

## **IMPACT OF ONLINE HEALTH INFORMATION ON ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS OF POLISH CITIZENS 50+**

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The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of Internet use and online health information on attitudes, behavior and emotions of Polish citizens 50+ with special regard to their attitude towards health professionals and health care system. A total of 323 citizens in the age of 50 years and above using Internet for health purposes were selected from the Polish population by random sampling. Sample collection was carried out by the Polish opinion poll agencies in 2005, 2007 and 2012. The data were analyzed using R version 3.0.2 program. The Internet for health related purposes was used by 27.8% of Polish citizens 50+ in years 2005-2012. The use of medical Internet affected the attitude and health behaviors of older citizens. 69.7% of respondents were looking for health information that might help them to deal with a consultation, 53.9% turned to the Internet to be prepared for a medical appointment and 63.5% to assess the outcome of the medical consultation and get 'second opinion'. The most likely effects of health related use of the Internet were: willingness to change diet or other life style habits (48% of respondents) and making suggestions or queries on diagnosis or treatment to the doctor (46.1%). Feelings of reassurance or relief after obtaining information on health or illness were reported by similar number of respondents as feelings of anxiety and fear (31% and 31.3 % respectively). Online health information in different ways can affect attitudes, emotions and health behaviors of Polish citizens 50+.