Germans would value more trustworthy online health information

Friday 10 October, 2025

Most people these days look online for answers to questions on health. However, many have doubts on the integrity and quality of the information provided by social media platforms and AI chatbots. The Bertelsmann Stiftung would like to contribute to promoting reliable sources and increasing confidence in digital information on health by means of its new "InfoCure" international initiative.

Gütersloh - There is a strong desire on the part of people in Germany for high-quality and reliable information on health via the Internet. As many as 93% regard quality assurance on health and medical content found on the internet as important, as is shown by a representative survey conducted on behalf of the Bertelsmann Stiftung. One important reason for this could be the fact that 71% of Germans see their own digital competency on health issues as limited, as Bielefeld University's new "Health Literacy Survey" (HLS-GER 3) reveals. Many people have difficulty in assessing whether online information on health issues is trustworthy.

The significance of online sources in searching for information on health has increased over recent years. In the Bertelsmann Stiftung analysis, 87% of respondents say that they search online for information on health issues. Women do so more frequently than men by 91% to 83%, and those with higher educational qualifications more frequently than those with fewer qualifications, by 95% to 77%. Among the sources used, search engines are the most popular. And among those who are aware of search engines, 87% use them to look for information in a health context, either frequently or occasionally. Healthcare web portals have a high rate of use: 54% of those who are aware of them make use of them frequently or occasionally. In the case of AI chatbots, the figure is 40%, with messenger services it is 36%, and with social media platforms 29%.

Reservations about the quality of digital health information

However, many people simultaneously harbour doubts concerning the trustworthiness of the digital responses provided on health issues. For example, 59% of respondents say that they feel they have received incorrect information frequently or occasionally when looking up health-related content on social media. With those using search engines for this purpose, the figure is 47%, and for AI chatbots 41%. By contrast, only 26% of those looking for information on health portals feel that they have received incorrect information frequently or occasionally.

"Incorrect or misleading information on health issues could cause great harm – both at an individual and at a societal level," Bertelsmann Stiftung executive member Daniela Schwarzer says. "For that reason, creating trustworthy sources on the internet for information on health on the internet is more important than ever, along with further developing it and identifying it in a transparent way," she adds.

The Bertelsmann Stiftung, along with the Austrian National Public Health Institute (Gesundheit Österreich GmbH) and Switzerland's Careum Stiftung, has set up the "InfoCure" non-profit initiative with the aim of assuring the quality of digital health information and countering the dissemination of false information. The intention is to establish an international certification system that vets providers of information on health objectively on the basis of scientific indicators. The certificate aims to assist digital applications to recognise trustworthy content on health issues. The "Nature Medicine Commission Quality Health Information for All" will take on the development of the indicators. This forum is made up of 24 international experts, including Daniela Schwarzer.

Contact:

Sebastian Schmidt-Kaehler, phone: +49 52 41 81 81 863

Email: sebastian.schmidt-kaehler@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Related Sectors:

Computing & Telecoms :: Health ::

Related Keywords:

Bertelsmann Stiftung :: Internet :: Health :: InfoCure :: Digital Health Information :: Analysis ::

Scan Me:

Company Contact:

_

news aktuell

E. desk@newsaktuell.de
W. https://www.newsaktuell.de/

View Online

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.newsaktuell.pressat.co.uk