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ATKINS INTERNATIONAL GLOBAL BUSINESS NEWSLETTER

HEALTH 2.0 Trends in Raising Health Awareness

In the past, a patient trying to research a diagnosis on his own usually spent hours at the library trying to locate reference books, scanned through medical journals hoping to find a related article, and finally enlisted the help of his best friend's cousin's brother who's a doctor to help try and make sense of anything he may have been able to find.

Since the 1990's, though, the internet has brought the library, the medical journals, and even the doctor directly into his home. With infinite variations for searching, sorting, and saving information, researching a diagnosis, medication, or procedure is easier than ever. We even have a new name for it – Health 2.0.

Although the methods might be new, the patient is the same. He is taking control of his health. She is being proactive about the wellbeing of her family. The average consumer has greater access to healthcare information now than at any other time in history. The medical knowledge once reserved for the privileged few who could complete years of college is now available online, anytime, and to anyone with a modem and a mouse.

And those in the know appear happy to share. Although healthcare information has always been common internet fodder, over the past few years, there has been a surge in the number of new websites devoted to helping patients find more accurate and disease-specific information.

The sponsors of these websites run the gamut from patient advocacy groups to marketing and pharmaceutical companies. Certainly, many of the online resources available are sites which offer informational content; but recently, conversation sites, called blogs, have experienced a wave of popularity. Oftentimes, patients setup a blog to initiate

dialogue for a rare condition or obscure set of symptoms in hopes of reaching out to others similarly afflicted or of gaining the attention of caregivers who can share advice or resources.

What started out as a grass-roots movement among neighbors and colleagues to help each other through the exchange of information has recently turned into big business. These days, it seems everyone has a stake in making sure patients have access to healthcare information. As manufactures and marketers have begun to realize, Health 2.0 is not merely a network of support groups, but also a way of reaching both consumers and their prescribing physicians.

As patients learn more about disease prevention and treatment, they also gain awareness of symptoms for themselves and loved ones, and the confidence to ask questions of their doctors and other caregivers. So, whether health information is provided strictly as a means to educate or as a gateway to reach consumers, patients and their families are the ultimate beneficiaries of these online resources. ← (Audrey Miller)





Health 2.0 For Everyone?

In the U.S., the trend is toward becoming a super self-educated patient – spending time in chat rooms and on health-related websites. But is the Health 2.0 revolution really available to everyone? What about those who do not speak English as a first language? The answer is overwhelmingly no.

Pharmaceutical companies lead the way when it comes to understanding the diverse U.S. healthcare market. They translate patient information brochures and disease awareness campaigns. They do market research and advertising in Spanish and Chinese. But most independent health education sites are sadly monolingual.

WebMD is a leading source of medical information and news. While none of the disease pages or drug information is offered in any language but English, they do offer *Noticias Breves de Salud*, a Spanish-language health news page.

Other sites, like RevolutionHealth, PatientsLikeMe, EveryDay Health and Wrong Diagnosis offer only English-



language resources. Spanish health information is, however, available at Medline Plus from the National Institutes of Health and at FamilyDoctor.org. Many non-English speakers have turned to sites like YouTube, where there is an overwhelming amount of health information in almost any language you can imagine. The problem here is there is no vetting of the accuracy of the information provided. U.S. Spanish speakers can go to international sites like that available from www.pulsomed.com in Spain. They have a site called Tu Otro Medico (Your Other Doctor; www.tuotromedico.com) that provides Spanish only content.

Some health information sites are resorting to posting user-translated information on their sites. This should be done with extreme care as the overall accuracy of the information diminishes when translations have errors or inaccuracies. However, allowing users to post questions in their native language is indeed the beginning of a truly multilingual, diversity-friendly website.

Perhaps the Health 2.0 sites worry, because their content is continuously changing, that making it available in other languages would be too much of a burden. The fact of the matter is, with the content management systems currently available, translation memory (TM) can be leveraged to allow for flexible, real-time translation of content that is constantly developing. ←

“it is estimated nearly one-third of the 100 million Americans who have looked for health information online say that they or people they know have been significantly helped by what they found.”

Wikipedia, Health 2.0

Happy Anniversary AIA!

Atkins International celebrates 14 years as a leading provider of global language solutions.

Removing the Barriers in Health Education

Healthcare professionals are providing care to the increasingly diverse populations in the United States and throughout the world. Studies have shown that non-native English speakers are unable to receive the care they need on a consistent basis. The ability to provide patient information in multiple languages enhances a caregiver’s ability to truly affect their communities.

Atkins International Associates has dedicated 2009 to providing healthcare professionals with the tools needed to expand patient access to information and education programs. By offering our high quality translation and interpreting services at a discounted rate, we hope to eliminate language driven barriers to understanding and expand program access to patients.



Contact us for more information. www.aiaTranslations.com



Health 2.0: A Tale of Two Industries

The internet has become integral to our lives. Introduced to the masses in the mid-90's, the internet allowed for fast and efficient flow of information over space and time.

To stay afloat after the tech bubble burst in 2002, the computing industry had to find new and imaginative ways to combine technology, products and services that would interest consumers. This new way of using the internet is referred to as Web 2.0.

Sites like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter popped up and blogs, wikis and podcasts were created. Web 2.0 is more than technology, it is a social, cultural and political phenomenon that allows for users to participate and generate content. The computing industry in general has become one where quality is increasing and costs are decreasing.

America's healthcare system on the other hand, is in dire need of life support. The largest industry in the U.S., it takes up 17% of the GDP. It is a lumbering giant characterized by high costs, inefficiency, and poor quality. It follows an archaic business model that provides no incentive for wellness.

When the two ends of the spectrum collide: Web 2.0 + Healthcare = Health 2.0.

A new concept, it is still being defined by industry experts. A more general definition given recently by Ted Eytan, MD says, "Health 2.0 is participatory health care. Enabled by information, software, and community that we collect or create, we the patients can be effective



partners in our own healthcare, and we the people can participate in reshaping the health system itself."

Health 2.0 has the potential to revolutionize healthcare. Every time you visit websites like Organized Wisdom, RightHealth or PatientsLikeMe, or visit a drug company's website to research side effects, you are helping purport this revolution.

It's not just patients researching symptoms and side effects though. Health 2.0 encompasses a move toward an integrated healthcare system. As care providers use technology to access a patient's electronic health record, the result is a continuum of care that follows a patient throughout the healthcare system.

By enhancing communication and thus the relationship between care givers and patients, the system provides better care based on individual needs. Providers will know if their patient does not speak English, which therapies were received and which were effective, tests that were run, and which drugs were prescribed. They will reduce the expense of duplicating tests and the danger of interacting drugs. The result is a more cost effective system with educated and empowered caregivers and patients.

So, what is Health 2.0? If the right tools are offered globally in all languages, it is about participatory healthcare characterized by open communication among caregivers, patients, healthcare professionals and researchers. Health 2.0 has the ability to transcend cultures and languages to empower patients and healthcare providers with information. ←

Doctors Social Network Too!

While most of the Health 2.0 networking is aimed at empowering patients, two big online communities are designed specifically for physicians: Medscape Physician Connect and Sermo. According to a study released by Manhattan Research, 60% of physicians are using or are interested in using online social networks.

The online users tend to be younger, female primary care doctors and the study claims they prescribe an average of 24 prescriptions per week more than non-users. According to the study author, Erika S. Fishman, this may result from one doctor discussing a positive treatment option online, making other doctors more likely to prescribe it. "What makes Sermo and Physician Connect so successful is the idea that it is a private community where physicians are talking together..."←

**"245,000 physicians
report to post
professional content
online or participate in
online communities
with other physicians"**

*White Paper: Physicians
and Web 2.0
Manhattan Research*



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Comparative Effectiveness Research: Good Practice?

While not a new concept, comparative effectiveness research (CER), and the inclusion of \$1.1 billion in funds for this research in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), has received a lot of media attention lately. Proponents argue it has the potential to reduce rising healthcare costs and improve healthcare quality. Opponents argue that using cost as a factor to assess effectiveness could inhibit a physician's ability to prescribe costly treatments and provide new therapies.

CER is loosely defined as testing the clinical effectiveness of treatment options for a medical condition by comparing similar treatments, competing drug therapies or analyzing different approaches, such as inpatient versus outpatient surgery. The goal is to provide doctors and patients with evidence to support treatment decisions.

In addition to concerns about cost comparison, there are concerns about which populations are included in the research. In the United States, women and minority groups are not typical participants in clinical trial studies. What constitutes good practice for CER? If you use clinical trial data for the research, a large portion of the population is likely excluded.

Since demand for comparison information is greater than resources for conducting additional expensive clinical trials, initiatives are being established to use observational research based on patient follow-up data. Since minority and non-English speaking populations in the US are growing significantly every year (equivalent to 50% of the population by 2050), special care needs to be taken to use observational data representing these vulnerable populations.

Gathering observational data provides faster results but since it is more subjective than a formal clinical trial setting, where that data comes from becomes important. With attention to comparative effectiveness research unlikely to wane in the near future, clear guidelines affecting CER study conduct, evaluation, reporting, and their inclusion of minority and non-English speaking populations, needs to be created to garner the best results. ←

The mission of CONNECT

With expertise in areas of language, culture and relocation, AIA will use the quarterly newsletter as a tool to unite and educate the global business community on issues of relevance for improving global business communication.

Sherry Dineen, *Editor*

Who we are...

Atkins International Associates, Inc. is a global provider of language and cultural support programs including:

- Corporate language training
- International relocation support
- Cross-cultural training
- Diversity training
- Family support programs
- Language programs for children
- Interpretation services
- Translation services

Check us out on the web at:
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