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Three out of every five Indians vulnerable to health misinformation on web: Study

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The survey was conducted by Cyber Media Research (CMR) on behalf of THIP Media among 1500 Indians



A survey conducted by THIP Media,which is a part of The Healthy Indian Project, reveals that a significant portion of the Indian population feels ill-equipped to identify credible health information on the internet.

The study found that three out of every five Indians (62%) admitted to not knowing how to identify trustworthy health information on the web, leaving them vulnerable to misinformation and potential harm. Moreover, 55% of respondents felt that they needed help understanding whether a health claim was true or false, indicating a significant lack of confidence in their ability to assess the veracity of health information online.

According to the research, 59% of Indians also worry that they may fall prey to health misinformation and get hurt without realising it. While 48% fear that any misinformation related to critical health conditions may hurt the most, another 36% feel that it is misinformation about alternative medicines that is most dangerous. The findings highlight the need for greater awareness and education on the importance of seeking out credible health information from reputable sources.

The survey also brought to light a significant lack of trust in doctors and a higher dependency on online health content. While 49% of people agreed that they would follow what their doctors suggested as treatment. Surprisingly, 28% of respondents agreed that they cross-check their doctor's advice through internet searches, indicating a growing trend of relying on unverified sources of health information.

Interestingly, the survey also found that two out of every five Indians were not aware of fact-checking helplines, which could provide them with reliable and accurate health information.

The research team hopes that the results will encourage policymakers to take proactive steps to educate the public on the importance of fact-checking and seeking out verified health information.