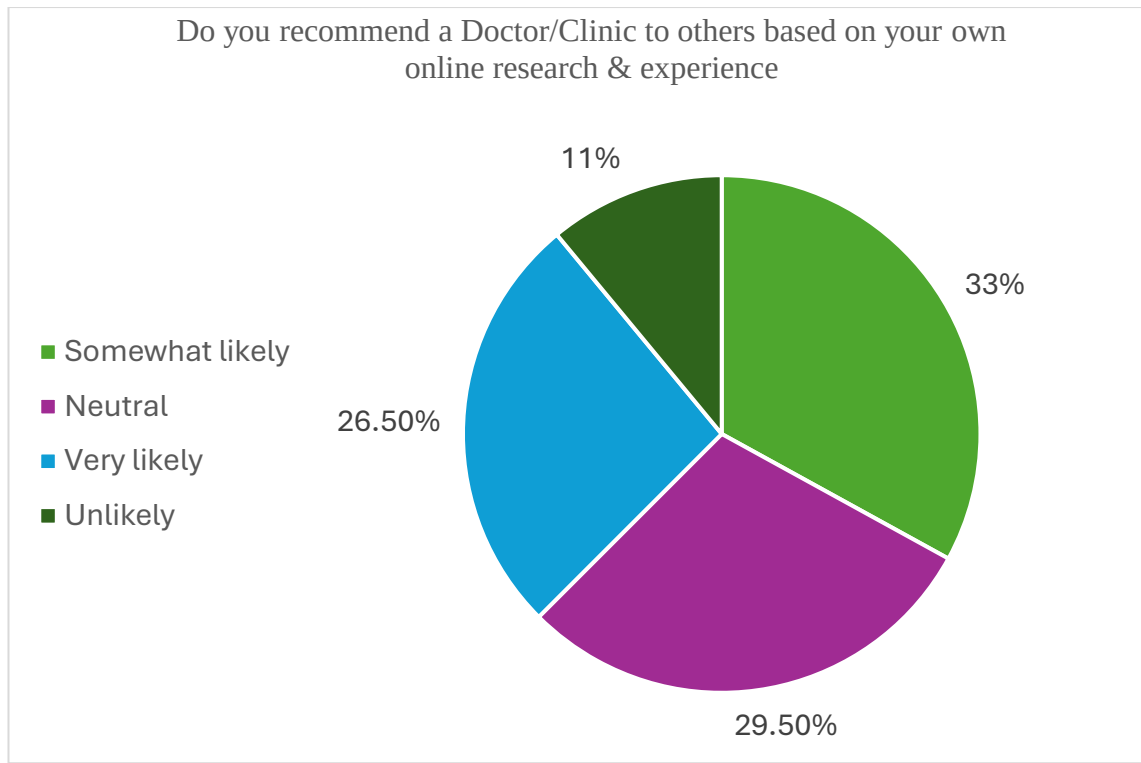


Fig 4.9: N=201,Percentage distribution of recommending a Doctor/Clinic to others based on your own online research & experience

Lastly, the graph in Fig. 4.10 investigates respondents' perceptions of the fairness of a healthcare provider's quality and capabilities as represented by online platforms. According to the findings, 57.4% of participants think that online platforms offer a fairly accurate depiction. In the meantime, 18.8% feel they do not provide a fair portrayal, while 23.8% think they do.

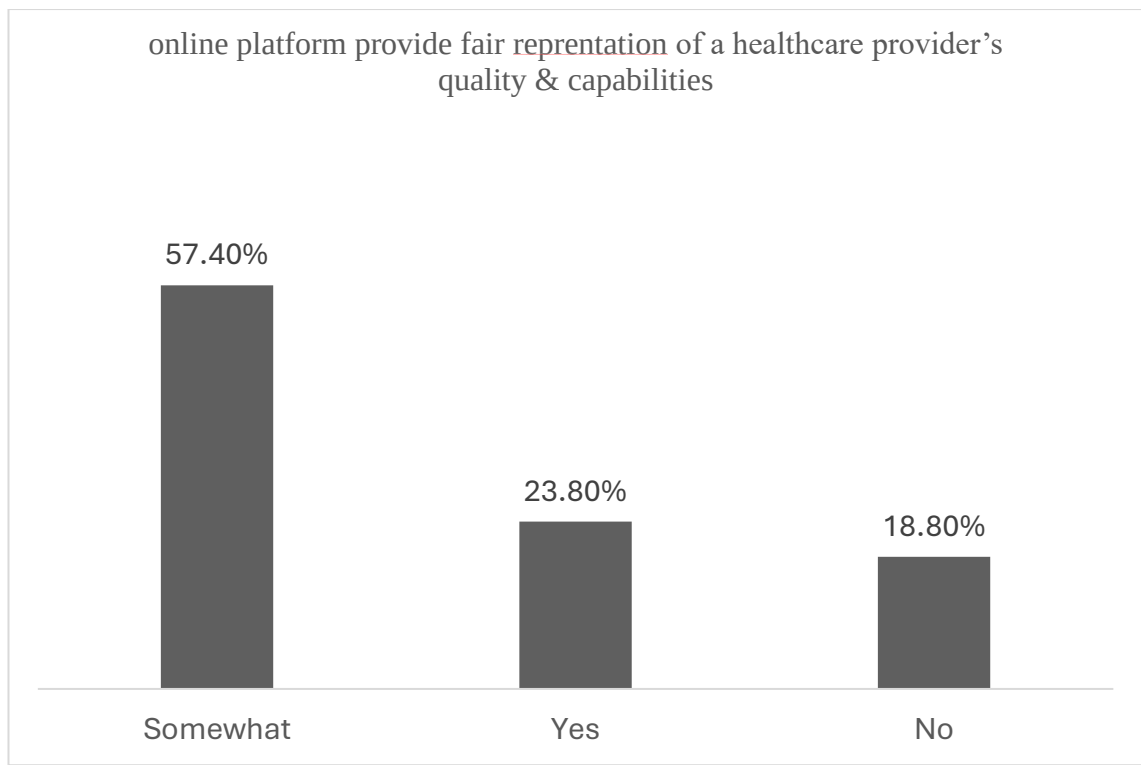


Fig 4.10 : N=201,Percentage representation of online platform provide fair representation of a healthcare provider's quality & capabilities

6: DISCUSSION

The findings show that when selecting a healthcare provider, 44.6% of respondents give top priority to the caliber of the facilities and technology. Following at 29.7% are experience and reputation, underscoring the significance of credibility and trust. Cost and affordability are important to 10.9% of respondents, whereas location convenience and appointment availability are important to 12.9%. Merely 0.5% of respondents place a higher value on prior affordability experience and referrals from friends. A study done in 2019 “Exploring patient choice in India: A study on hospital selection”, also talks about the factors which influence the patients decision to choose healthcare providers.

The data reveals that 36% of participants occasionally seek healthcare information online, with 33.2% doing so very often. This indicates a high reliance on digital media for healthcare decisions. About 29.2% rarely use online sources, and only 1.5% never use them.

According to 24% of respondents, online platforms have a significant influence on public opinion about healthcare providers, while 54.5% of respondents found them to have a moderate influence. This emphasizes how important internet media is when making decisions about healthcare.

A significant 67.3% of respondents have chosen a healthcare provider based solely on their online presence, emphasizing the impact of digital visibility and reputation on patient choices.

Online reviews have made the process of choosing a healthcare provider easier for 71.1% of respondents. However, 19.4% saw no difference, while 9.5% found it more difficult due to conflicting judgments or information overload.

The majority of respondents (62.2%) spent less than an hour researching healthcare providers online, compared to 26.9% of respondents who spent 1-2 hours. This suggests that quick access to information is necessary for making decisions.

More than half of the respondents (52%) believe that healthcare professionals should engage with consumers on social media to increase accessibility and transparency. However, 16.5% are concerned that privacy and professionalism would be violated, and 31.5 percent think it would depend on the nature of the involvement.

When asked about influential social media platforms, 30.2% of respondents favoured YouTube, 26.7% preferred Instagram, and 19.3% chose Facebook. Notably, 8% listed Google Search in the open option, highlighting its significant role despite not being a traditional social media platform. This aligns with study “Social Marketing in Healthcare” done in 2011.

Digital information is trusted by most, as seen by the majority (59.5%) who are inclined to suggest a healthcare provider based on their online research and experience. Nonetheless, 11% are unlikely to offer such recommendations, and 29.5% are neutral. Which was also discussed in a study “Applying Digital Marketing Methods in the Healthcare Industry” done in 2020.

Online platforms, according to the majority (57.4%), somewhat accurately depict the qualifications and abilities of healthcare practitioners; 23.8% disagree, and 18.8% think otherwise.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following were the recommendations that were given after the discussion:

1. Inform clients about their rights and responsibilities, quality of services, infrastructures and healthy personnel. It is advised that one should not make overstatement or exaggeration of the services that are available. The honest representation of patients' conditions assists in creating trust since expectations by the patients are maintained at a reasonable range.

2. Employ use of social media to engage patient, posting of health tips/updates, and responding to questions. It also increases the clarity and ease of access to information while at the same time giving a professional outlook that upholds the patients' right to privacy.

3. It is always advisable for healthcare centers to encourage satisfied patients to leave positive comments or respond positively and professionally to the negative remarks. Considering replies to the reviews timely and politely shows the patient-centered caring organization's willingness to enhance the services.

4. From time to time conduct orientation sessions to educate the staff on how to communicate with the patient through the internet professionally. This includes issues to do with the social media etiquette, how to respond to inquiries from clients via the social media among others, and the realization that the website and other related online platforms provide comprehensive details about the services offered, the prices, insurance acceptance and the ability to schedule an appointment. Ensure that the information provided is easily browsable and searchable so that patients can easily point themselves in the right direction.

5. Make sure that all business communications are performed professionally. This encompasses the nature of posts on social media about the company and its products,

how the company attends to patients enquires and the manner used in dealing with negative reviews. Any behaviour exhibited on the internet is equivalent to the quality of service that a patient will receive when attending a physical clinic.

8: CONCLUSION

This research highlights the significant role digital media plays in choosing healthcare providers. The study demonstrates the crucial need for a strong online presence, effective use of social media, and the impact of online reviews on patients' decisions.

Healthcare providers have to plan how to improve their outreach of e-Health as more people embrace the digital age. Honestly, we need to admit that such platforms make healthcare more transparent, related decisions can be trusted, and, thus, make treatment easier for patients. Another important factor for checklist is also appropriate behavior of health care workers and the need for the correct presentation of information on the Internet to ensure patient satisfaction.

As for the impact in the digital era of different approaches in the consumption of health care services, it is necessary again to note that active presence online and provision of good quality services should not be opposed to one another. Sharing valuable and easily digestible information online as well as maintaining individuals' and organizations' profiles are also critical. Small controversies such as patient feedback and reviews also provide an opportunity for constructing trust with the patients and enhancing their satisfaction in the hospital.

This research may provide direction on the best approach for the healthcare providers when implementing the digital approach to cater for the patients' needs especially in the modern society. Thus, the use of digital media can be beneficial in attracting and maintaining patient satisfaction and the recognition of the provider as a valuable source of information on the topic.

Thus, we have seen a high level of impact of digital media in deciding the health care providers in India. This kind of environment requires healthcare providers to formulate and implement a sound and coherent digital engagement strategy to succeed. Appropriate digitization measures can thus positively transform pin processes to advance patient satisfaction, quality of care, and broadly, healthcare consumers' trust in the larger health system.

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ANNEXURE

Healthcare Provider Selection Survey

B *I* U  

Form description

Image title



Do you use digital platforms (such as websites, social media, or apps) to search for healthcare providers? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Have you selected a healthcare provider based on information obtained from digital media in the past year? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Are you comfortable participating in an online survey regarding your experiences? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

If the participants answer No in any of these questions, The questionnaire will end here

In your opinion, how influential are online platforms in shaping public opinion about healthcare providers in India?

- ☐ Extremely influential
- ☐ Moderately influential
- ☐ Slightly influential
- ☐ Not influential at all

Have you ever chosen a doctor or clinic based on their online presence without any prior recommendation or referral?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Would you say that the availability of online reviews has made it easier or more difficult for you to

Would you say that the availability of online reviews has made it easier or more difficult for you to choose a healthcare provider?

- ☐ Easier
- ☐ More difficult
- ☐ No difference

...

How much time do you typically spend researching healthcare providers online before making a decision?

- ☐ Less than an hour
- ☐ 1-2 hours
- ☐ 2-4 hours
- ☐ More than 4 hours

Do you believe that healthcare providers should actively engage with patients through social media and online platforms?

- ☐ Yes, it enhances transparency and accessibility
- ☐ No, it may compromise professionalism and privacy
- ☐ It depends on the nature of engagement

Which social media platform do you think is most influential in shaping opinions about healthcare providers in India?

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Other...

How likely are you to recommend a doctor or clinic to others based on your own online research and experience?

- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Somewhat likely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Unlikely

Do you believe that online platforms provide a fair representation of a healthcare provider's quality and capabilities?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes