Drug Information Written for the Consumer Audience

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“One thing I’ve tried to do my whole life is get people to take charge of their health — and now, with managed care, I amend it to say, ‘or no one else will.’ ”

former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop

Consumer Drug Topics
1. What do consumers want to know?
2. What level of information do consumers want?
3. Do informed consumers have better outcomes?
4. Why do consumers turn to alternative medicines?
5. Where do consumers go for information?

What Do Consumers Want to Know?
Top Six Topics That Consumers Want From the Internet

- 57% Information from physician
- 55% Fitness
- 55% Diseases
- 51% Injuries
- 49% Prescription Drugs
- 46% Diet and Food Supplies

1998 Environmental Assessment, Setting The State of Health Care in America 1999

Top Three Topics That Consumers Want From a Health Library

1. Cancer
2. Heart Disease
3. Arthritis

Drug Information Wanted by Consumers
1. What are the side effects?
2. Why am I taking this drug?
3. Are there drug interactions?

Why Are Consumers Looking?
- Consumers have become better researchers.
- More information is available.
- Health Care System has changed.
  - Physician visits per patient are shortening.
  - Pharmacists have less time to spend per patient.

Who is the Healthcare Consumer?
The “healthcare consumer” is defined as anyone who receives or has the potential to receive health care services, regardless of whether or not that person pays for those services directly.

What Level of Information Do Consumers Want?
Health Content Consumers and Their Needs
- Casual health seekers
- The worried well
- Newly diagnosed patients
- Chronic illness sufferers

Patient Education on Drugs
1. Generic name plus common brand name of the drug
2. Phonetic pronunciation of the generic name
3. Uses - labeled and common off-label.
4. How to take - Seems obvious - wrong!
5. Side Effects - What to include?
6. Precautions - An overlooked concern?
7. Drug Interactions - When should you worry?
8. Notes - What should be checked?
9. Missed dose - Why not double up?
10. Storage - The medicine cabinet - where else?
11. Medic Alert available

**New Additions from Keystone Guidelines**
1. Overdose Warnings - When does a side effect become an overdose?
2. Black Box Warnings - FDA wants these separated.
3. Labeled Indications - separate.

**Special Patient Education**
- Drug/Drug Interactions
- Drug/Food Interactions

**Sources of Information for Patient Education**
- Package Insert
- Primary Literature
- Manufacturer supplied information
- FDA Medwatch website
- Secondary Compendia (partial listing)
  - American Hospital Formulary, Service Drug Information
  - Facts and Comparisons
  - US Pharmacopoeia Drug Information
  - Review Articles

**Do Informed Patients Have Better Outcomes?**
“Armed with data they’ve found online, in medical journals, databases, and consumer health sites, patients are walking into doctors’ offices and asking about treatments and diseases some physicians may never have heard of or considered...It’s a fundamental shift of knowledge, and therefore power, from physicians to patients.”

- Jim Hudak, global managing partner for health at Andersen Consulting. >From A
Why Do Patients Turn to Alternative Therapies?

Alternative Medicine

• Is it alternative medicine, complementary medicine, integrative medicine, or Nutraceuticals?

Alternative Medicines - Definition

• Nutraceuticals (coined by Stephen De Felice, M.D.) defined as “food or parts of food that offer medical and/or health benefits, including prevention and/or treatment of disease.”

Drug Topics, April 8, 1996
V140 N7 p.85 (2).

Reliable Secondary Sources of Alternative Medicine


Difficulties with Alternative Medicines

1. Is the product really there? Standardization is missing.

2. Are there contaminants in the product?

3. What is the real active ingredient?

Where Do Consumers Go for Information?

Information Therapy
• Consumers with access to carefully vetted medical information visit emergency rooms and doctors offices less frequently, cutting health costs.

− Wall Street Journal

“On the Internet, nobody knows you’re a dog.”

New Yorker, 1993

**How Reliable is the Internet**

• Home management of cough in children
  ♦ 19 web sites
  ♦ 10 web sites, more incorrect than correct information
  ♦ 2 web sites - complete information

  − Pediatrics 2000; Jan 10 105:el

• Treatment of childhood diarrhea
  ♦ Established guidelines from American Academy of Pediatrics
  ♦ 300 web sites
  ♦ 12% conformed to guidelines


**Volume of Information of the Internet**

• Gout
• Gout & Drug
• Allopurinol
• Zyloprim
• 162,000 hits
• 60,400 hits
• 18,700 hits
• 2,190 hits

− Search Done on Google

**Inaccurate Information - Are Consumers Concerned?**

• 86% concerned if source is reliable
• 81% found information on search - not referral
• 58% checked to find provider of information
• 52% who went to Internet think “almost all” information is creditable
Does the Internet Influence “Health Seekers”
- 48% say advice improved how they care for themselves
- 92% information was useful
- 47% information affected their decisions for themselves
- 36% information affected their decision for a loved one

How Important is Drug Information on the Internet (91,944 Queries)
- 40,000 Diseases and Pathologic Processes
- 18,000 Chemical and Drugs
- 8,000 Procedures

Drug Information for the Consumer
Know What You Are Getting Questions?