

Cisco report says Indian public open to virtual healthcare

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A recent survey by Cisco has revealed that the Indian population is more receptive to using technology to review a health condition rather than visiting the specialist in person. It revealed that nearly 88% of consumers would be comfortable communicating with a specialist using virtual technology (e.g. video chatting, text messaging).

The Cisco Customer Experience Report focused on health care was conducted in early 2013, and included responses from 1,547 consumers and HCDMs globally, with a consistent sample size of around 200 local respondents in each of the 10 countries surveyed. It also examined perceptions of consumers and health care decision makers (HCDMs) on patient experience in health care.

The report also revealed that 86% of Indian consumers surveyed would be comfortable with submitting genetic information to a doctor or other health care professionals to ensure they have all information available to treat and offer the most personal diagnosis possible. This could prove to be very important in current times, as an increasing number of people decide to opt for getting their genetic information through services offered by young startups like Xcode Life Sciences, Genomepatri and more.

The report findings challenged the assumption that face-to-face interaction is always the preferred health care experience. While consumers still depend heavily on in-person medical treatments, three-quarters of patients and citizens are comfortable with the use of technology for the clinician interaction. 75% of global consumers indicate they are comfortable with the idea of communicating with doctors using technology instead of seeing them in person.

Vishal Gupta, VP/general manager, Global Healthcare Solutions said, "Virtual healthcare is no longer a myth and this report is an indication of how technology can potentially play a greater role in enabling access to virtual healthcare. The state of convergence between the physical and digital world has raised the expectations of consumers and at the same time expanded scope for healthcare providers to take their engagement further with more collaboration and information."

Interest in accessing health information on mobile devices is also growing rapidly and is the No. 1 topic of consumer interest in India, Mexico, Brazil and China. Nearly 30% of those surveyed in India confirmed using health and fitness or medical apps on their mobile devices.

Rajendra Pratap Gupta, chairman, board of directors, Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) Asia Pacific India Chapter commented "Healthcare IT is a pre-requisite for equitable healthcare. Patients are perennially intimidated and bogged down by their healthcare experiences. However, the accelerated growth of smart devices backed by an intelligent network will soon render these issues non-existent. This report is an indicator towards how customers and patients will be more empowered in future, with easy access to information, enabling them to be more involved in the process.