

Survey of e-commerce of health-related goods or services

REPORT OF HEALTH ON THE NET FOUNDATION

SURVEY CONDUCTED FROM MAY 2016 TO SEPTEMBER 2017

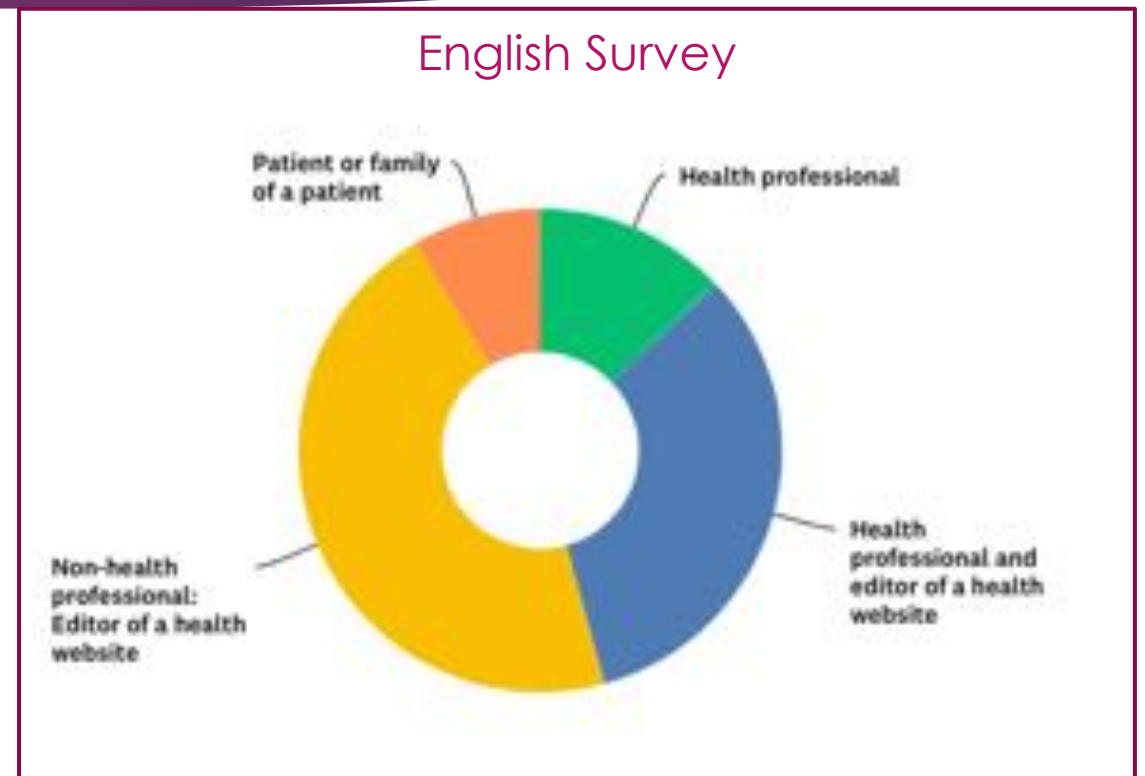
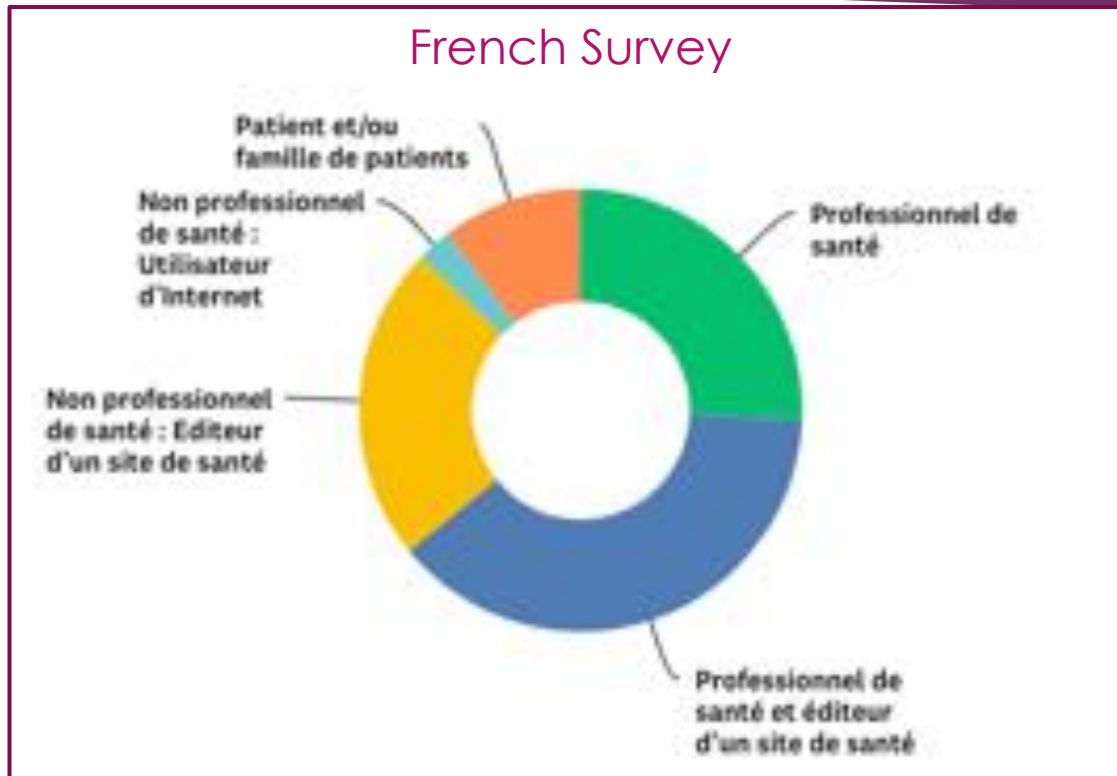
Study Objective

- ▶ To understand the practicality and usefulness for HON to oversee health-related e-commerce businesses which sell either products or services to the public.

Procedure

- ▶ We conducted a survey of 33 questions, both in French and English, in May 2016.
- ▶ The survey was posted on the Foundation's Facebook page, published in two newsletters, and through various emails sent out by HON.
- ▶ The survey was conducted and analyzed using the Survey Monkey platform.
- ▶ The French version of the survey collected 39 responses.
- ▶ The English version collected 75.

Analysis of results



The majority of people who participated in the survey are health professionals who publish websites.

Results analysis: E-store

- ▶ The majority of respondents have already purchased from an e-store (80 out of 114 participants), for the following main reasons:
 - ▶ Availability
 - ▶ Lower price
 - ▶ Comfort of purchase and delivery
- ▶ We find that the majority of respondents (health professionals) order over the Internet, which means that they are seeking this type of service.
- ▶ The products ordered are, in order: books, para-pharmacy, medical equipment, examination products, non-prescription drugs.

Results analysis: E-store

- ▶ For the French-language survey, 8 out of 15 respondents indicated that the e-store offered the ability to review their products/services.
- ▶ For the English version, 32 respondents out of 57 provided this response.
- ▶ This is done through a simple comments based tool.
- ▶ Not all opinions are necessarily published on the site (for half of them).

Results analysis: Potential problems

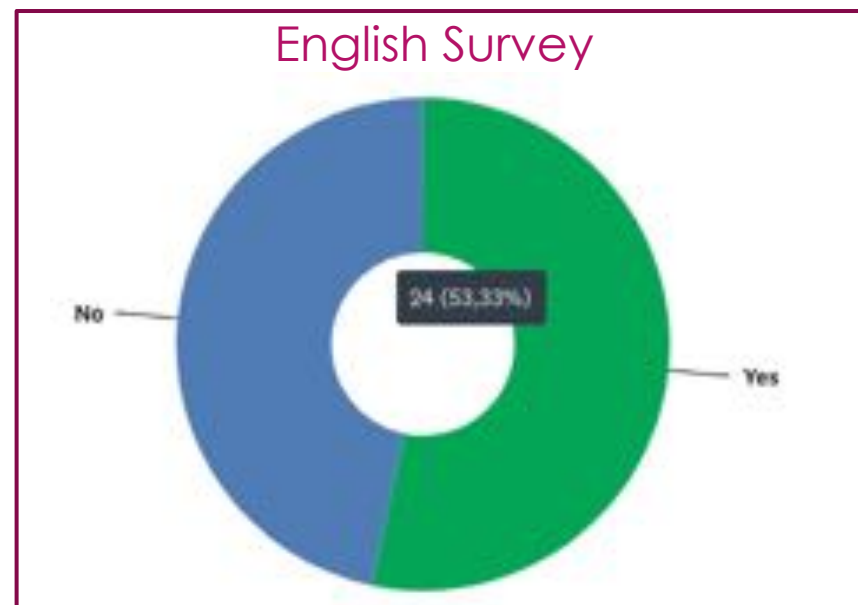
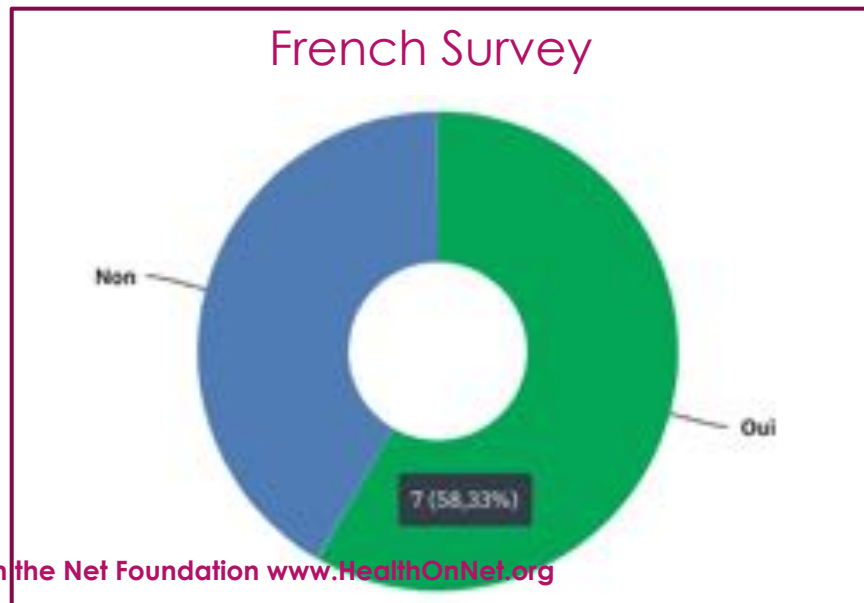
- ▶ 64 respondents out of 72 did not encounter any particular problem following the order placed on an e-store.
- ▶ Respondents who encountered a problem cite the following:
 - ▶ Delivery problems (3 respondents)
 - ▶ False advertising (2 respondents)
 - ▶ Product of poor quality (2 respondents)

Results Analysis: Personal Data

- ▶ The personal data transmitted are those required for a purchase and delivery: bank details, address, name, email.
- ▶ The majority of respondents did not provide medical information.
- ▶ The majority of respondents did not pay attention to whether the site provides information about its privacy practices.

Results Analysis: Products

- ▶ 41 respondents out of 58 had the opportunity to have information about the composition of purchased products.
- ▶ The majority of them checked the origin of the products, very few consulted forums.



Results Analysis: Certification

► Sites that can be certified by the HONcode:

▼ Vendant ou louant des dispositifs médicaux	68,00%	17	French Survey
▼ Vendant des cosmétiques	32,00%	8	
▼ Vendant des produits alimentaires	28,00%	7	
▼ Vendant du contenu d'information type brochures, livres	72,00%	18	
▼ Vendant des services de soins à domicile	44,00%	11	
Nombre total de participants : 25			

English Survey	▼ Those selling or leasing medical devices	86,36%	38
	▼ Those selling cosmetics	27,27%	12
	▼ Those selling food products	34,09%	15
	▼ Those selling information, such as brochures or books	52,27%	23
	▼ Those selling home care	43,18%	19
Nombre total de participants : 44			

Results Analysis: Certification

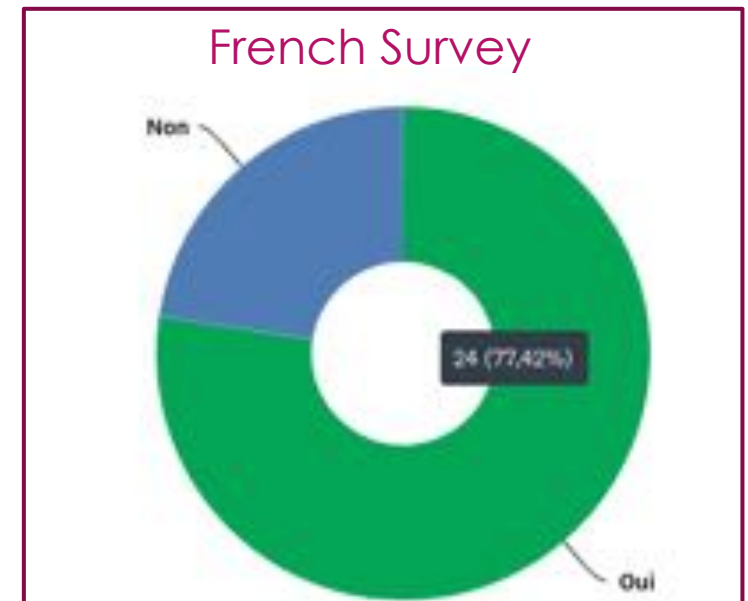
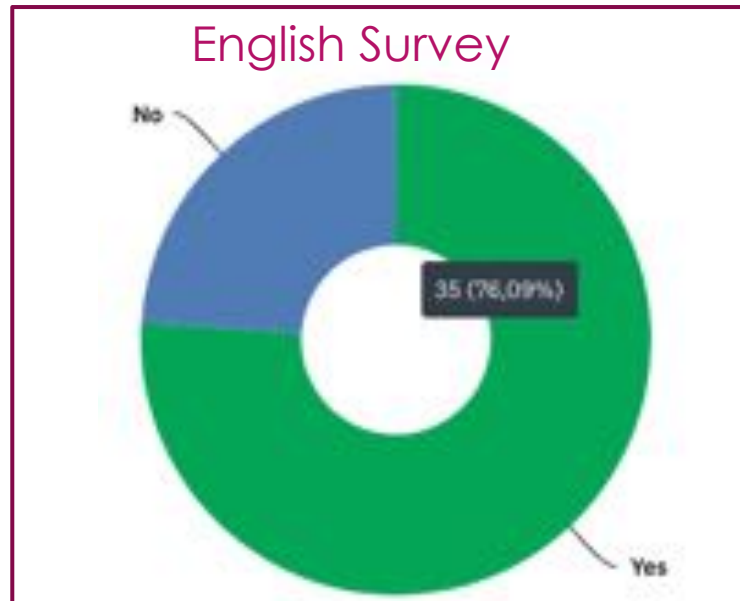
- ▶ Those who do not wish to see the Foundation certify this type of site (15 respondents commented on this question) give the following reasons:
 - ▶ This would taint the neutrality of HON
 - ▶ It would be moving away from the primary mission of HON
 - ▶ It seems impossible to control
 - ▶ It would be like advertising for these shops
- ▶ Those who consider that HON can certify these sites (42 respondents in total) can not give way to function or coaching particular.

Results Analysis: Telemedicine

- ▶ Many of the respondents know about telemedicine, but have never used it.
- ▶ For those who have used it, they are satisfied and have found it helpful.
- ▶ The confidentiality of data seems to be addressed in this type of service.
- ▶ The qualifications of health professionals have been verified in the majority of cases (9 out of 14), but this figure should be higher for the sake of transparency and security.

Results Analysis: E-consulting

- ▶ Most respondents do not know of e-consulting (16 of 27) and have never used it (8 of 11)
- ▶ The majority (75% English and French combined) think that the Foundation should certify this sort of service.



Conclusion

- ▶ This survey (perhaps a little too long because not all respondents have responded to all questions), that the e-shop and tele-health are important features of current life.
- ▶ It seems important for the majority of respondents that these services be better supervised, without really knowing how. As with any new tool or method of work, the right way to proceed is to be found to be effective.

Conclusion

- ▶ Many of them nevertheless question the place of the Foundation in this framework of eshop type website, fearing for the loss of credibility of the current certification.
- ▶ We can ask ourselves if this survey does not present a bias such as the fact that a certain number of respondents has a health site certified by the HONcode and does not want the certification to reach online sales sites. On the contrary, another bias could be the fact that some are health professionals wishing to make their e-consulting services more legitimate with the HONcode certification.

Conclusion

- ▶ It should also be noted that the composition or origin of the products are not sufficiently verified and displayed (approximately half of the respondents are interested); and it is important that it be more transparent and thus less dangerous.
- ▶ The concern that emerges from the analysis of this survey is such that we ask ourselves whether, without certification of this type of site, users will only be able to rely on the ratings offered by the evaluation services. "Basic", or more dangerous, referencing very common in search engines, highlighting sites not necessarily of confidence and quality. Clancy and al. has demonstrated that popular websites can be of low quality and that patients "lack adequate information to assess the potential for commercial bias". Clancy, A. A., Hickling, D., Didomizio, L., Sanaee, M., Shehata, F., Zee, R., & Khalil, H. (2017). Patient-targeted websites on overactive bladder: What are our patients reading?. *Neurourology and urodynamics*.