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# The Impact of Online Behavior on Hospital Choice

Google OTX Custom Hospital Research Study  
U.S., 2009

# Study Methodology

Vendor: OTX: Online Testing Exchange



Survey field dates: April 29, 2009 – May 3, 2009

Number of Interviews: 1,000 completes from of an online survey, which includes a 50/50 split of patients and caregivers.

## In order to qualify for the survey, a respondent had to:

- Reside in the United States
- Be 18 – 55 years old
- Been admitted\* or cared for someone\*\* who has been to the hospital within the past year or plan on being admitted\* or care for someone\*\* who plans to stay overnight within the next year
- Search for hospital related information online in the past 12 months.

\* Defined as Patient, n=500. \*\* Defined as Caregiver, n=500.

# Key Findings

- 1** There is a large opportunity to engage hospital information seekers online

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- 2** People are more likely to consult the Internet before turning to family, friends, or even a healthcare professional

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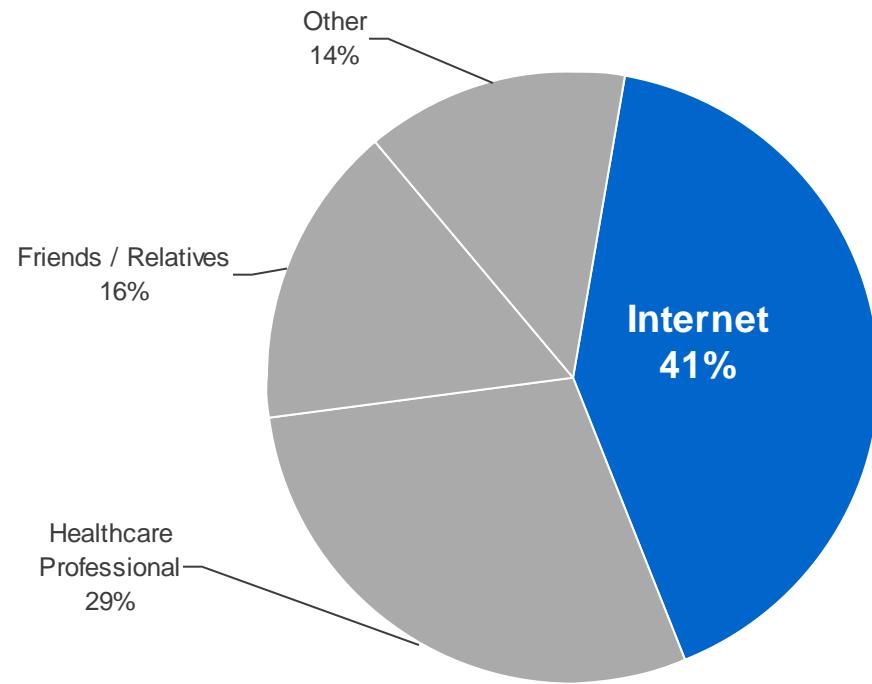
- 3** Next to hospital websites, search engines are the most utilized source of online information about hospitals

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- 4** Online hospital searches prompt action and the Internet has a direct impact on the health and well being of consumers

# Consumers Turn to Internet First

First Source Used to Research Hospitals

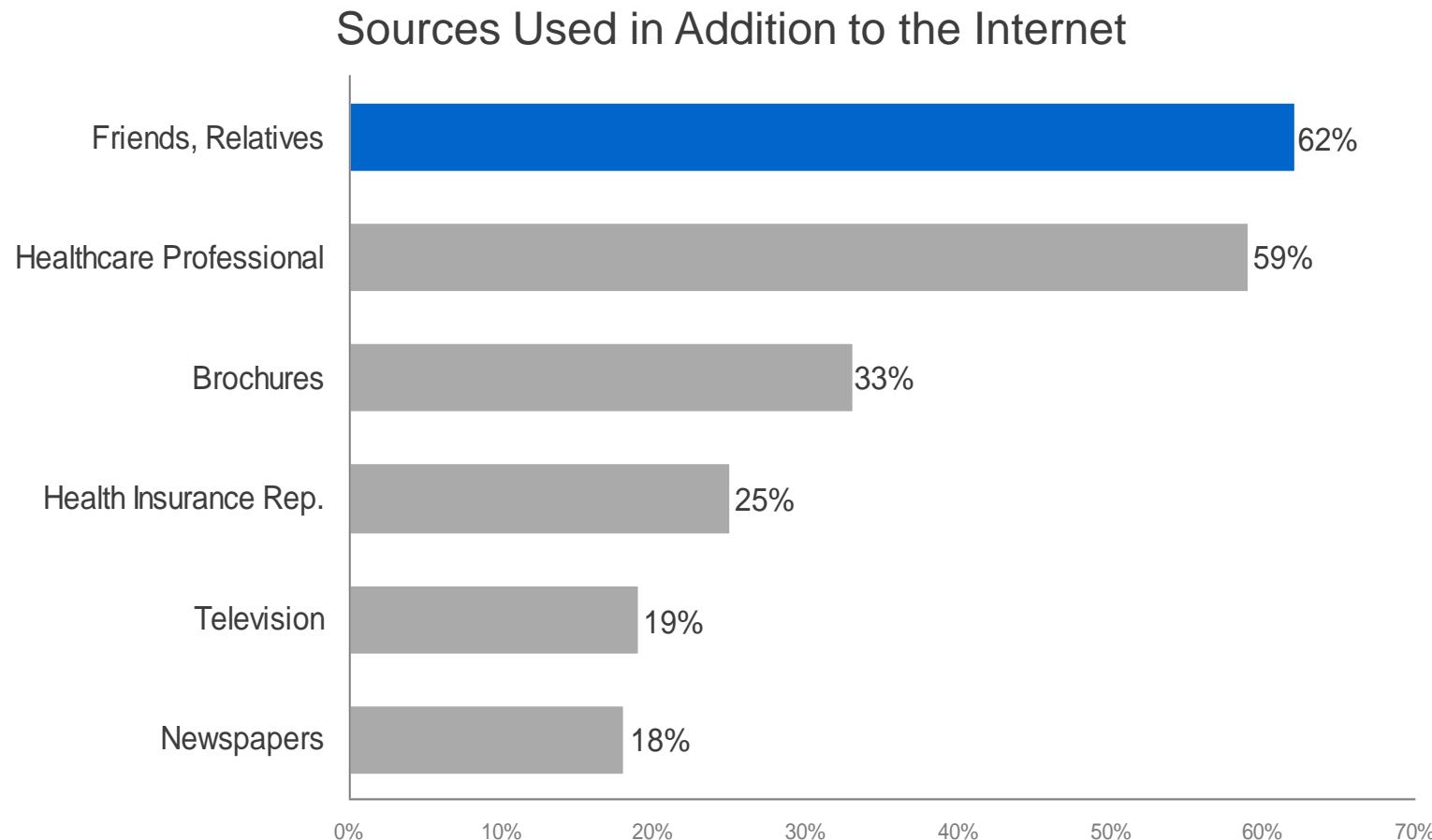


Question: Which of the following sources do you refer to first when looking for information on hospitals? Based on total: Total (1000); Sufferers (500); Caregivers (500)

Source: OTX & Google Custom Hospital Study, June 2009

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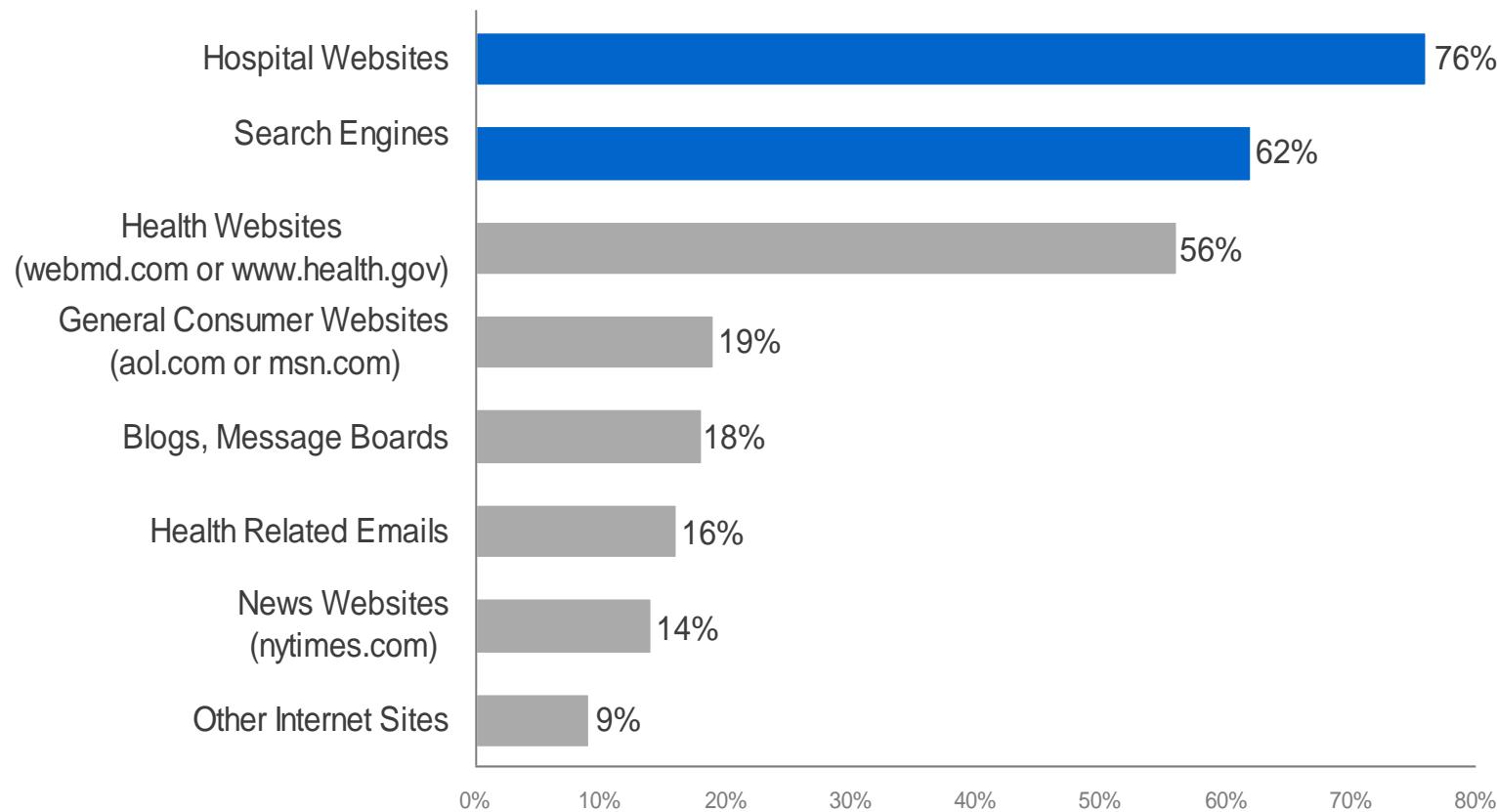
# Additional Sources Used to Gather Information



Questions: You mentioned earlier that you have used the internet to research hospitals pertaining to yourself or someone you care for. What other sources, if any, have you used for this type of research? Which of the following sources do you refer to first when looking for information on hospitals? **Based on total: Total (1000); Sufferers (500); Caregivers (500)**  
Source: OTX & Google Custom Hospital Study, June 2009.

# Majority Use Hospital Websites and Search

## Online Resources Used to Obtain Information on Hospitals

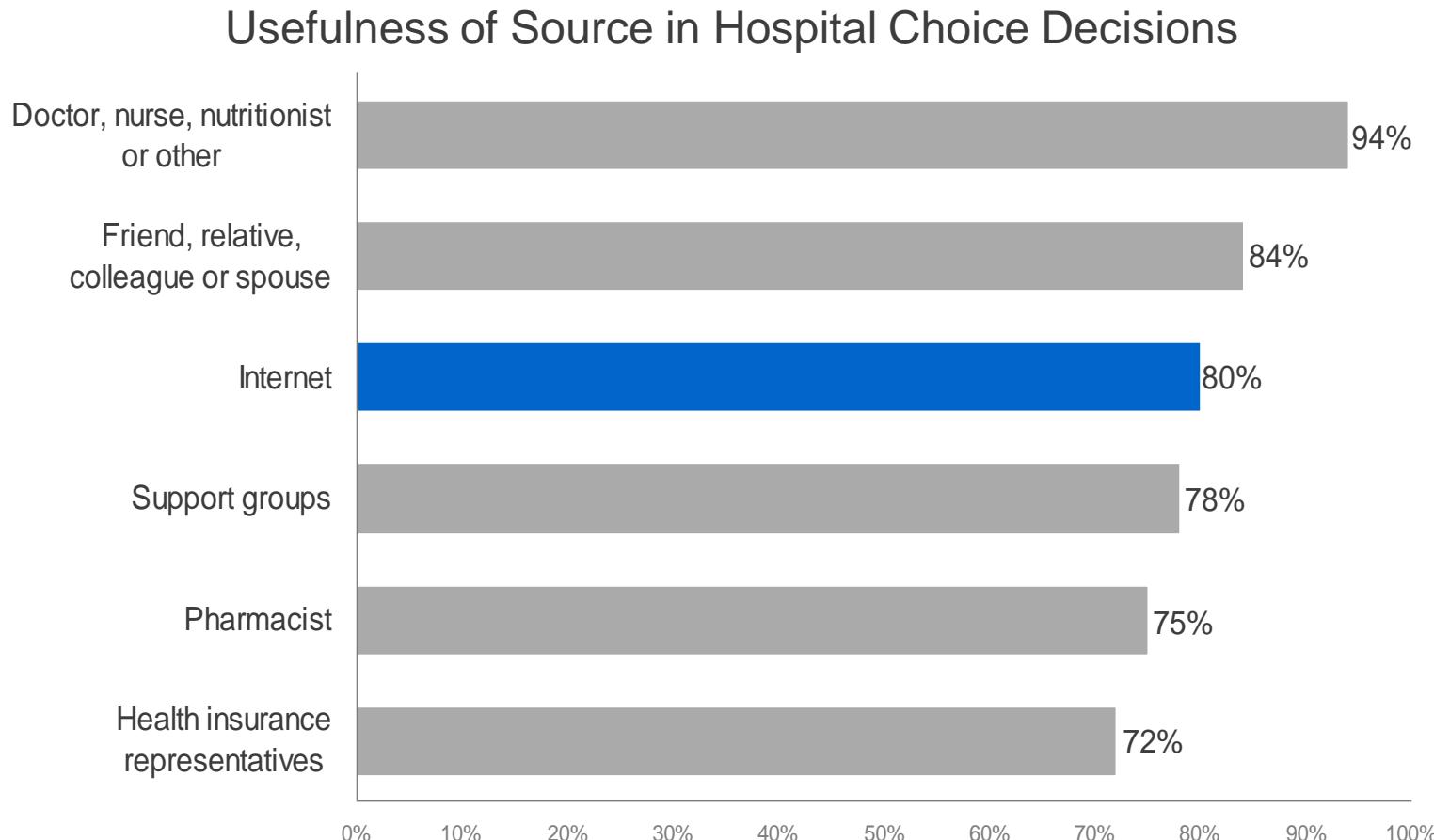


Question: Now thinking specifically about **online** sources, which of the following have you used to obtain information on hospitals? Based on total: Total (1000); Sufferers (500); Caregivers (500)

Source: OTX & Google Custom Hospital Study, June 2009

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# Next to Speaking to Someone, the Internet Is the Most Useful Source of Information



Question: Based on your experience, how useful are the following sources when choosing a hospital.

Based on those who used the source to research hospitals: Total (66-1000); Sufferers (45-500); Caregivers (16-500)

Top 2 box: Extremely/Very useful

Source: OTX & Google Custom Hospital Study, June 2009.

# Patients Look for Condition, Facility and Staff Information

## Reasons for Conducting Online Research

### Condition Information



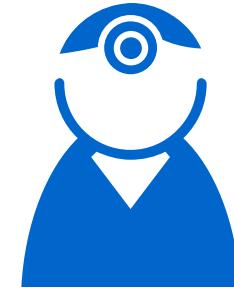
- To learn more about conditions
- To find out how you treat a condition

### Facility Information



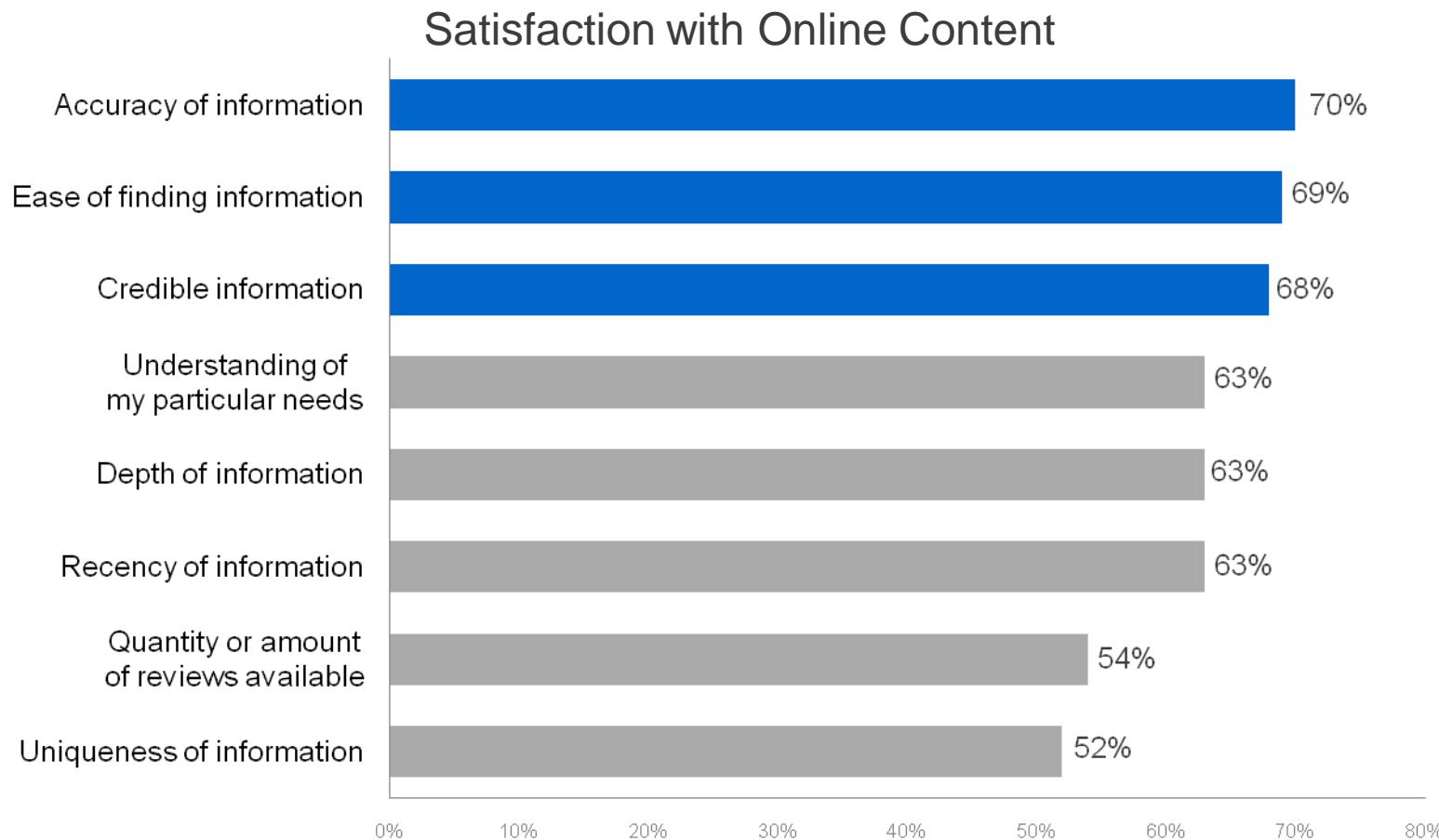
- To find a hospital that specializes in a condition/treatment
- To compare facilities
- To research a facility recommended by a doctor
- To determine the convenience of a facility
- To research a facility seen from an ad
- To find info on a clinical trial

### Medical & Admin Staff Info



- To learn about a facility a physician is associated with
- To get information on a facility's staff

# Hospital Info Seekers Are Most Satisfied with Accuracy, Ease, & Credibility



Question: When it comes to researching hospitals online, how satisfied are you with the following?

Based on those who used source to find information on hospitals: Total (62-759); Sufferers (36-367); Caregivers (19-392)

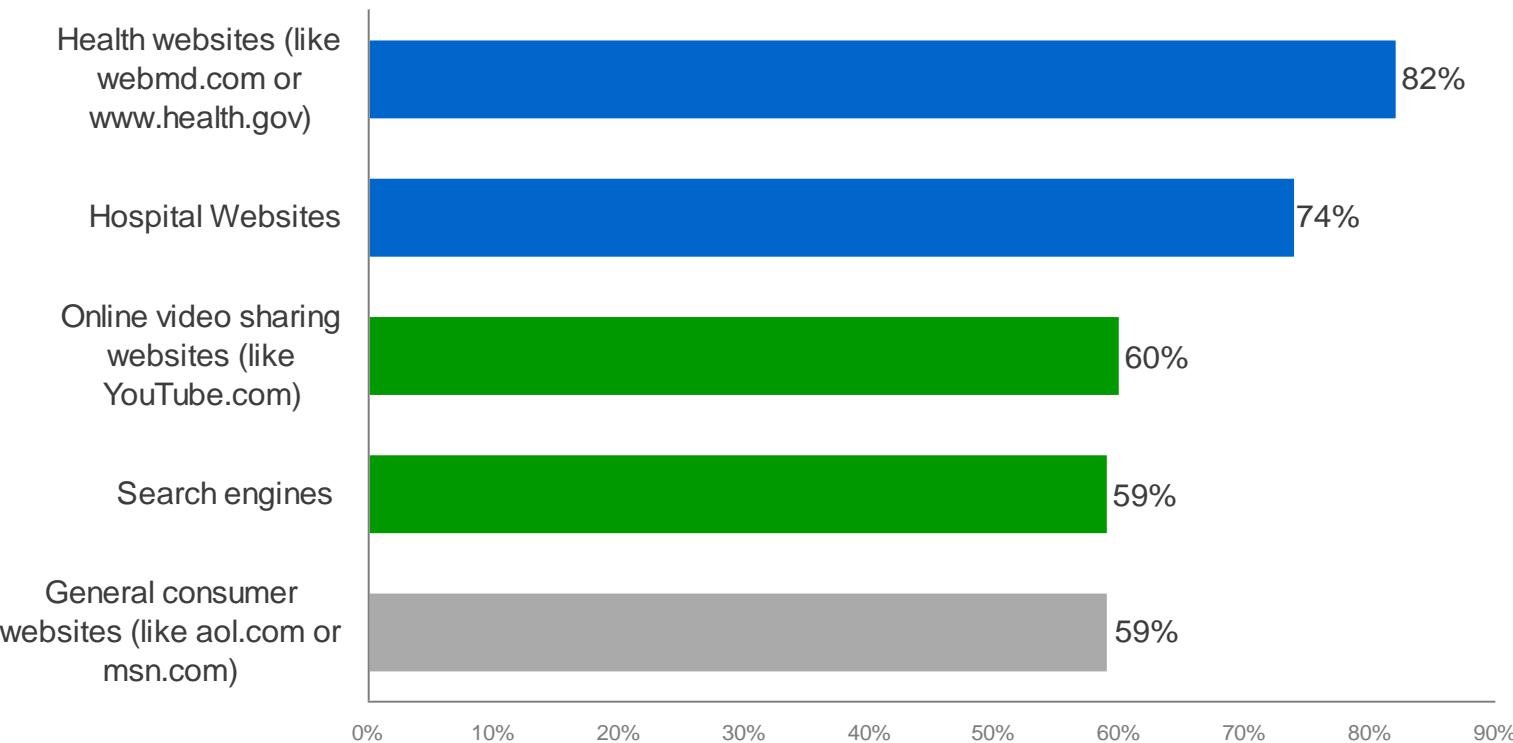
Top 2 box: Extremely/Very Satisfied

Source: OTX & Google Custom Hospital Study, June 2009.

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# Search Engines Are Highly Trusted by Nearly Two-Thirds of Hospital Info Seekers

## Most Trusted Online Sources of Hospital Info

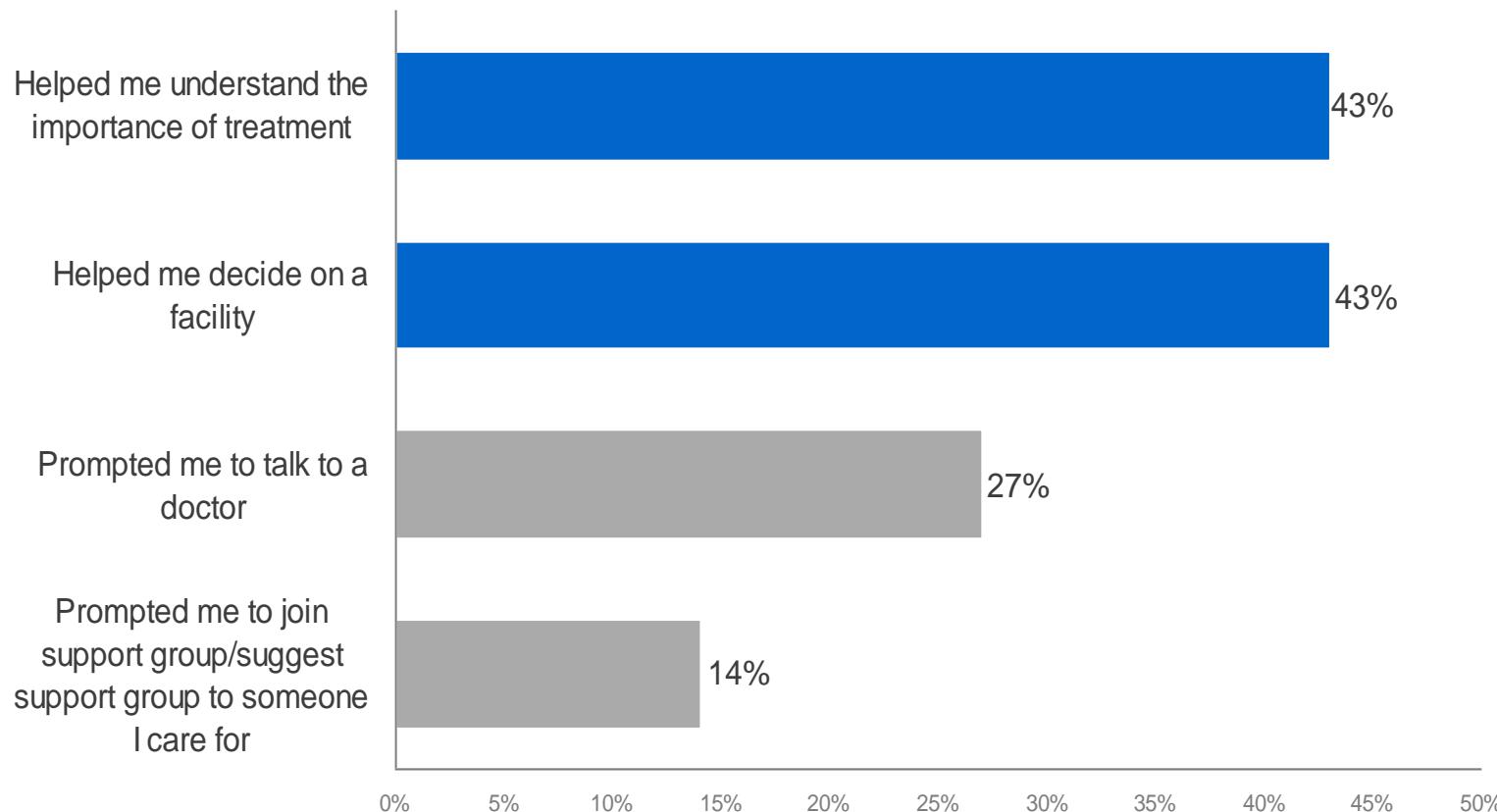


Question: How much do you trust the following online sources?  
Based on total: Total (1000); Sufferers (500); Caregivers (500)  
Source: OTX & Google Custom Hospital Study, June 2009.

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# Internet Educates and Helps in Decision Choice

## How the Internet Helped in Choice Decision



Question: Specifically, how have the following sources helped as you looked for information on hospitals?

Based on Internet users

Source: OTX & Google Custom Hospital Study, June 2009.

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# Internet Helps in Facility Choice

## Sources That Helped Guide Facility Choice



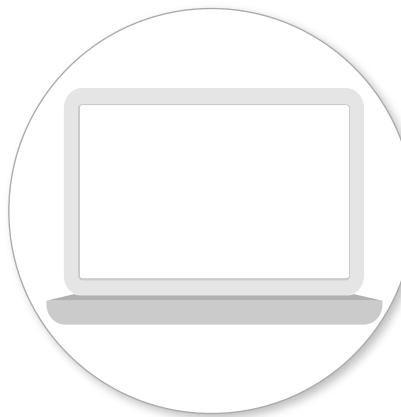
**53%**

Doctor, nurse,  
nutritionist or other  
healthcare  
professional



**34%**

Informational  
brochures or  
pamphlets



**43%**

**Internet**



**50%**

Friend, relative,  
colleague or  
spouse

Question: Specifically, how have the following sources helped you as you looked for information on hospitals?

Based on total: Total (1000); Sufferers (500); Caregivers (500)

Source: OTX & Google Custom Hospital Study, June 2009.

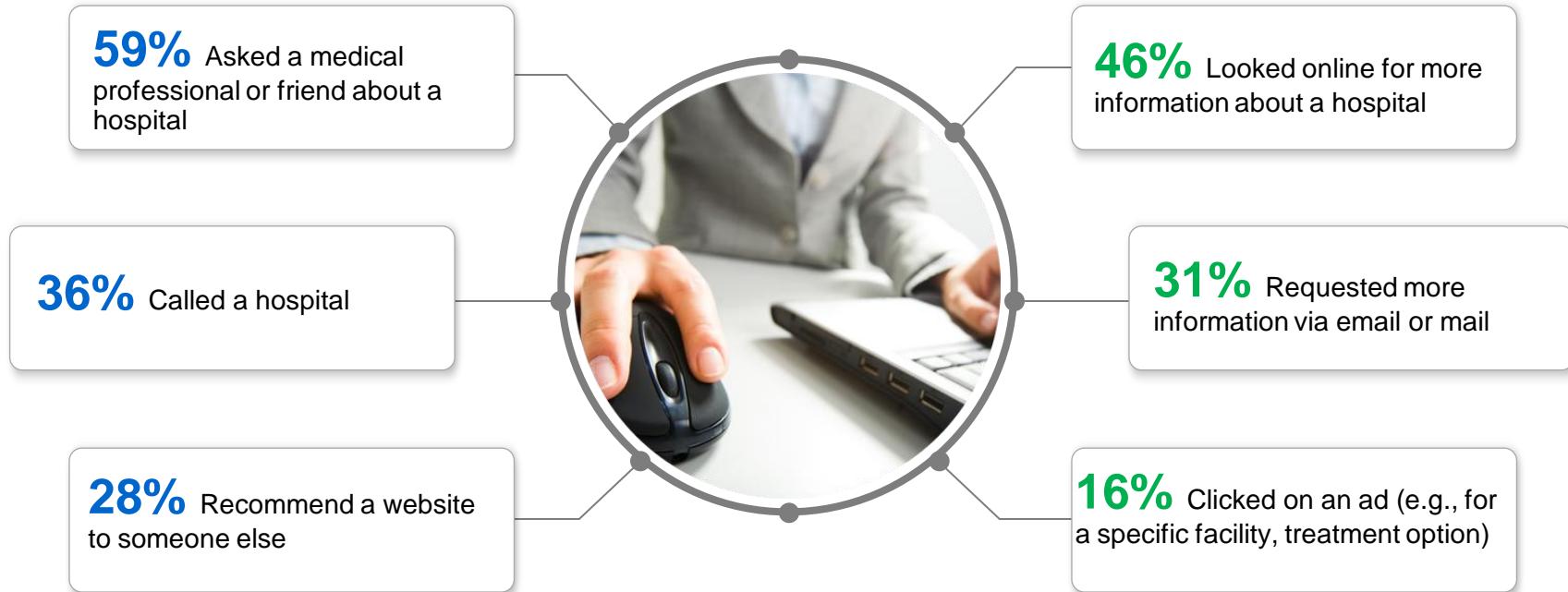
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# Actions Taken as a Result of an Online Search

**85% of People Take Action Offline**

**66% of People Take Action Online**



Question: Which of the following have you ever done as a result of conducting an online search on hospitals?

Based on total: Total (1000); Sufferers (500); Caregivers (500)

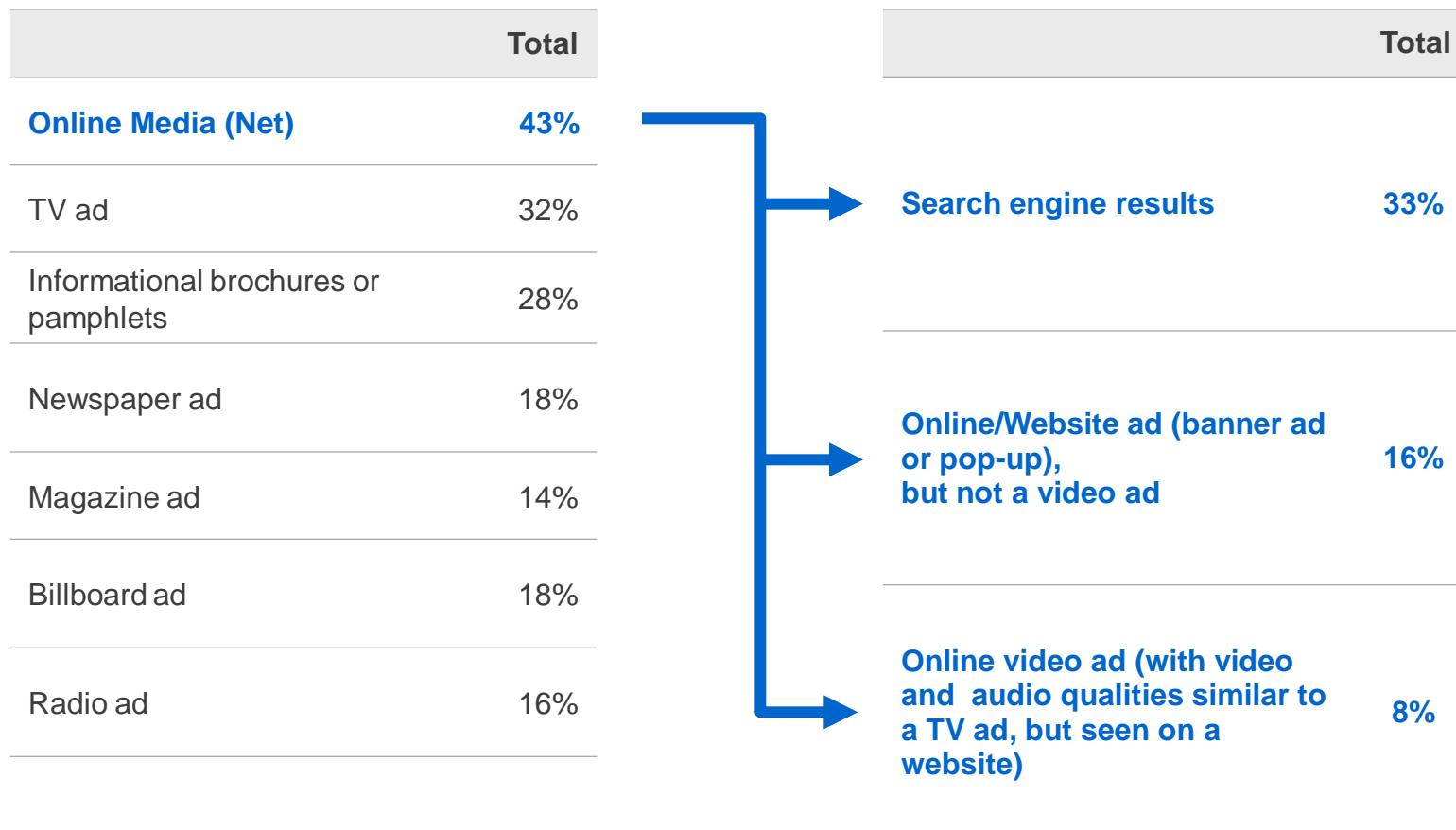
Source: OTX & Google Custom Hospital Study, June 2009.

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# Online Searches for Hospitals Have Higher Recall Rates than all Other Mediums

## Advertising Recall



Question: In addition to all of the research that you did to learn about , which of the following advertisements do you recall seeing or hearing, if any? (Please select all that apply) Base: Total = 1000 (Sufferers = 500; Caregivers = 500).  
Source: OTX & Google Custom Hospital Study, June 2009.

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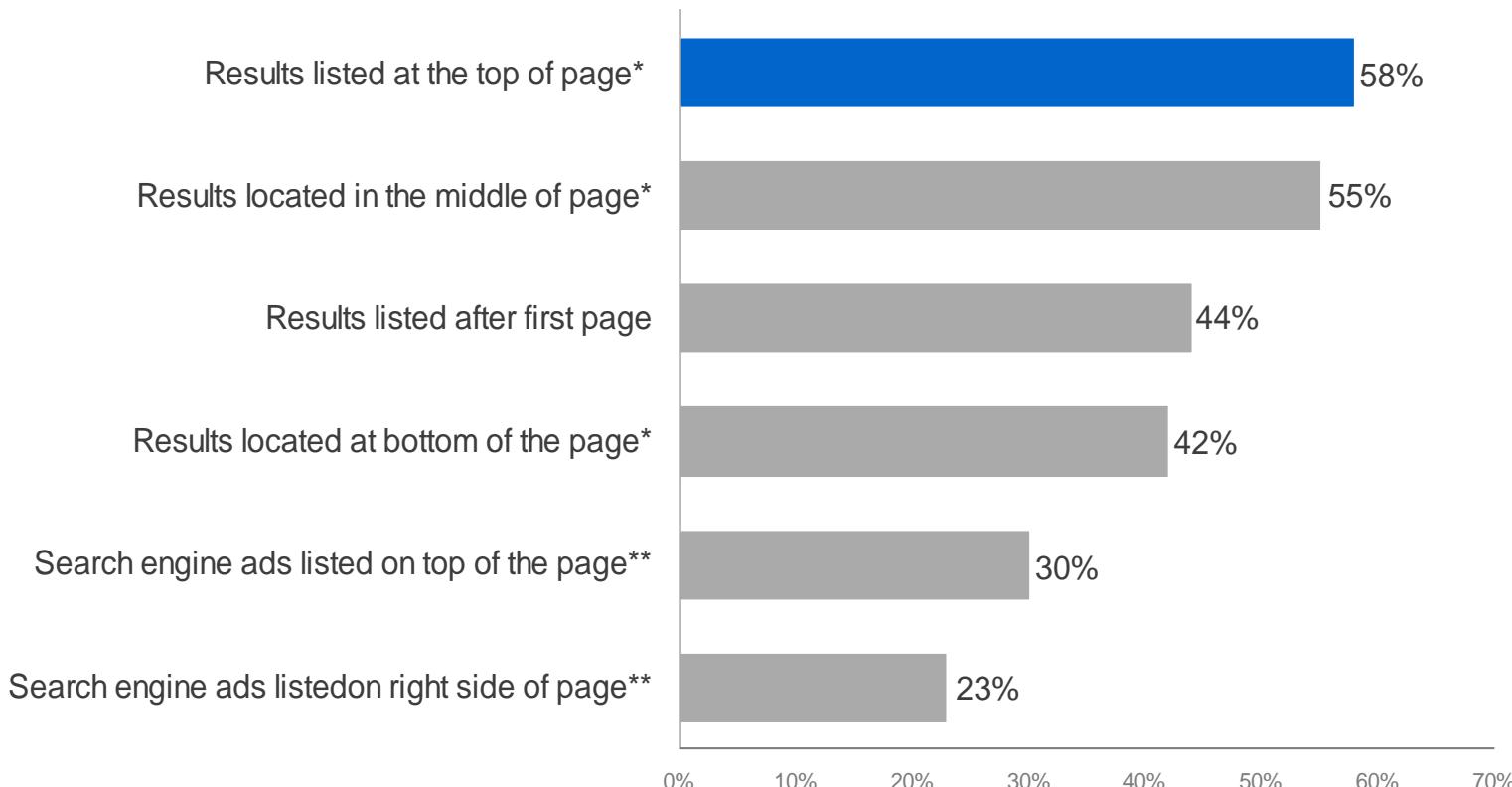
# Advertising Recall Leads Consumers to Take Action

Actions Taken Based on Advertising Recall	Total
Looked online for more information about a hospital	43%
Asked a medical professional about a hospital	38%
Asked a friend or family member about a hospital	38%
Thought more favorably about a hospital	30%
Called a hospital	26%
Visited a hospital	23%
Requested more information be mailed to you	21%
Recommended a website to someone else	18%
Called a toll-free or 800 number	15%
Considered using a hospital based on the search result	15%
Booked an appointment or stay online	10%
Switched hospitals	10%
Clicked on an ad for a specific facility, treatment option, etc	7%
Forwarded a link or video	5%

Question: And, which of the following, if any, have you taken as a result of seeing or hearing advertising for hospitals? Based on those who recall seeing advertising for hospitals: Total (746); Sufferers (377); Caregivers (369)  
Source: OTX & Google Custom Hospital Study, June 2009.

# Nearly One-Third of Hospital Info Seekers Click on Ads to Get More Info

Likelihood to Click on Search Engine Results



\*Not "labeled", "sponsored" or "paid". \*\*Usually labeled or identified as "sponsored" or "paid" listings

Question: While researching hospitals on a search engine such as Google or Yahoo!, how likely are you to click on the following?

Base: Find search engines useful Total n=966; Sufferers n=485; Caretakers n=481

Top 2 box: Extremely/Very Likely

Source: OTX & Google Custom Hospital Study, June 2009.

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## Conclusions & Recommendations

Google OTX Custom Hospital Research Study  
August 2009

# Conclusions & Recommendations

## Conclusions

The Internet is often the primary and useful source to find information on hospitals

Hospital info seekers begin their research using search and surfing the web

Online research leads to higher ad recall and impacts health decisions

## Recommendations

Syndicate and distribute messages across the web to reach hospital info seekers as they search for and/or browse for information

Ensure your campaigns are set up to capture your target audience

Diversify your marketing mix through multiple channels

Like what you learned?  
Find more studies and data at

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