

# Social media is changing choices for patients, providers, and pharma marketers

Article

**The data on doctors:** 57% of US-based physicians frequently or occasionally change their perception of a medication or treatment based on content they've seen on [social media](#), per a

joint survey by **Sermo** and **LiveWorld**.

- More than 200 physicians across various specialties were surveyed in November 2022.

**Drilling down on doctors:** People who are trained to look for evidence-based solutions turn to their professional colleagues for insight and advice. So, it's no surprise that walled-garden communities like **Doximity** and **Sermo** top the list of social media platforms doctors go to for clinical or professional purposes (59% and 58%, respectively).

But doctors are also using public social platforms for medical information and professional networking.

- **52% use Facebook** as their public platform of choice to join private medical groups.
- **35% say LinkedIn** is the most helpful social platform for learning about Congressional actions and key opinion leader presentations.
- **62% use Twitter** to follow hospitals and professional organizations.

**The data on patients:** Doctors are still the go-to information source (62%) for patients with chronic conditions.

- However, a large share (**38%**) of chronic condition patients are more likely to turn to online influencers and social media for medical information, per a joint survey by **Hall & Partners** and **Think Next**.
- 10,500 adults from China, Germany, Japan, the UK, and the US were surveyed online in 2022.

**Drilling down on patients:** Age is a determining factor for most patient engagement on social media platforms. Younger people—Gen Z and millennials—are more active in seeking medical advice there than are older people—Gen X and Baby boomers.

- **33% of Gen Z patients use specific groups on social media** to discuss an illness or medical situation. Their top 3 platforms are **TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter**.
- **26% of millennial patients** used social media platforms to talk about medical issues, citing **Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter**.
- **14% of Gen X patients** sought out medical discussions on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

- **Just 5% of boomer patients** turned to social media for medical reasons—Facebook was their chief resource.

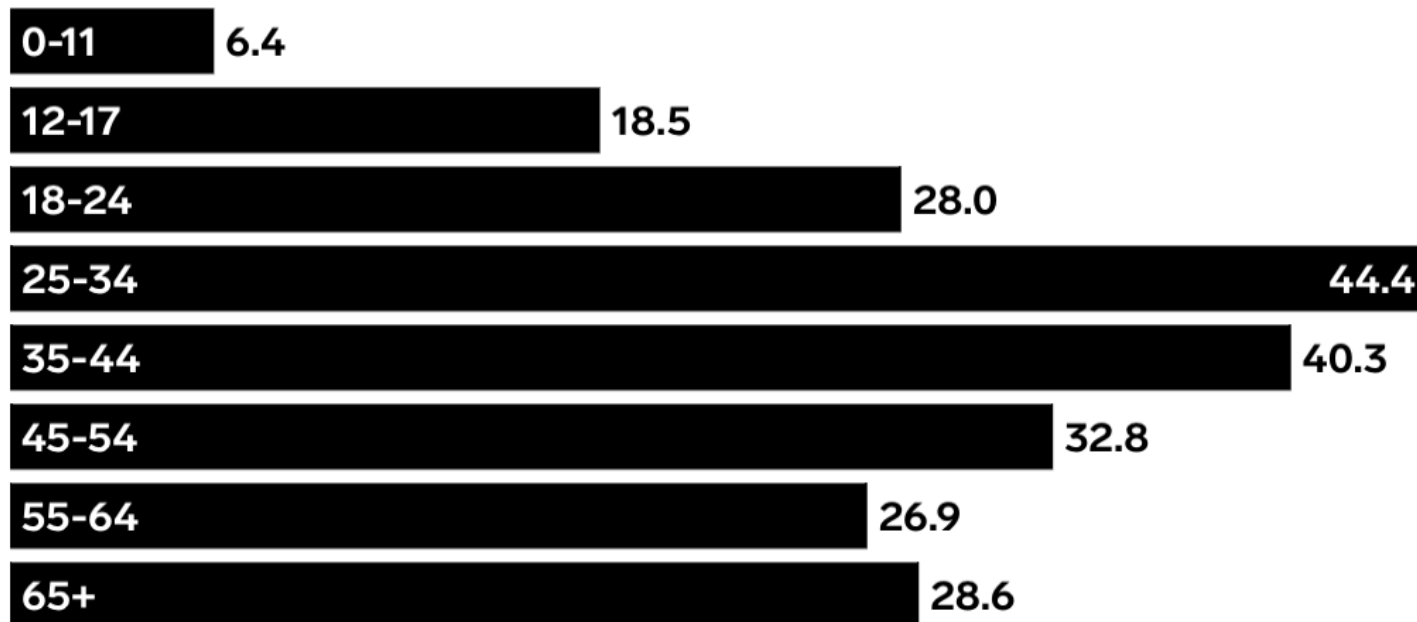
**Pharma marketers are taking notice:** 90% of the 50+ pharma marketers surveyed by Sermo/LiveWorld have implemented social media plans in 2023. And 50% planned to increase budgets aimed at physicians this year. No one expects to decrease their social media spending.

**Our take:** Although US physicians were the target in the Sermo/LiveWorld survey, we expect we'd see similar results from a global canvas of doctors' social media usage. For younger patients, seeking medical information online comes naturally.

## Social Network Users, by Age

US, 2023

Millions



Note: internet users who use a social network via any device at least once per month

Source: eMarketer, December 2022

eMarketer | InsiderIntelligence.com

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