



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

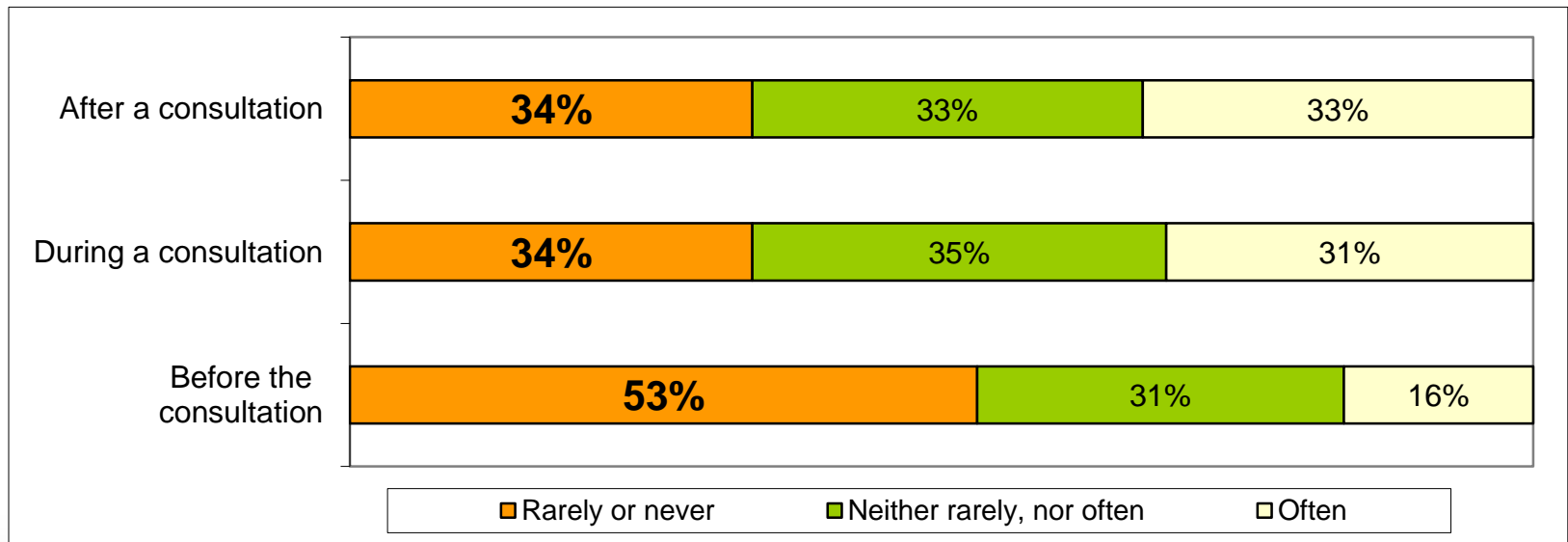
- On average the respondents use internet for 7 or more years (**79%**). This number has significantly increased over the last years from 44%
- **45%** of the respondents connect to the Internet through the cable modem and wireless (**37%**) (in 2005 wireless connection was only in 4% of cases).
- **50%** 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

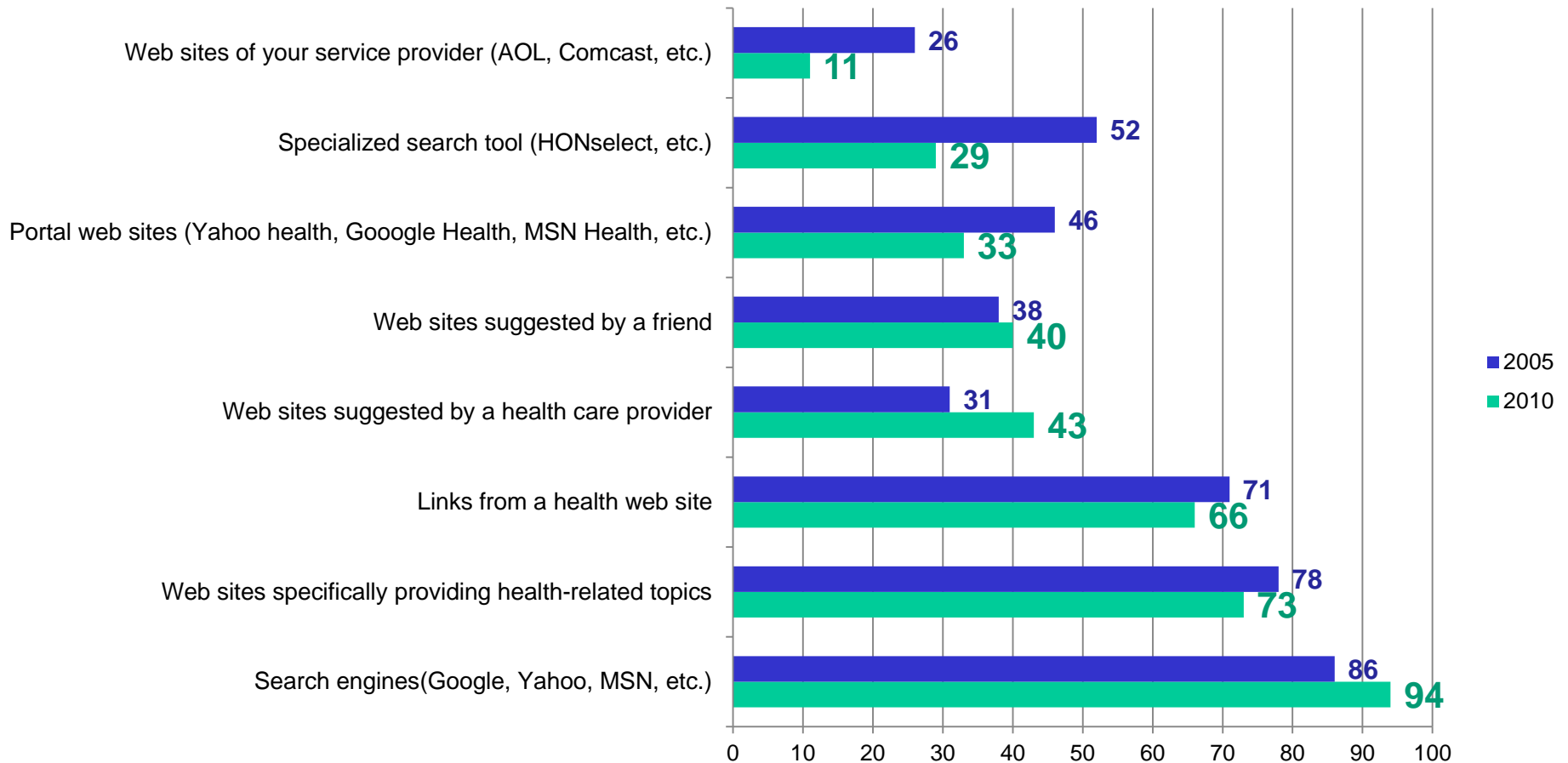
- **44%** of users was searching for health information *more than 3 times during “past week”*, 25% did it from 2 to 3 times. People mostly search for disease description (69%) and medical literature (62%).
- Users are looking for information for **themselves (77%)**, their children (32%), and then patient, 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?

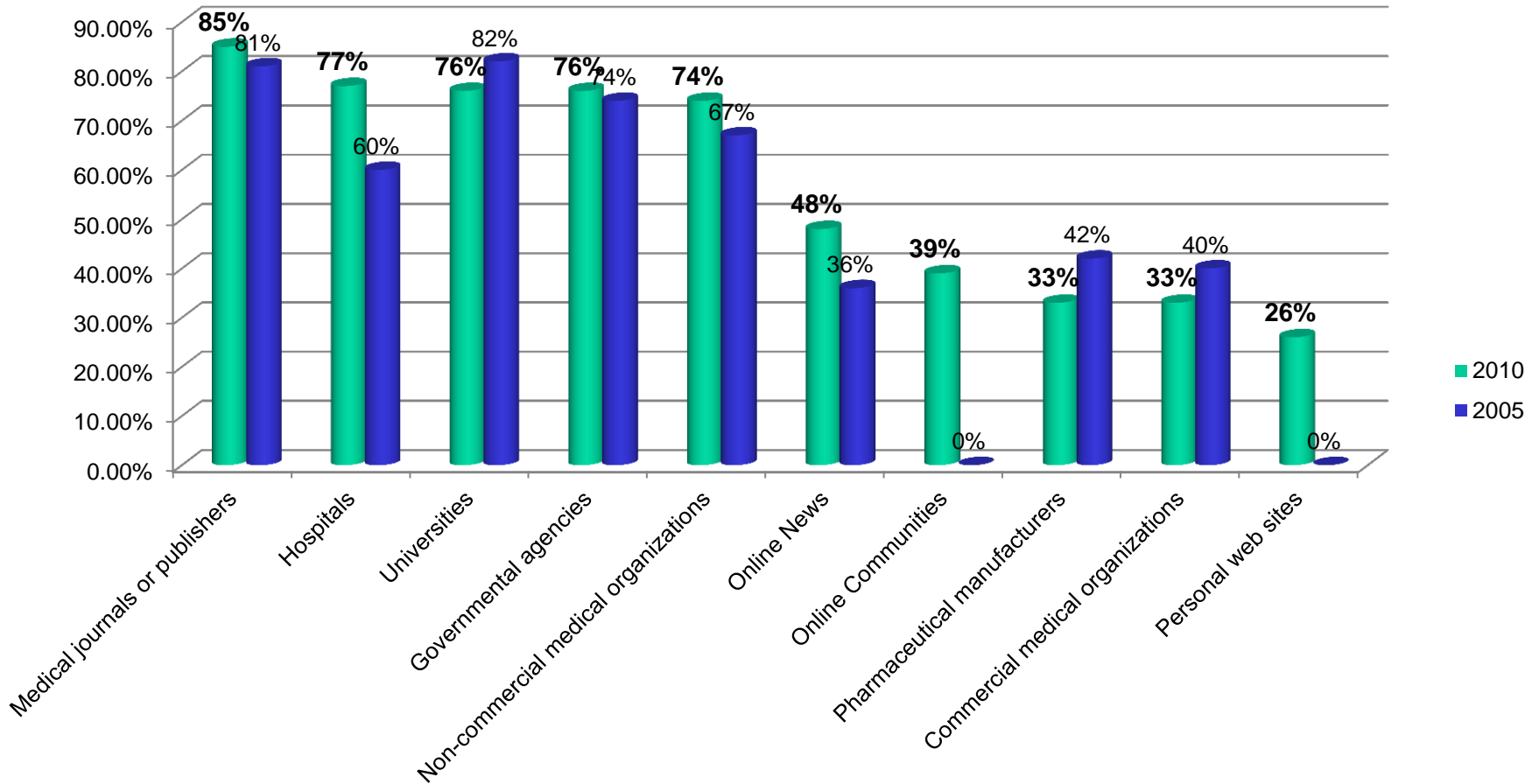
- *50% of patients mostly search for health information disregard to consultation time (no before, no after).*
- *78% of patients say that healthcare provider has never told them about the health web site.*
- *Healthcare Professionals confirm it saying that they rarely recommend the sites disregard to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



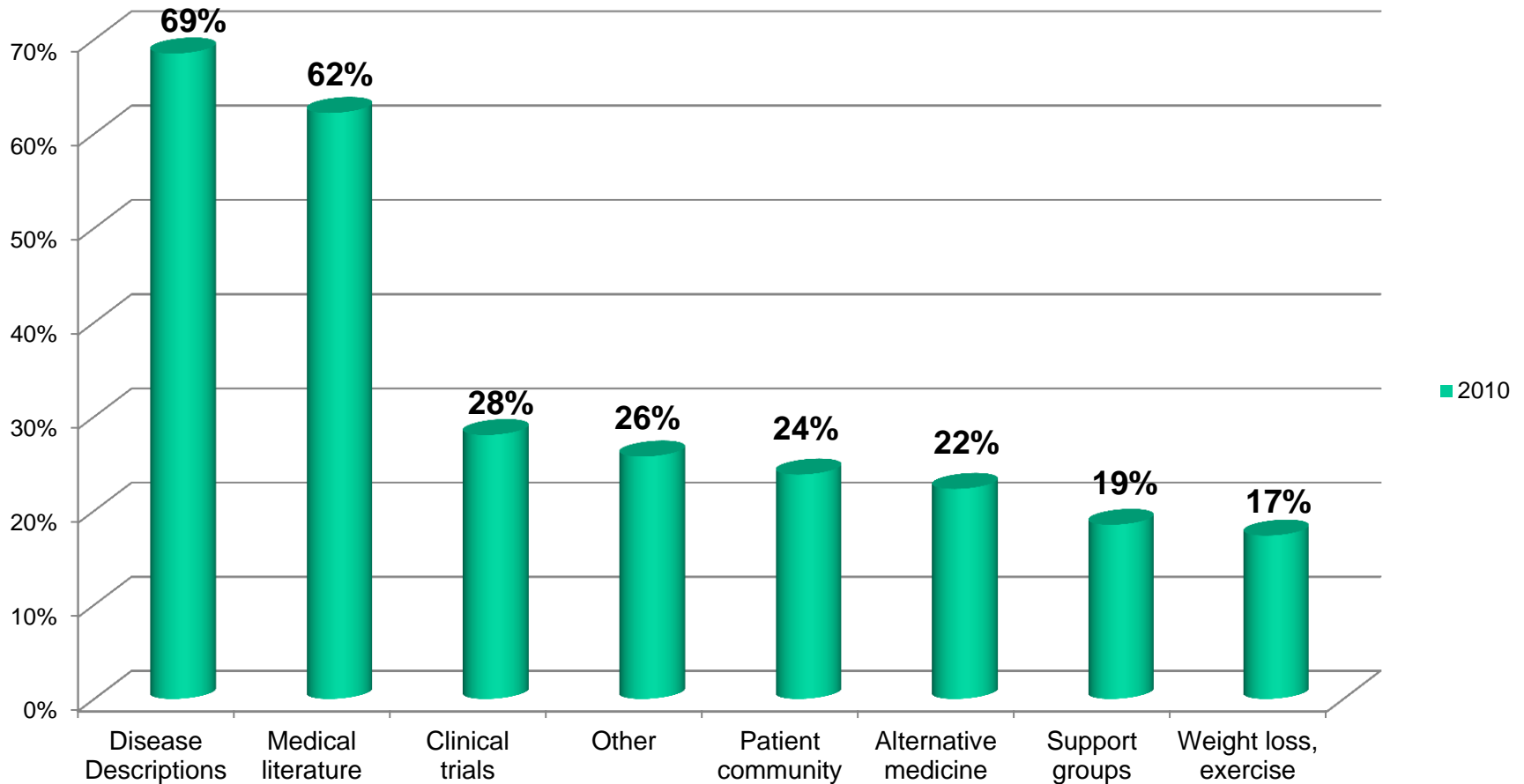
The most frequently used web sites to obtain medical/health information on the Internet



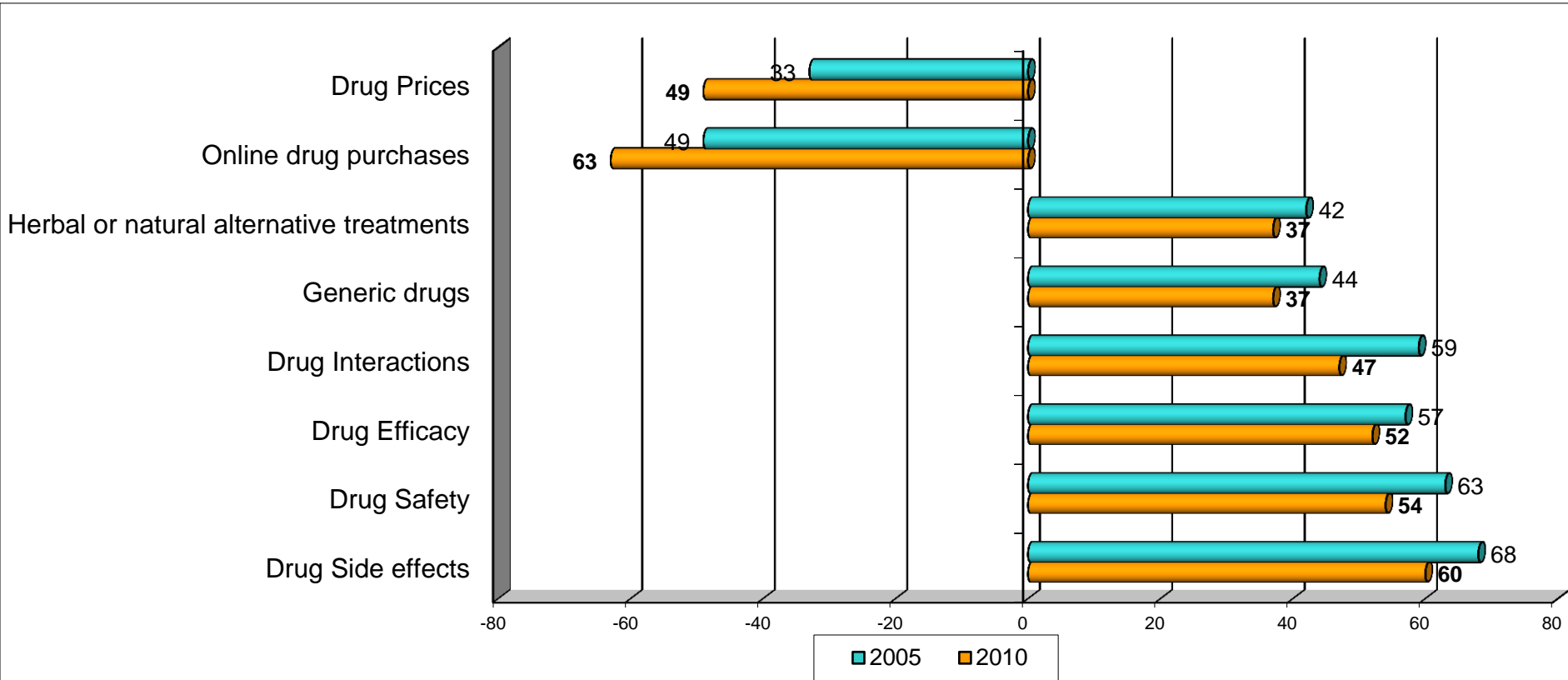
The types of sites users prefer to use to attain health information:



Mainly, the CITIZENS search for:

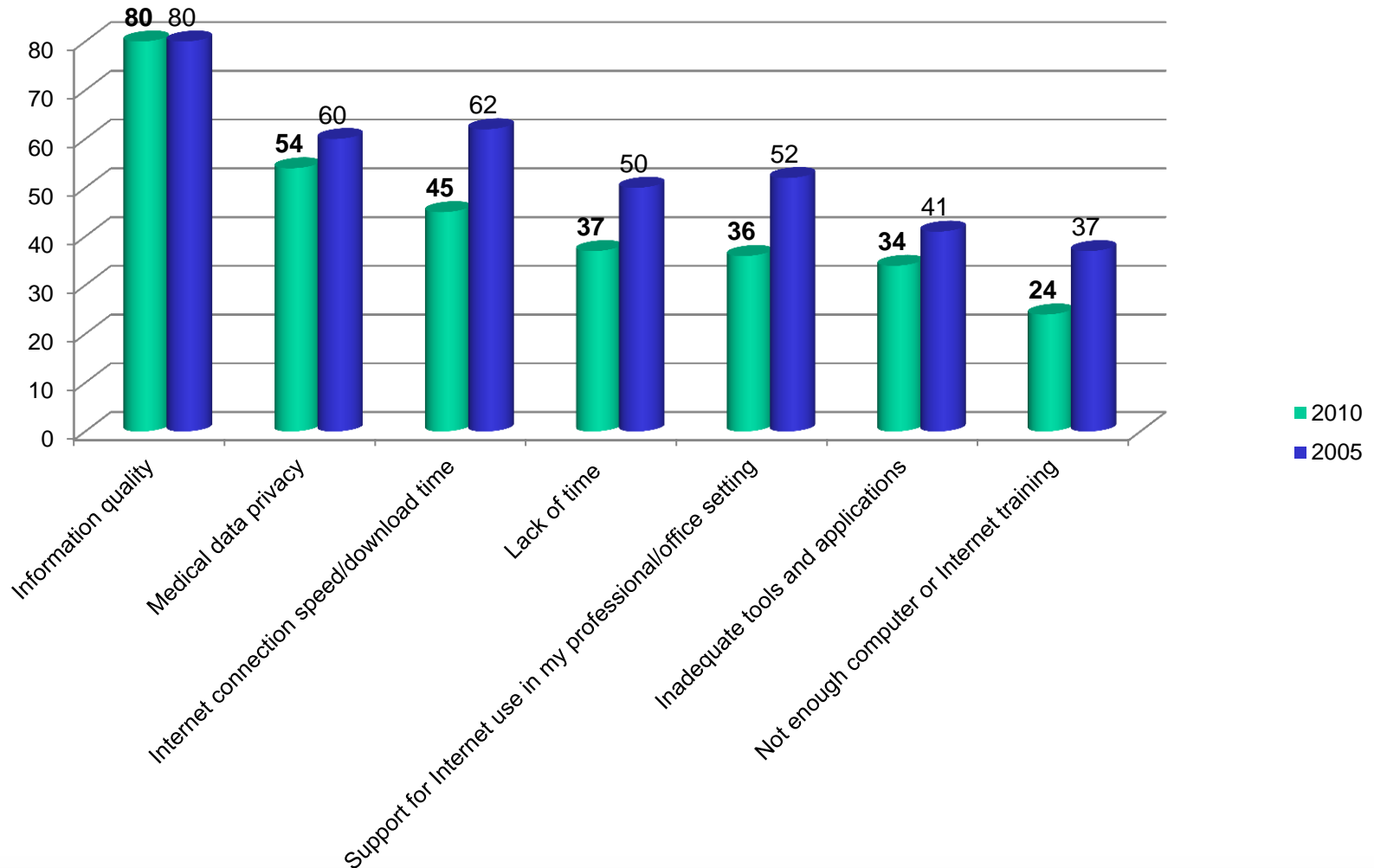


Search for medications or drugs information by CITIZENS:

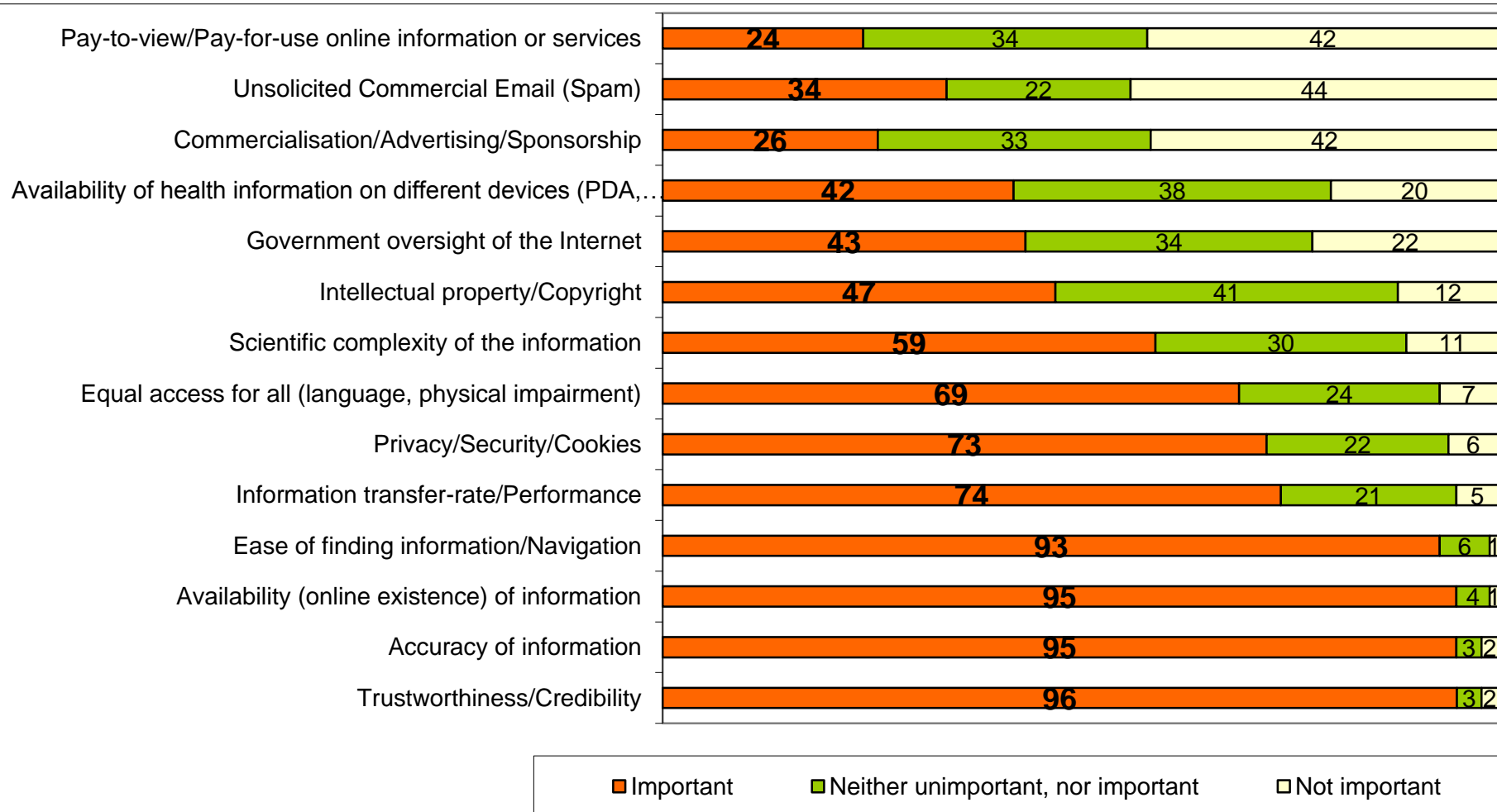


Patients participated in the survey rarely buy prescription (80%) and OCT (over the counter) drugs (72%). Both of the indicators have been increased since 2005.

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

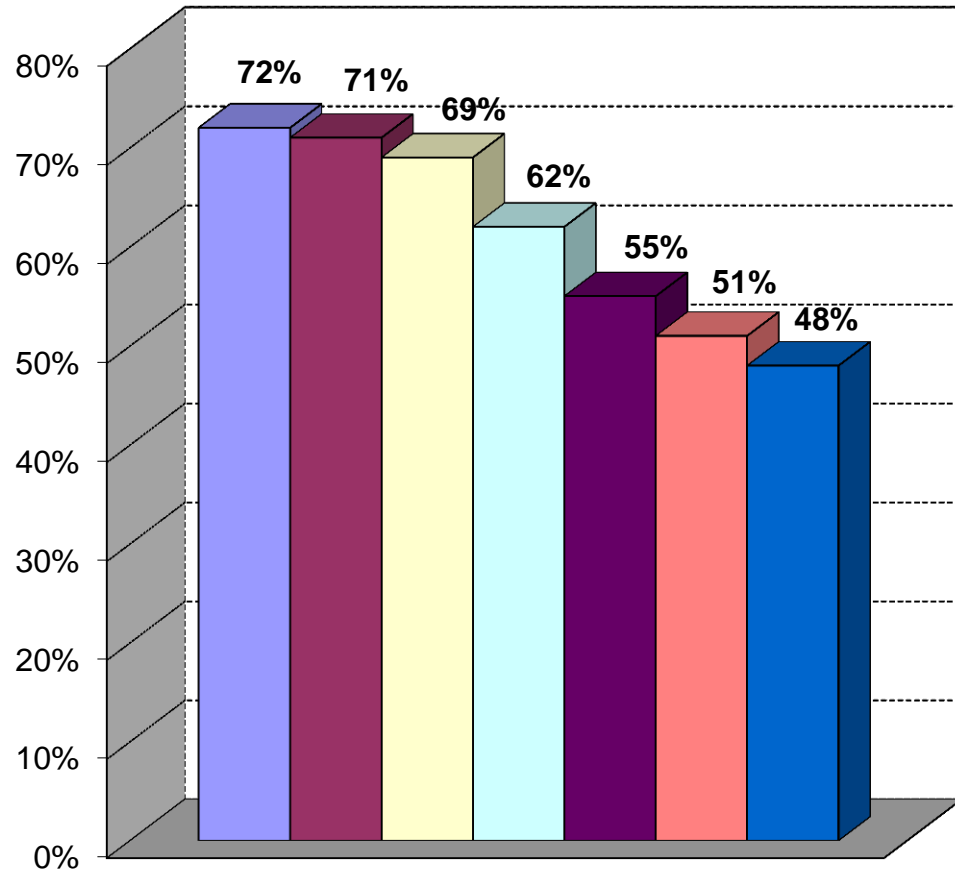


The importance of the factors listed below in improving the quality of information and service for users of a health related web site

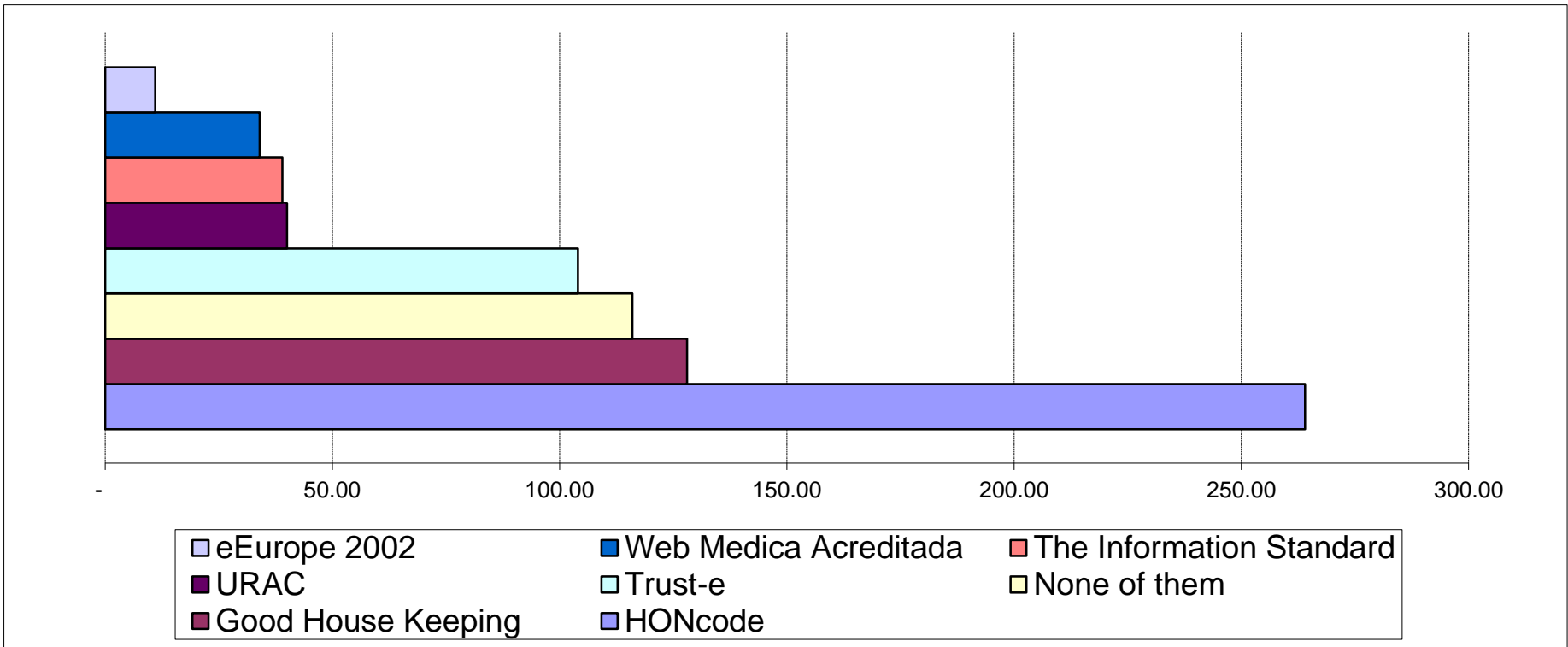


The following agencies should have a primary responsibility to sustain the quality of health care information on web sites and set high ethical standards:

- 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):

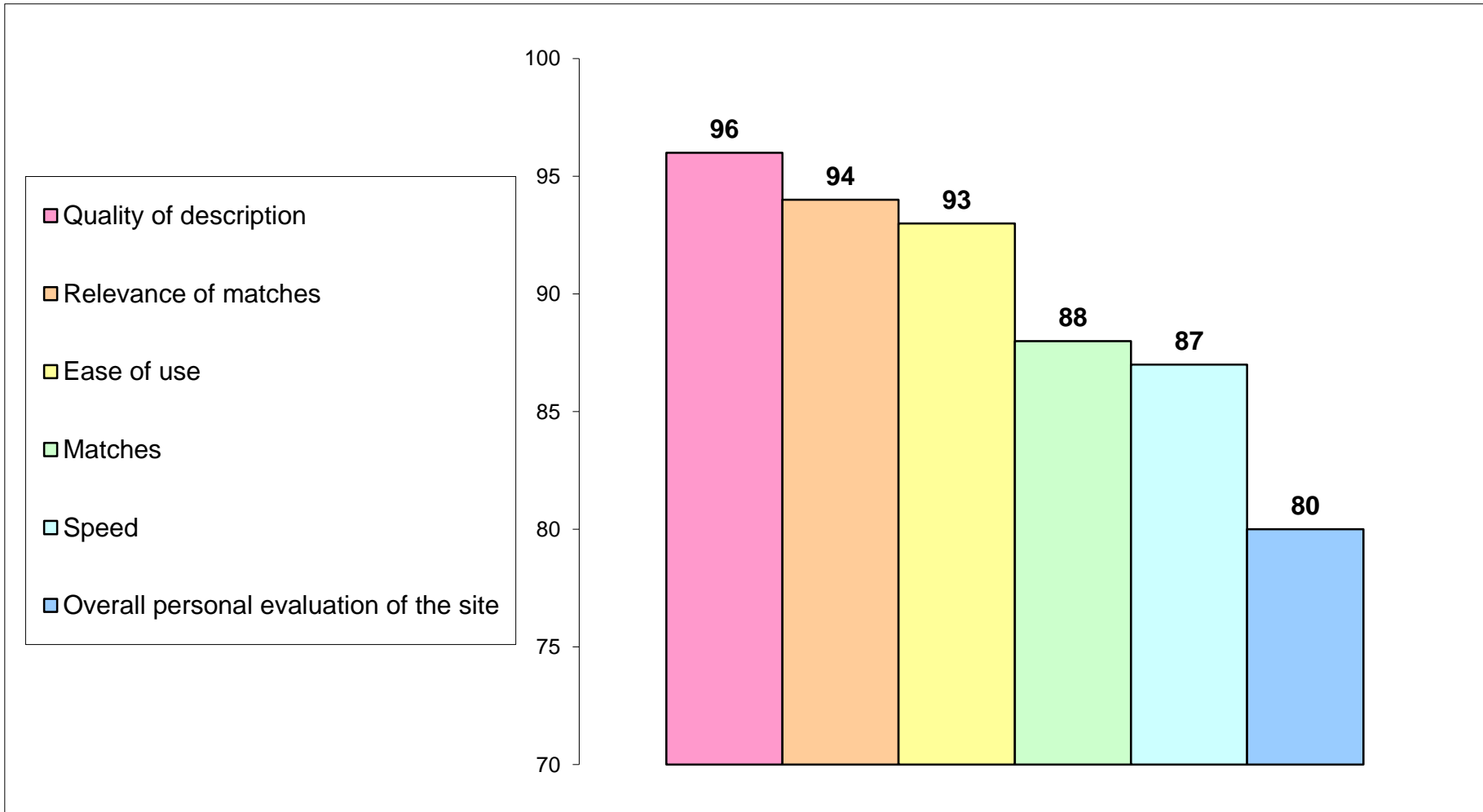


As for the costs of certification 61% of English speaking respondents consider it should be paid by the owner of the site, 28% think of certification body of trust mark and 24% of Government. As for French-speaking users, they rated the organizations in a following way: certification body of trust mark (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

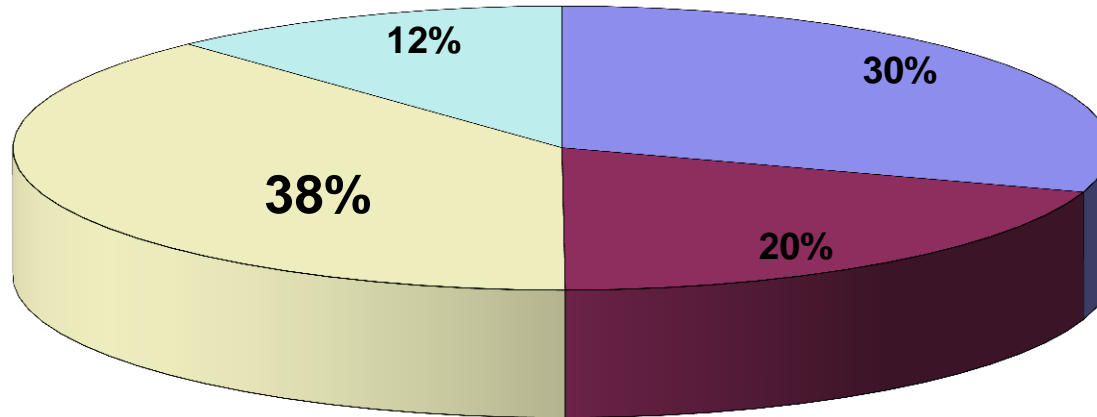
Domains trustworthiness

- 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, nor 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

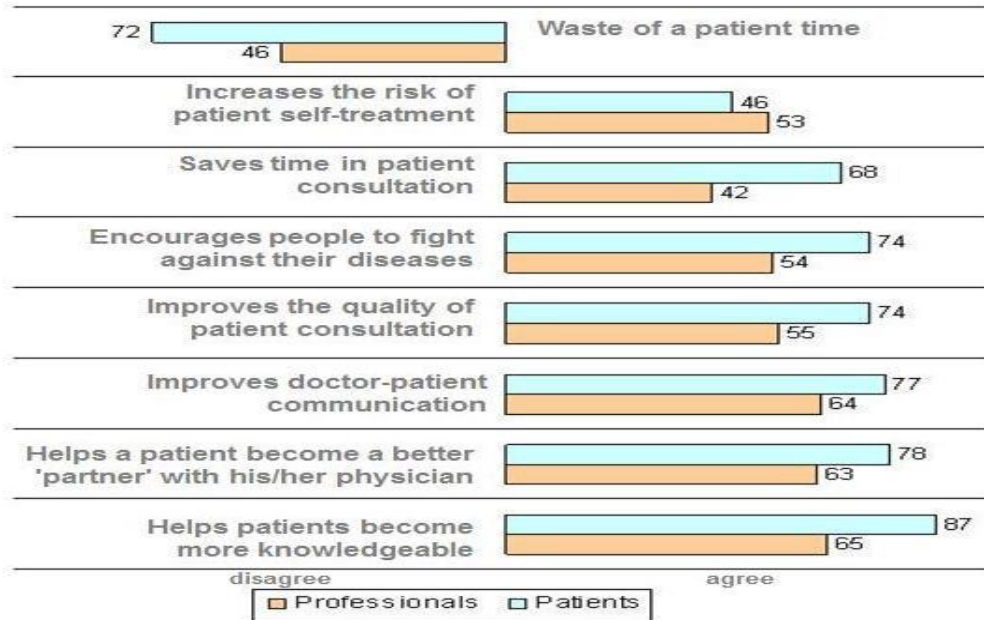
CITIZENS:

- 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



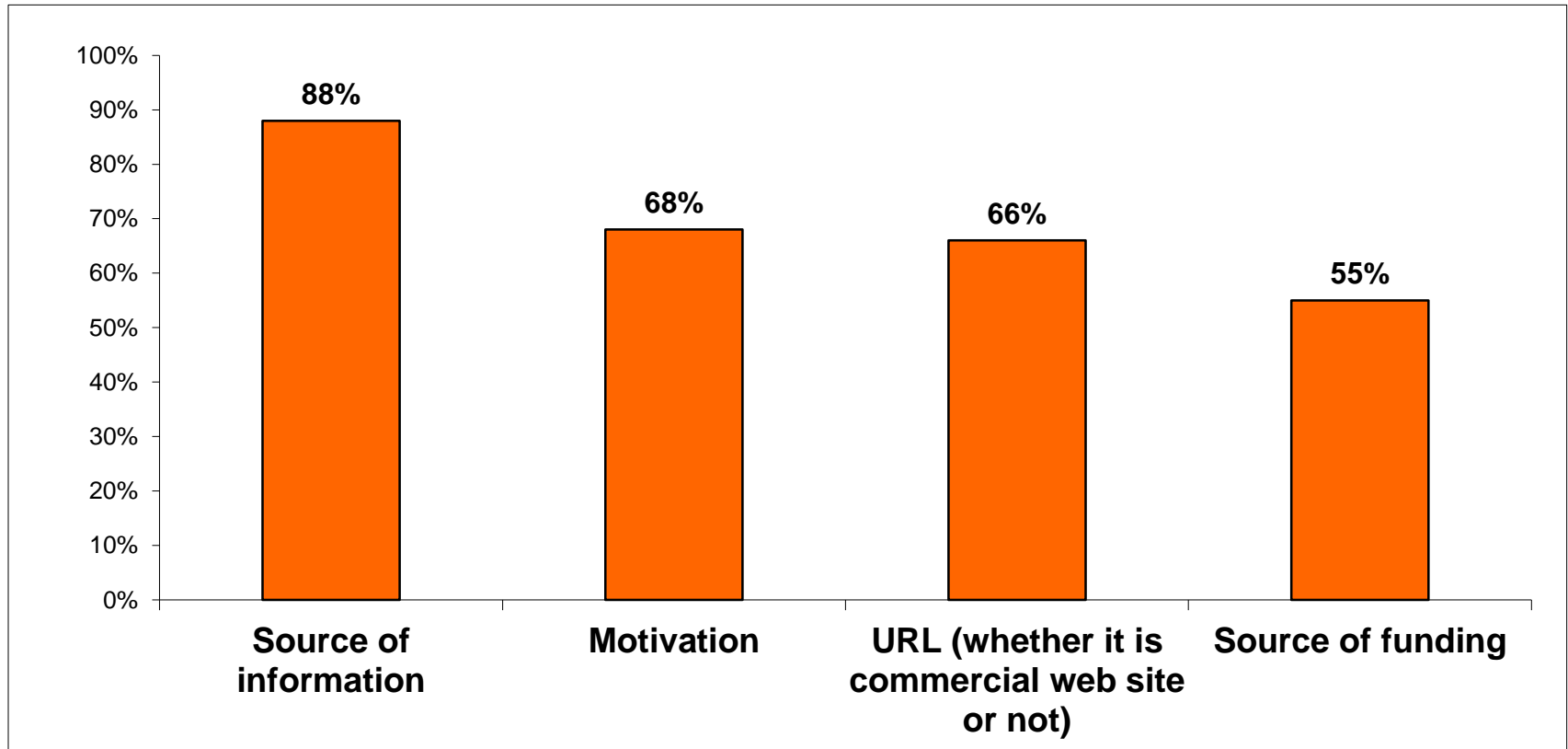
53% of citizens participated in the survey declared they discuss the results of their internet search with their doctors

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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