



**Health On the Net Foundation**

Non Governmental Organization

*Quality of health related information on the Web*

**Results of the 10th HON survey on health and medical  
Internet use  
(July – August 2010)**

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## Survey Overview

- Time frame: July – August 2010 on HON web site
- Language: English (65%) and French (35% of total results)
- Participants: **524** responds from 60 countries around the world, majority – France (28%), the UK (18%), the USA (18%)
- Target audience: Individuals/citizens/patients (65%) and medical professionals (35%)
- Methodology: Non-probabilistic sampling, where appropriate the comparison with the results of survey 2005 was done

*A note: All the graphs represent a percentage for both groups of participants (where it is relevant only to citizens or professionals is mentioned) except for the slide 15.*

## Participants profile

- The majority of the participants are aged between **20 and 59** years old with the most active age group of 30-39 years old (30%), there were **more female** (65%) than male (35%) participants.
- For 48% of participants **English** is mother tongue, for 32% it is **French** and for 5% it is Spanish.
- 58% of participants come from **Europe** and 22% from **Northern America**. Overall, most of the participants live in France (28%), the USA (18%) and the UK (18%).
- 23% of all participants have **Master Degree** and 22% at least 4 years of college/university education.

## Detailed profiles of two target groups

### Out of all healthcare professionals respondents (100%):

- 23% had some medical specialisation,
- 18% identified themselves as healthcare providers
- 15% as General Practitioners (GPs)



### Out of all non-professionals / citizens respondents (100%):

- 19% were patients
- Additionally 14% were patients with specific condition
- 15% identified themselves as general healthcare consumers



Image credentials:

<http://organicandgreenliving.wordpress.com/2010/06/22/14-months-to-50-one-real-womans-account-of-her-new-healthy-lifestyle/>

## Use of the Internet

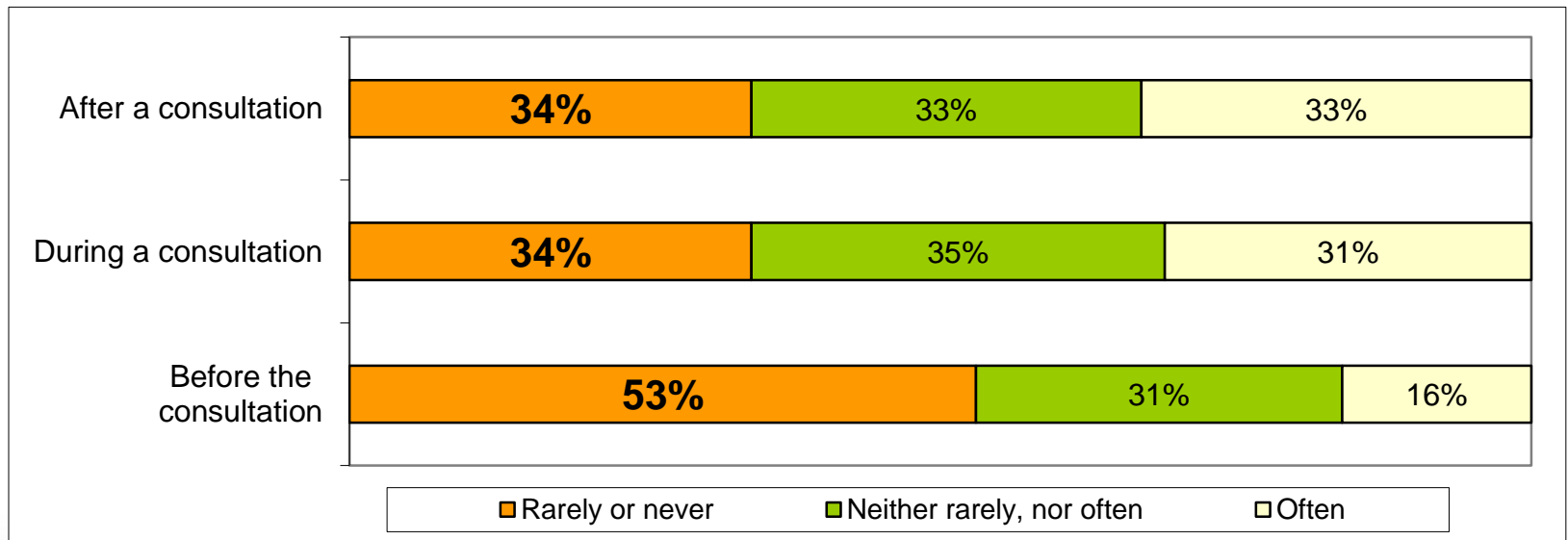
- On average the respondents use internet for 7 or more years (**79%**). This number has significantly increased over the last years from 44%
- **45%** of the respondents connect to the Internet through the cable modem and wireless (**37%**) (in 2005 wireless connection was only in 4% of cases).
- **50%** of users spend from 2 to 4 hours per day in the Internet (in 2005 36%) and **22%** less than 2 hours (in 2005 39%).
- **96%** of users spend time checking and writing emails and **93%** browsing web. **60%** read newsletter, online communities and **51%** participate in online communities. *In 2005 only 28% were reading and 23% were participating in community activities.*

## Use of Internet for health

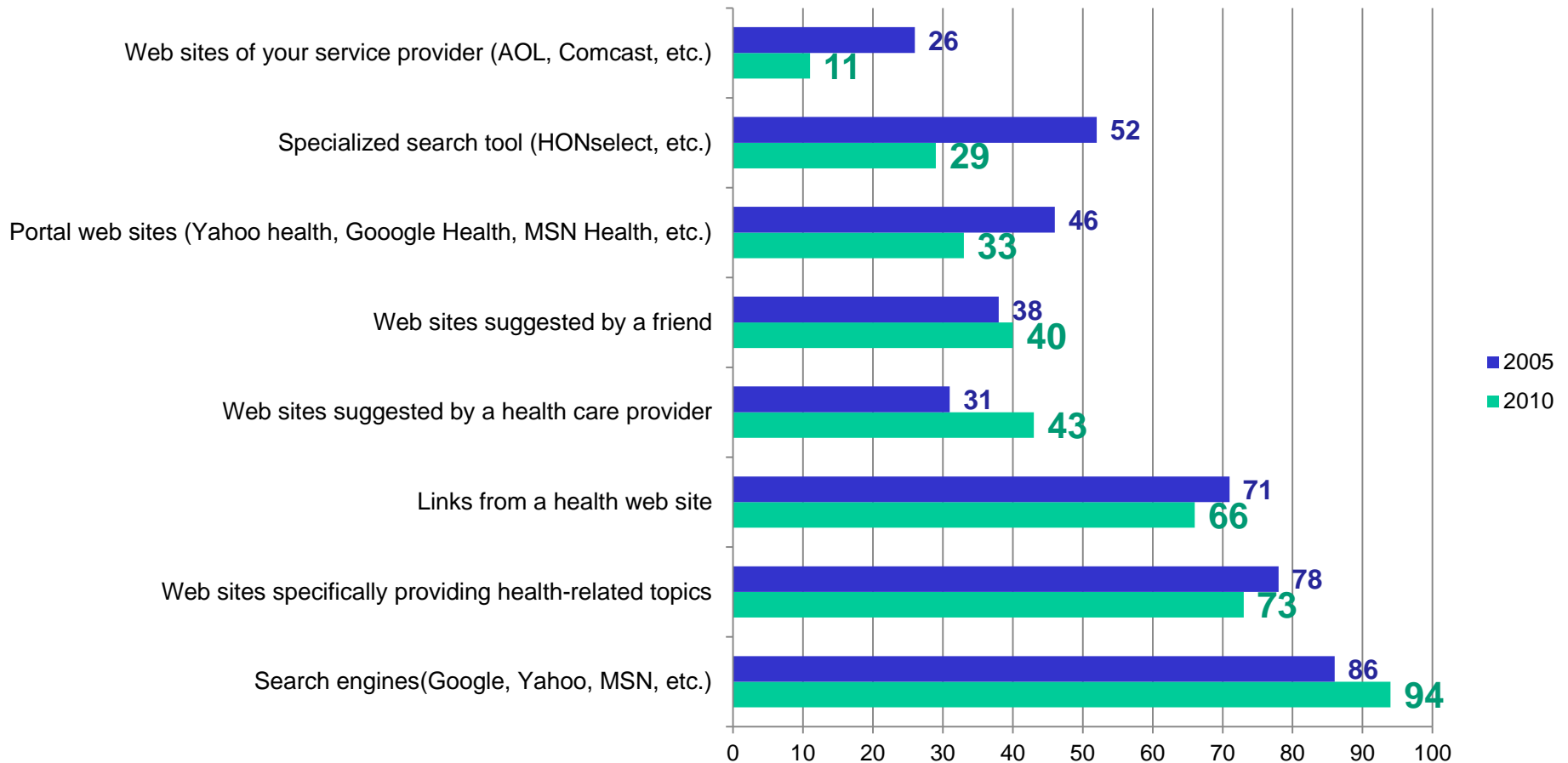
- **44%** of users was searching for health information *more than 3 times during “past week”*, 25% did it from 2 to 3 times. People mostly search for disease description (69%) and medical literature (62%).
- Users are looking for information for **themselves (77%)**, their children (32%), and then patient, spouse (25% each), friend (24%), relative (23%).
- On average **61%** of respondents visit **from 2 to 5** health related web site and 25% check from 6 to 10 web sites.

## When do you search for medical information?

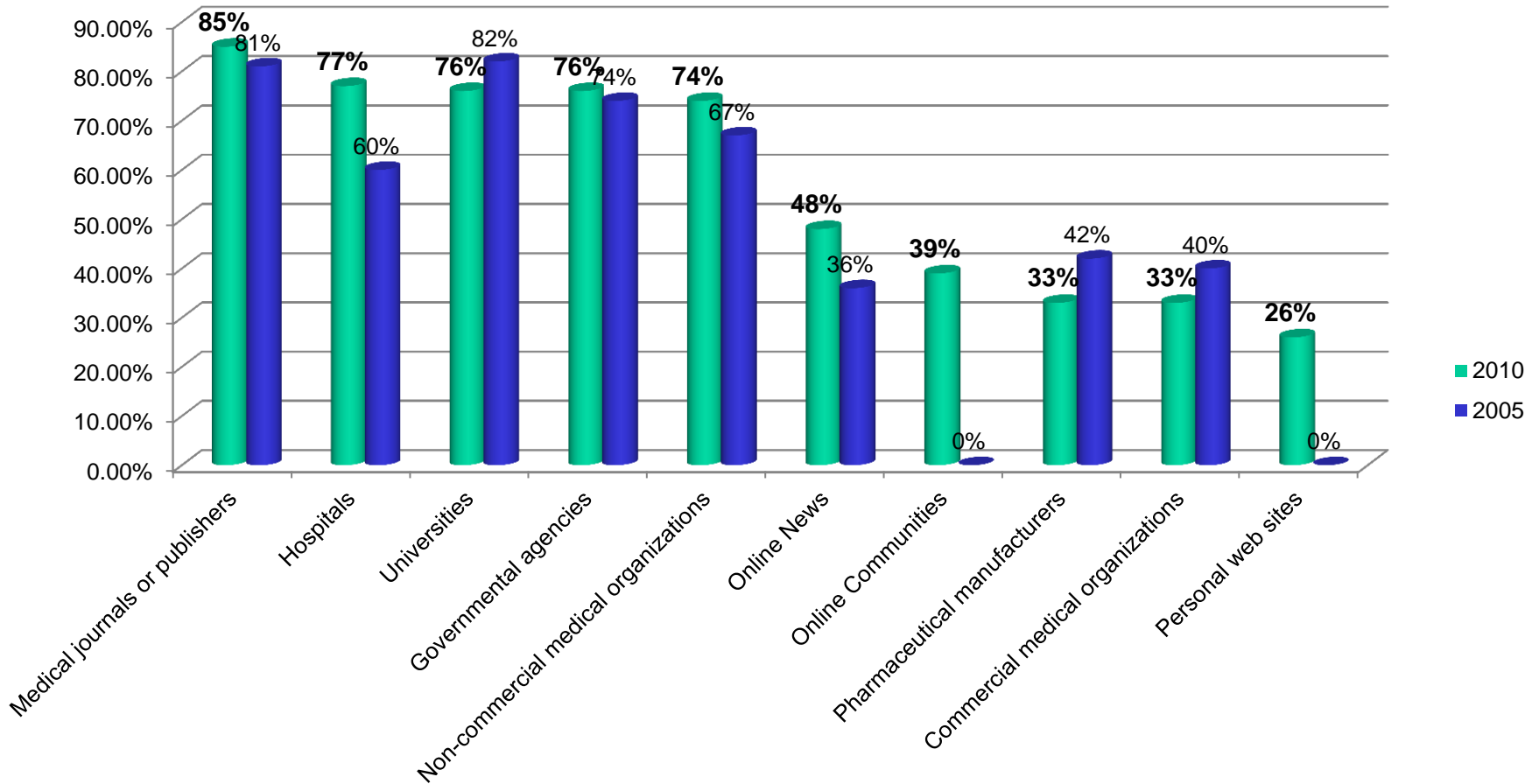
- 50% of patients mostly search for health information disregard to consultation time (no before, no after).
- 78% of patients say that healthcare provider has never told them about the health web site.
- Healthcare Professionals confirm it saying that they rarely recommend the sites disregard to “time” of consultation:



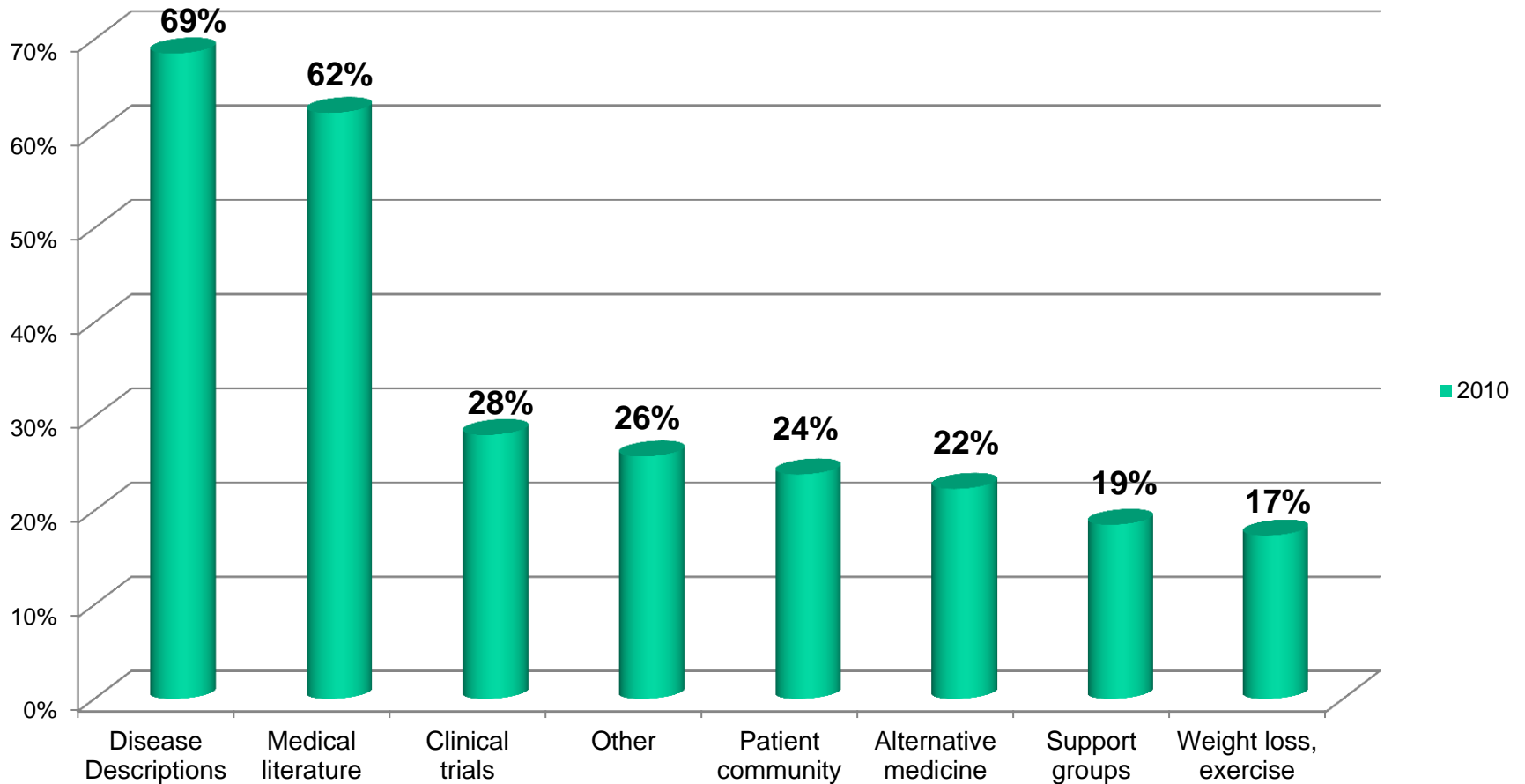
## The most frequently used web sites to obtain medical/health information on the Internet



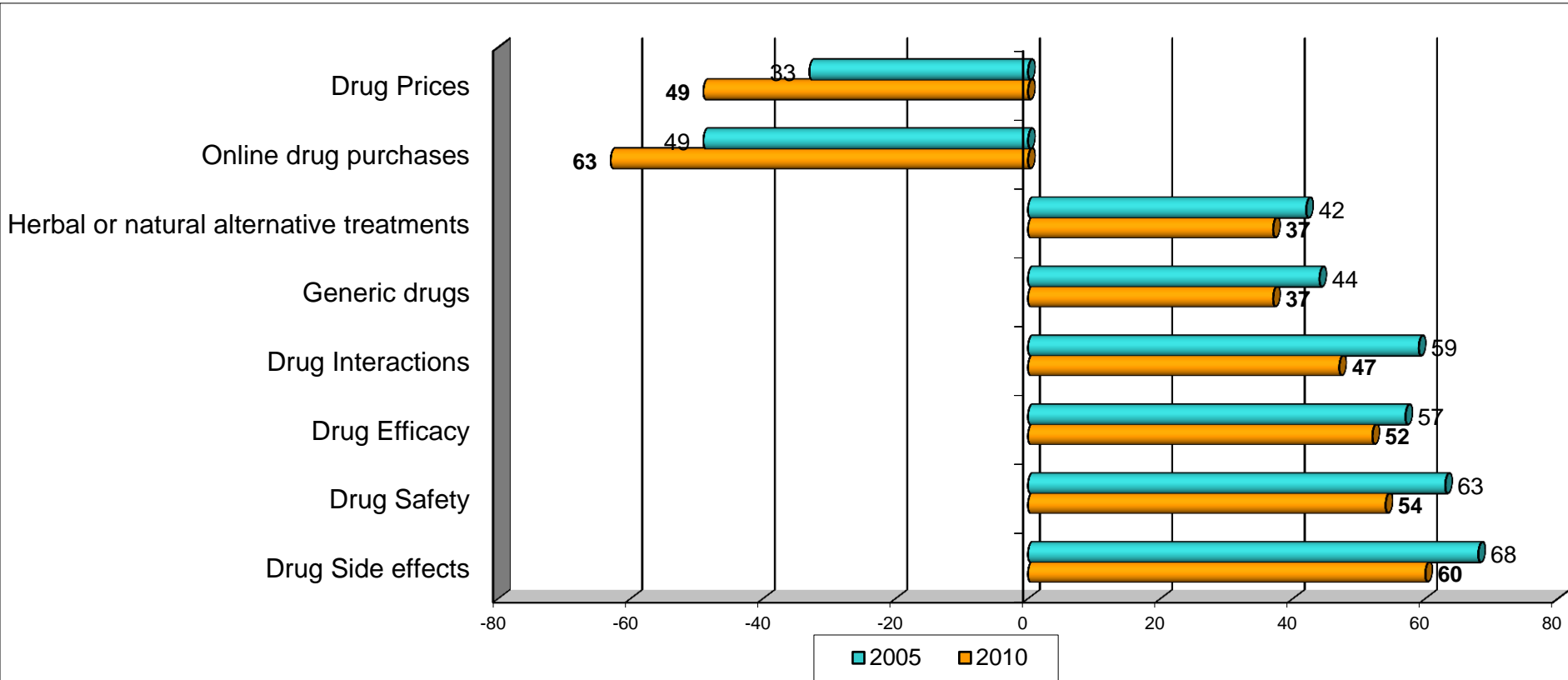
## The types of sites users prefer to use to attain health information:



## Mainly, the CITIZENS search for:

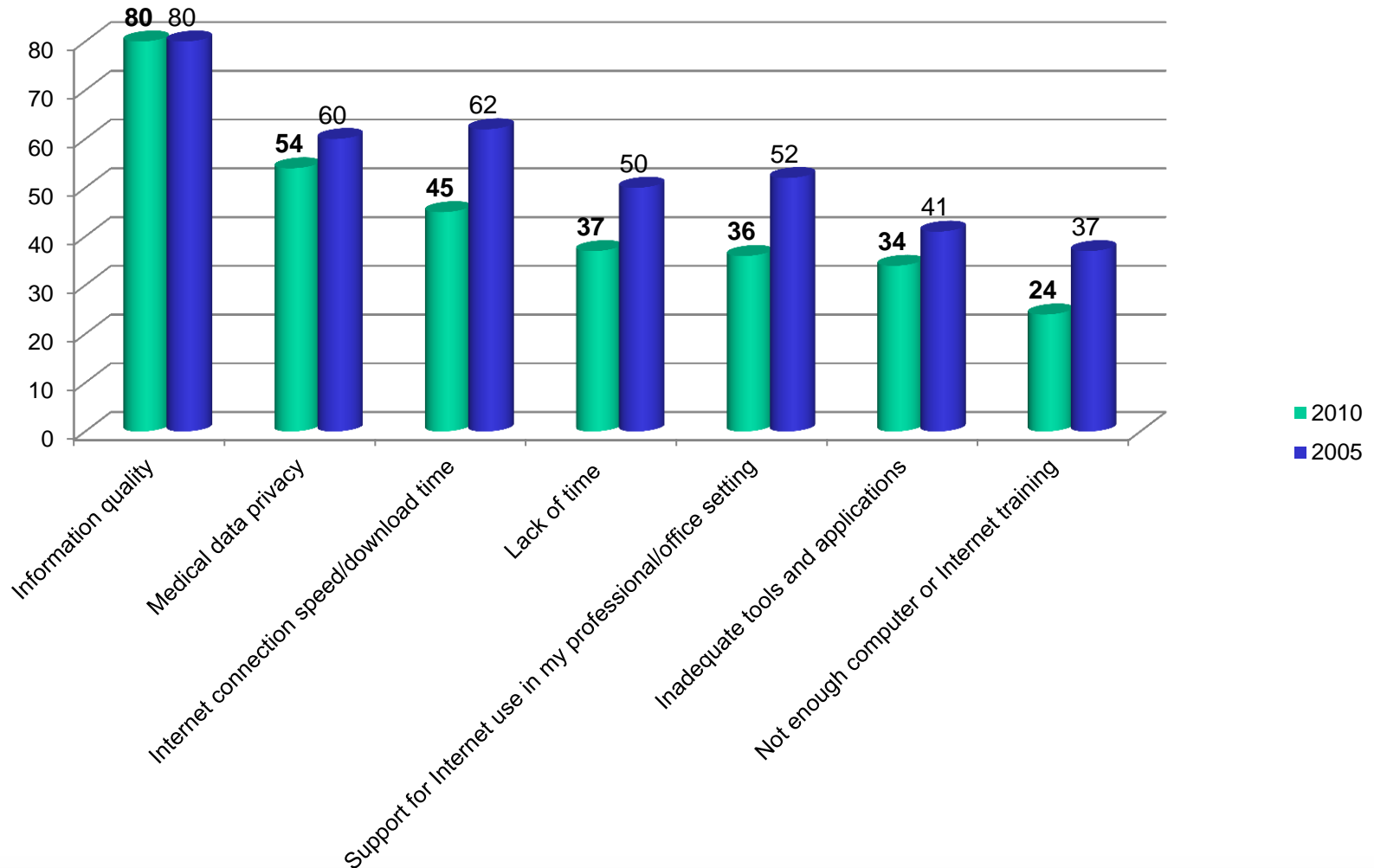


## Search for medications or drugs information by CITIZENS:

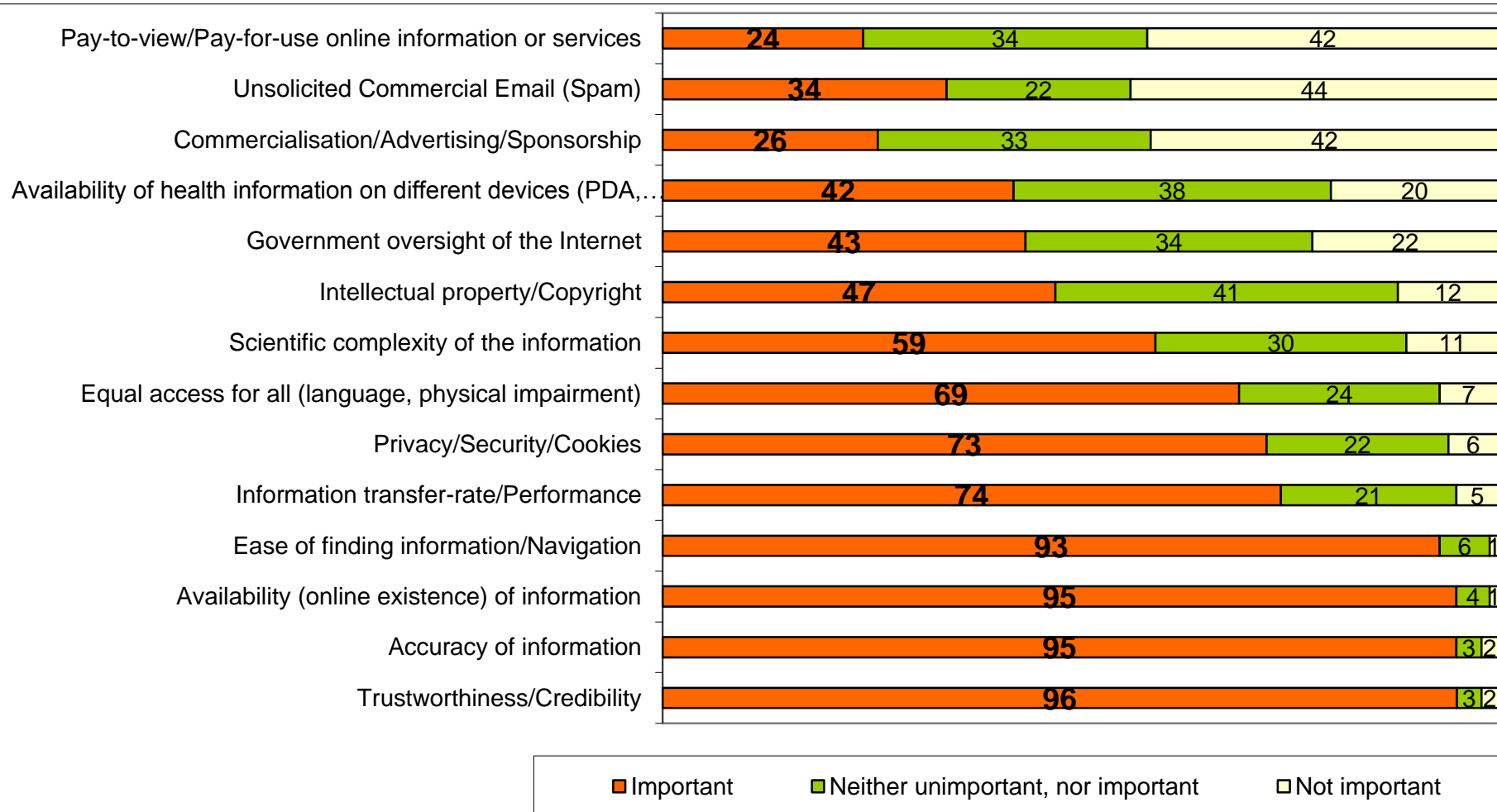


*Patients participated in the survey rarely buy prescription (80%) and OCT (over the counter) drugs (72%). Both of the indicators have been increased since 2005.*

## The most important barriers while using the Internet to seek health information

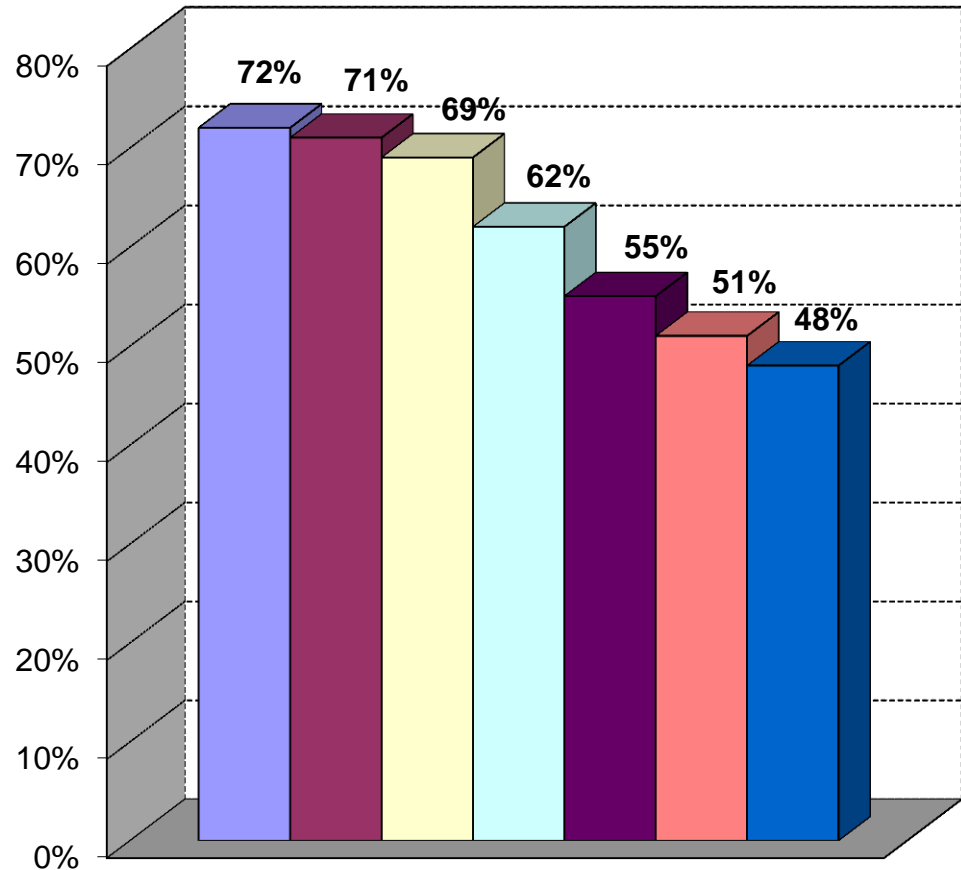


## The importance of the factors listed below in improving the quality of information and service for users of a health related web site

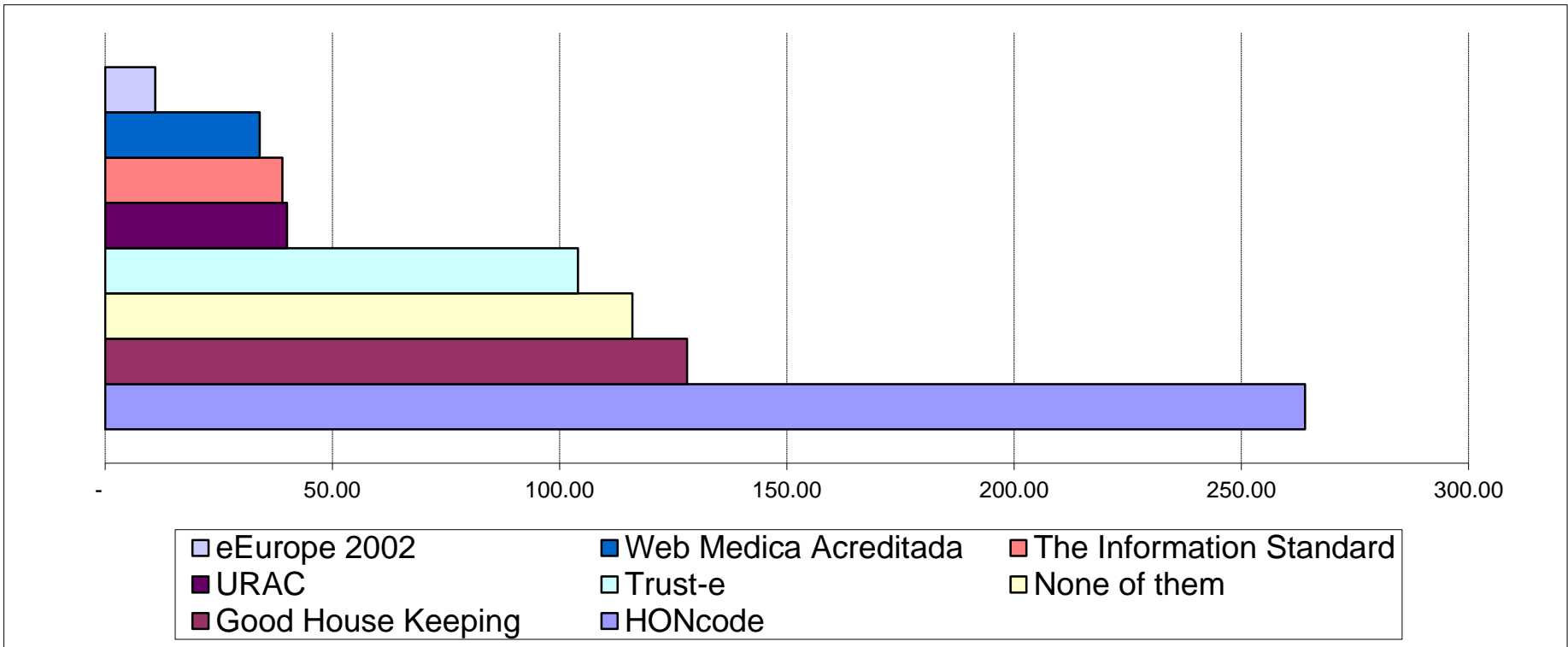


**The following agencies should have a primary responsibility to sustain the quality of health care information on web sites and set high ethical standards:**

- Associations representing non profits, international health web site developers
- Associations representing non profits, health web site developers within each nation
- Non Governmental Organisations
- Federal (national) governments
- Associations representing for-profit and non-profit health web site developers within each nation
- International associations representing for profit and non-profit web site developers
- Local or regional governments (such as states, municipalities, regions)



## The most familiar certifications, accreditations, or trust marks systems (absolute values):

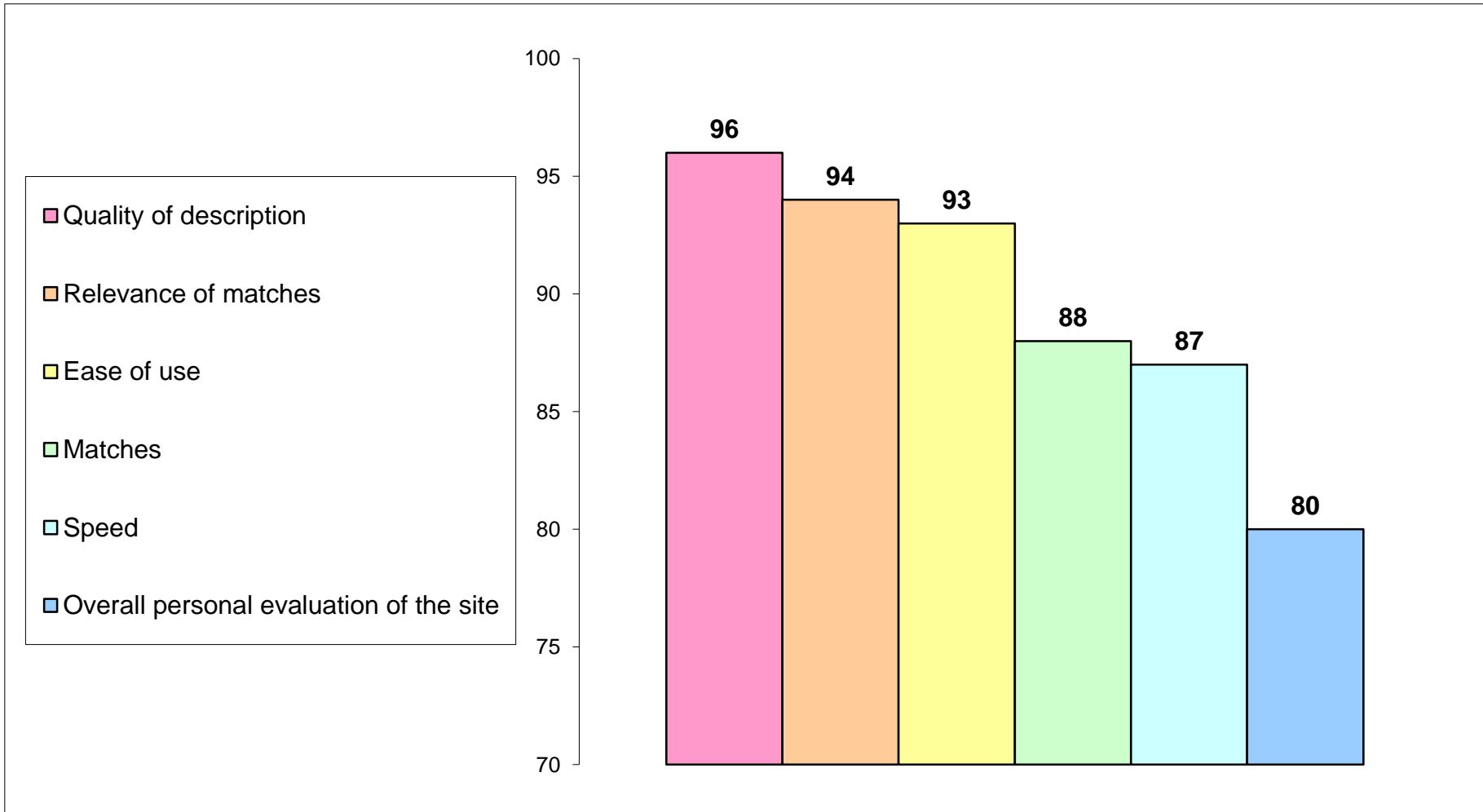


*As for the costs of certification 61% of English speaking respondents consider it should be paid by the owner of the site, 28% think of certification body of trust mark and 24% of Government. As for French-speaking users, they rated the organizations in a following way: certification body of trust mark (61%), government (34%), and owner of the web site (29%). Overall, 50% of all participants think the cost is on the owner of the web site side*

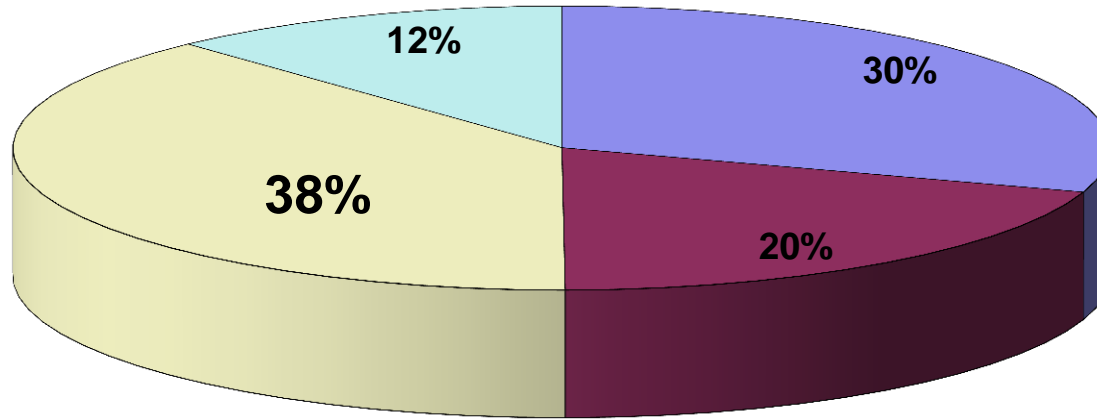
## Domains trustworthiness

- As for different domains, *.edu* (70%), *.gov* (69%) and *.org* (65%) remain to be the most credible for the users. The domain *.com* is considered neither credible, no non-credible by 52% of respondents (increased from 46% in 2005). National domains have gained more trust in French-speaking users (64%) than in English-speaking (19%).
- Answering the question *“Would a domain name dedicated to health (such as .health) help you identify and more easily search health/medical Web sites?”* 47% were not sure (39% in 2005), and 28% were agree (44% in 2005). **55%** agreed that only medical, evidence-based web sites should be allowed to use a *.health* domain name.
- **76%** think that *web sites containing health content and of hospitals* should be always certified. 66% consider it appropriate for the physicians’ web sites and 46% - for the web sites selling medical software.

## The seach process: The importance of elements to create a helpful web search tool



## Among search results, how many web sites the respondents usually visit:



■ 5 web sites from the top   ■ 10 web sites from the top   ■ More than 10 web sites from the top   □ Not sure

## Citizens - Professionals' communication

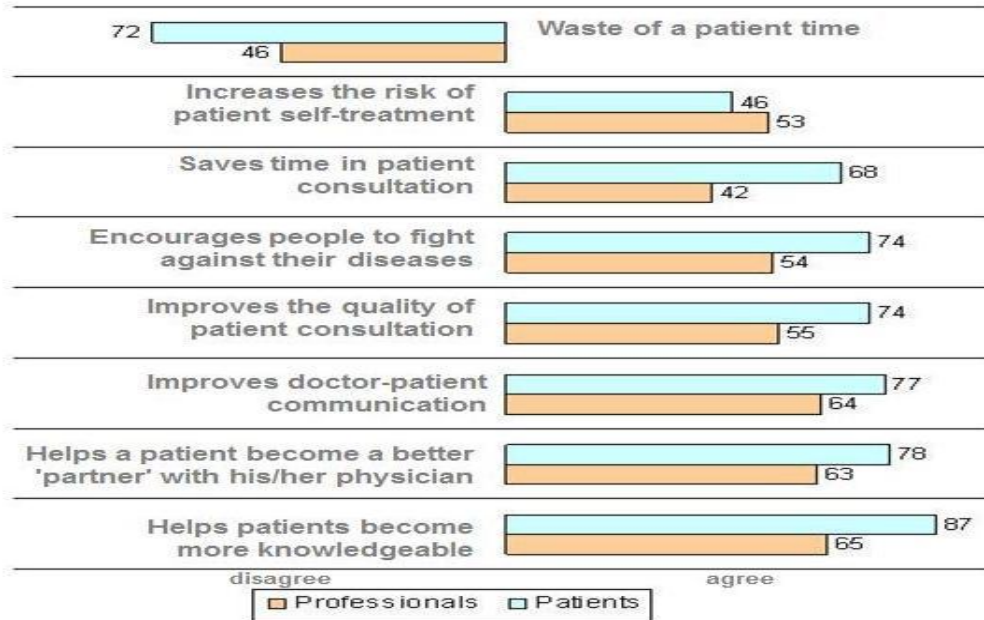
### CITIZENS:

- 70% of the citizens rarely email to their healthcare provider which is less than the results of 2005 (59%).
- 55% also rarely use online medical consultation service in opposite to 39% in 2005.
- The number of users using Internet to seek “*second opinion*” has increased from 39% in 2005 to 50% in 2010.
- 80% of citizens keep thinking that a healthcare provider should suggest trustworthy sources of online health information as well as a list of specific health web sites similar to drug prescription (75%).

### PROFESSIONALS:

- 53% of professionals rarely or never email their patients.
- 72% of the professionals think it would be helpful for them to guide patients to a trustworthy (online) source, which shows a significant increase from 2005 (59%).
- Most of the physicians would use a trustworthy online service which allowed them to suggest reliable online health information to the patient, especially if it is free for the patient (87%) and would rather not use if the patients are charged and not reimbursed for the service (51%).

## Influence of the Internet use on doctors-patients relationships



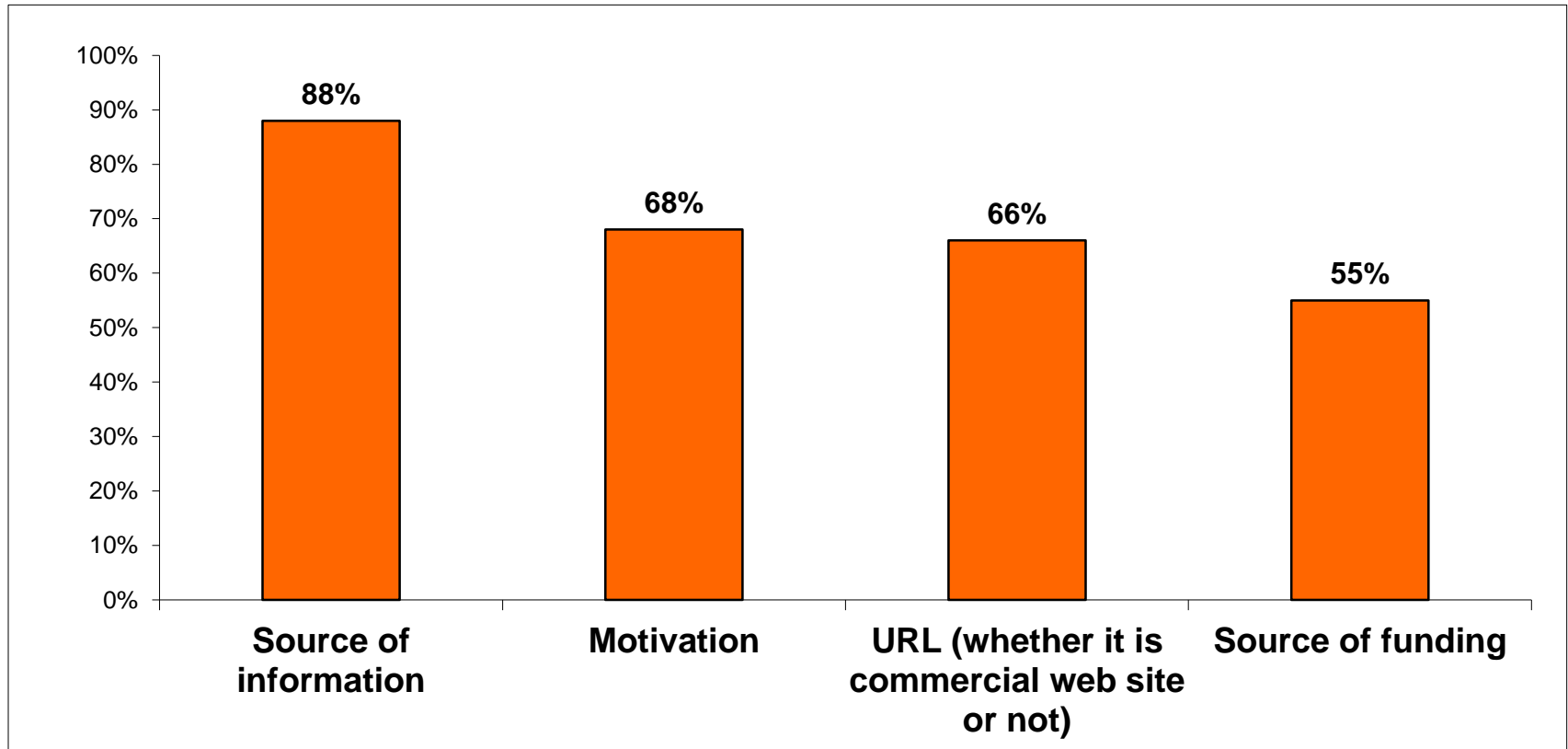
*53% of citizens participated in the survey declared they discuss the results of their internet search with their doctors*

*76% of healthcare professionals participated in the survey see the patients in their practice (44% in 2005). 75% of English-speaking professionals said their patients discuss the information they have found on the Internet, as for French-speaking audience, it is only a case in 47%. 64% of professionals declared they or their healthcare organization have a web site.*

## Quality is important for the consumers!

- The importance of *access to reliable medical information* is perceived important by English (96%) and French (76%) speaking citizens. 74% of them agree that learning about health on web sites should feature interactivity and self-testing of knowledge.
- Most of citizens (78%) prefer to have the option of seeking complex medical information on web sites, especially the French-speaking (91%).
- 57% of citizens consider the information presented on consumer web sites to be often superficial.
- In 79% of cases a web search is a starting point to clarify medical information. 65% believe they understand complex medical information.

## 83% of users state they verify whether the web site is trustworthy or no. What exactly:



## Cyberchondria

- **49%** state they were *not* anxious after looking for health information online, 29% were, and 22% were not sure.
- We have also asked whether the users consider themselves as cyberchondriatics: **75%** answered they do not think of themselves in such a way.

## Summary of findings

- 96% use Internet to **check email** and 93% to **browse web sites**
- 61% of respondents are visiting usually **from 2 to 5 websites**
- NEW!** 60% read and 51% participate in **online communities** (Blogs, Forums, Social Networking, etc.), 44% use them for retrieving of health information too
- 44% of respondents had been searching for health information in the Internet **more than 3 times past week**
- In 79% of cases **a web search** was the starting point to clarify medical information (for citizens)
- The general search engines use** for health topics has increased from 86% in 2005 to 94% in 2010
- Mostly users are looking for **Disease descriptions** (69%) and **Medical literature** (62%)
- 29% admitted they **were anxious** after looking for health information online, 22% were not sure

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
PARTICIPATION AND INTEREST!**

**FURTHER QUESTIONS?**  
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