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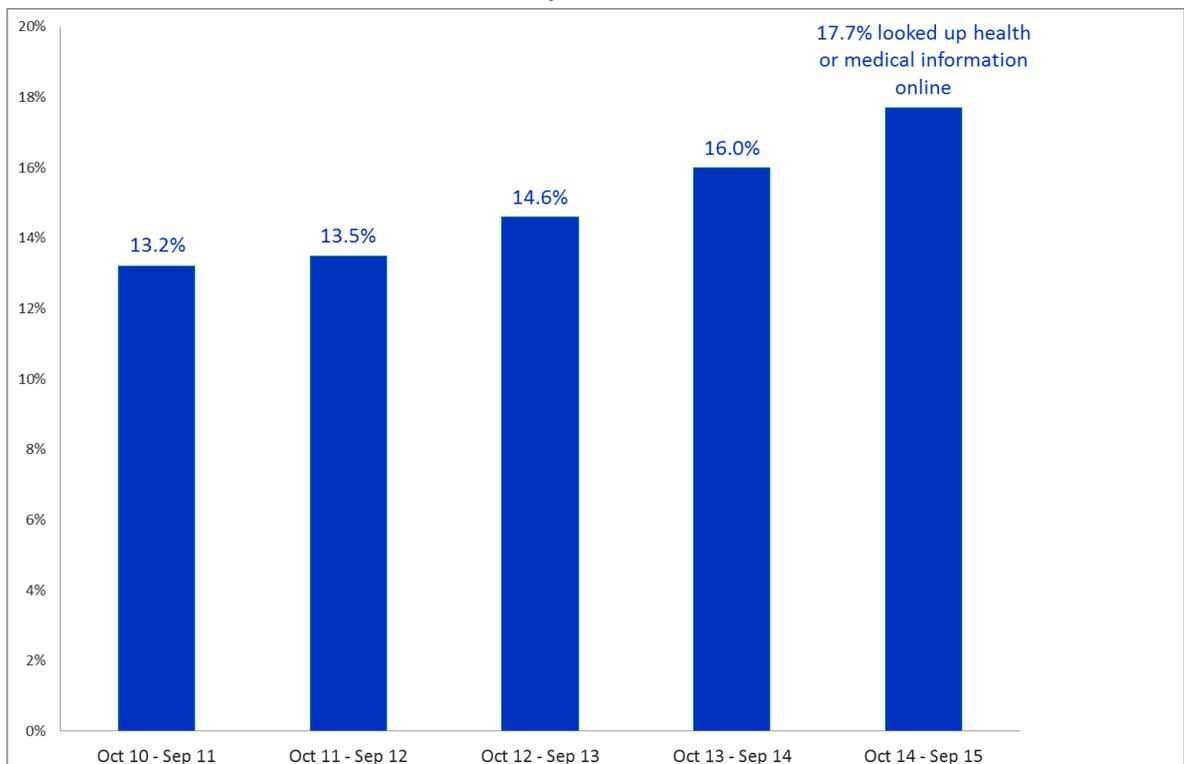
More patients using internet to self-diagnose or get a second opinion

Five million Australians pay for a doctor's visit in an average four week period—but an increasing proportion of them are also going online to look up health and medical information themselves, Roy Morgan Research shows.

Doctors' visitors are today over a third more likely to also look up medical information online than they were four years ago: in 2011, 13.2% of Australians (14+) who'd paid for a doctor's visit in the last four weeks had used the internet to look up health or medical information within the same period; in the year to September 2015, 17.7% of patients (or those paying for their visit) used the internet for some independent medical research.

Overall, 11.3% of Australians (14+) looked up health or medical information online in the last four weeks, up from 9.1% in 2011. Around four in ten online health researchers go, or have been to, a doctor within the same period, unchanged over the past five years.

% of doctor visitors who look up health or medical information online



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source Australia, October 2010 - September 2015, average annual sample n = 5,112 Australians 14+ who paid for a doctor's visit in last four weeks.

Michele Levine, CEO, Roy Morgan Research, says:

“Medical practitioners need to be aware that over one in six patients today are also researching health and medical information on the internet—and the number is growing.

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“This googling of symptoms and treatments may be conducted before or after a consultation, as a way to self-diagnose or get a second opinion. GPs and specialists could increasingly be facing patients who think they already know their conditions and the best medications (or indeed all the right symptoms to describe).

“Of course, the internet need not be all bad news for busy medical practitioners and our overworked health system. Doctors would do well to guide their patients to trustworthy websites for further information on their illnesses and medications, while governments and health organisations could develop and publicise reliable online tools for people to use as a source of information without having to see their GP.”

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Related Research

Download our profile of Australians who [access health or medical information online](#) or browse our huge range of [Health and Wellbeing](#) profiles.

About Roy Morgan Research

Roy Morgan Research is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in Indonesia, the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan Research has over 70 years' experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
7,500	±1.1	±1.0	±0.7	±0.5
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2