

Health Keystrokes Out of Synch. Study: Health Communication Disjointed Between Physicians, Congress, and the Media

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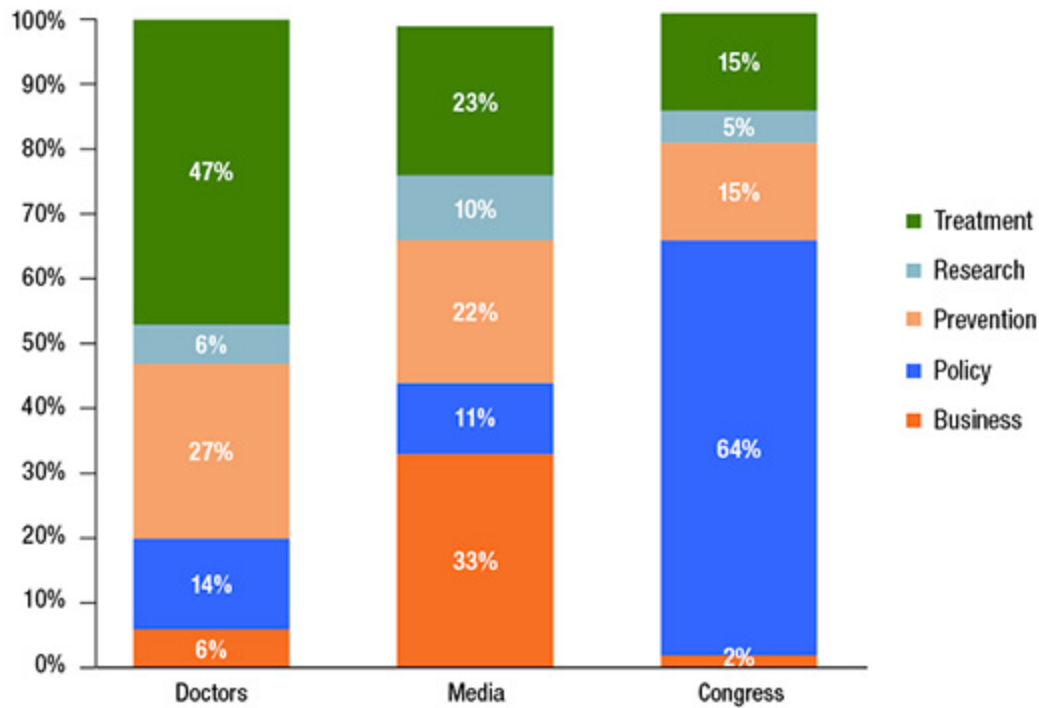
A study comparing how physicians, Congressional members, and the media type and tweet about healthcare has shown significant differences-and the need for greater alignment-among "key influencers" on health issues facing the US population.

The online data analysis, conducted by WCG's MDigitalLife for Kaiser Permanente, looked at qualitative and quantitative differences among the health stories reported in the media, discussed by physicians, and discussed in online policy circles, according to a Kaiser Permanente press release. Researchers examined millions of healthcare-related Tweets, online articles, and online posts by 3,200 online physicians, 458 members of the US Congress, and 154 journalists. The results showed wide differences in focus among these groups on various health issues that could lead to mixed messages for patients on exactly what is important for improved health.

"As a good example, the analysis found that physicians talked a tremendous amount about non-pharmaceutical treatment interventions, including health tips and lifestyle medicine, whereas health reporters focused significantly more on new drug approvals and milestones," says Robert M. Pearl, MD, executive director and CEO of The Permanente Medical Group, in the press release. "We're not saying that we should listen to one or the other or suggesting that any of the groups is right or wrong-all are appropriately focused on different aspects of health care for legitimate reasons. However, it's our belief and hope that effectively aligning key influencers around the health stories that are most beneficial for the American public could improve health literacy and, ultimately, our nation's overall health."

The data analysis, conducted online in December 2012 by WCG, analyzed 2.3 million healthcare-related Tweets by online physicians that linked to 218,934 online articles and posts, 464,272 healthcare-related Tweets by members of Congress that linked to 71,606 online articles and posts, and 132,108 healthcare-related Tweets by journalists that linked to 36,300 journalist-written articles.

Healthcare Conversation Topics



Source: WCG. "American Voices-Aligned for Health." February 26, 2013.
<http://www.slideshare.net/WCGWorld/american-voices-aligned-for-health>.

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