

ATTITUDES OF PATIENTS TOWARDS ONLINE COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES WITH HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Maria M. Bujnowska – Fedak, [Joanna Waligóra](#), Agnieszka Mastalerz-Migas

Department of Family Medicine, Wrocław Medical University, Poland

The Internet is increasingly used for health-related purposes and evolves with the ever-changing needs of patients. The aim of this study was to assess the level of reliance on the Internet as a health information source, to examine which online communication activities are the most common for health purposes, to determine the attitudes and needs of patients in this area and the factors affecting its use. A total of 1,000 adults were selected from the Polish population by random sampling. The survey was administered by Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI). The study concluded that 76.9% of the respondents used the Internet for health purposes, among whom 72.6 % of active and 27.4% of passive users were distinguished. The role of the Internet as a source of health information has increased, which corresponds to growing interest in online health services. As far as the factors affecting their use are concerned, a digital divide was shown. The majority of individuals searching for health information in the Internet lived in urban areas, had high level of education and were professionally active. We conclude that increased interest in the use of the Internet related to health determines the direction in which e-health should be developed in the future.