

# **“Social Media Benefits to Healthcare Industry: A Study”**

**A Dissertation Proposal for**

**Post Graduate Diploma in Health and Hospital Management**

**By**

**Dr. Aditi Chauhan**

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**International Institute of Health Management Research**

**New Delhi – 110075**

**May, 2013**

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of

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by

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**International Institute of Health Management Research**

**New Delhi – 110075**

**May, 2013**

**Certificate of Internship Completion**


Date: 25/04/13

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

This is to certify that DR. ADITI CHAUHAN has successfully completed her 3 months internship in our organization from January 01, 2013 to April 01, 2013. During this intern she has worked on "SOCIAL MEDIA BENEFITS TO HC INDUSTRY: A STUDY" under the guidance of me and my team at Indian Health Consultants, Gurgaon.

We wish her good luck for her future assignments

(Signature)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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## Certificate of Approval

The following dissertation titled "Social Media Benefits to Healthcare Industry: A Study" is hereby approved as a certified study in management carried out and presented in a manner satisfactory to warrant its acceptance as a prerequisite for the award of Post- Graduate Diploma in Health and Hospital Management for which it has been submitted. It is understood that by this approval the undersigned do not necessarily endorse or approve any statement made, opinion expressed or conclusion drawn therein but approve the dissertation only for the purpose it is submitted.

Dissertation Examination Committee for evaluation of dissertation

Name :

DR. BRIJENDER SINGH  
DHILLON

Signature:

18/6/13  
1/5/13

### Certificate from Dissertation Advisory Committee

This is to certify that Dr Aditi Chauhan a graduate student of the Post- Graduate Diploma in Health and Hospital Management has worked under our guidance and supervision. She is submitting this dissertation "Social Media Benefits to Healthcare Industry: A Study" in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Post- Graduate Diploma in Health and Hospital Management.

This dissertation has the requisite standard and to the best of our knowledge no part of it has been reproduced from any other dissertation, monograph, report or book.

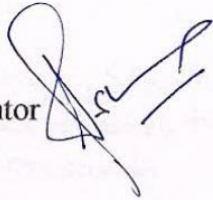
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## FEEDBACK FORM

Name of the Student: Dr. Aditi Chauhan

Dissertation Organisation: Indian Health Consultants

Area of Dissertation: Online Marketing in Healthcare  
Topic: Social Media Benefits to Healthcare Industry - A Study


Attendance: 100%

Objectives achieved: Student was able to analyse the benefits of social <sup>media</sup> through two questionnaires, one each for service providers and consumer.

Deliverables: Comparison of purpose of online marketing by healthcare service provider & customer/patient's perception about it, in terms of its usefulness.

Strengths: - Focussed & Keen Learner  
- Good Analytical Skills  
- Good Communication Skills

Suggestions for Improvement: Needs to be more proactive

  
Signature of the Officer-in-Charge/ Organisation Mentor (Dissertation)

Date: 25/4/2013

Place: Gurgaon.

## **Acknowledgement**

I want to express gratitude to my mentor **Mr. Anurag Srivastav**, senior consultant at IHC who provided his untiring support in facilitating, motivating and guiding me for the completion of my dissertation Report.

I am sincerely thankful to **Mr. Kuldeep Choudhary**, CEO of IHC who was extremely helpful, proactive and cooperative to me throughout the interim study. I also convey my thanks to the entire participants of the survey for helping me while collecting the required data for this project.

I take this opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude to my guide and mentor, **Prof. Anupama Sharma Faculty, IIHMR, New Delhi** for her constant support and encouragement.

My dissertation at IHC, Gurgaon has been an enriching experience and gave me the cordial environment and platform to learn and link my theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge.

**Aditi Chauhan**

## **Organization Profile**

Indian Health Consultants (IHC) is a group of professionals with in depth knowledge of the healthcare industry.

The team members at IHC have been instrumental and the pillar behind the successful establishment of two of the major hospitals in Gurgaon viz. Artemis Health Institute & Paras Hospital. In both the hospitals, Mr. Kuldeep Chaudhary, along with the team, played the key role as Head of Sales & Marketing Department. Apart from the team has a rich experience in the fields of diagnostics, health insurance & research based projects.

Today IHC with the pool of professionals with expertise knowledge in their respective fields is attracting the best talent from the field of Healthcare and are growing by leaps and bounds due to their cost effective and long lasting health care solutions.

### **Vision**

Our Vision is to make our clients businesses profitable, to provide them sustainable, cost effective and easy to implement solutions. We intend to be the most favoured partners for healthcare providers across the globe.

### **Mission**

Our mission is to create an organization where each employee feels satisfied, works in the area of their choice and takes responsibilities which they relish, decide how much they want to earn and how much time they want to work. The idea is to create a platform where there are no bosses and no employees just a group of talented professionals having the same vision as of the organization.



## Services offered

### 1. Sales, Marketing & PR

Almost all the functions of the department of marketing such as tariff lists, empanelment with various Insurance companies, TPA's, Governmental organizations, Public Sector Undertakings, rate negotiations, organizing activities such as camps, CME's, talks, presence in the media, referral associations, tie-ups with other healthcare facilities, international patients facilitation & complete management, web based publicity etc. We also undertake the collection of money due from the various empanelled organizations. We recruit, train and manage the marketing teams on behalf of our clients. The marketing budget is spent in correlation to the results accruing to the client.

### 2. Medical Tourism

IHC has a large base of facilitators who provide us patients from different countries. The choice of doctor / hospital and the cost of treatment is communicated by us to the partners and the entire facilitation of the patient ranging from assistance in travel documents, travel arrangements, pick-up from the airport, local travel, currency exchange, stay arrangements outside the hospital, special food requirements, interpreter services etc are taken care by us. We manage the complete international patient desk of the hospitals and facilitate the patients inside and outside the hospital.

### 3. Operations, Quality & Accreditation

CGHS has already mandated that all the hospitals empanelled for the treatment of their beneficiaries are required to get NABH & NABL accreditations before the end of this year.

Similarly in order to get the international patients in good numbers a hospital has to get JCI accreditation.

We provide complete solution for these accreditations. We provide solutions for getting various statutory approvals & licenses for the hospitals. We assist the clients in identifying and implementing the right kind of IT solutions both in terms of hardware and software. We help in making a good Annual Plan with industry benchmarking. We also assist our clients in setting and measuring the various quality parameters in the deliverance of healthcare and implement standard operating procedures in the processes of supply chain management, vendor selection, price negotiations with suppliers thereby bringing the costs down and improving operational margins.

#### 4. HR, Finance & Project Management

We provide help in procuring funds from the banks, financial institutions and also assist in getting equity based funding. We understand that in the long run, it is the Doctor that helps in establishing the brand in the market and hence it becomes imperative for any hospital to have good doctors in place. We provide quality manpower in the fields of medicine, nursing, para-medical and other functions. We provide consultancy in getting professional courses like the DNB and arranging training for employees both medical & non-medical. We assist in tie ups with various sources of manpower supply such as medical schools, nursing colleges and para-medical institutions.

We conduct market research for setting up new projects and offer assistance in defining the product, selection of equipments and the level of investments.

#### 5. Health Insurance

We offer solutions in the field of Health Insurance both for individual and corporate clients. Our solutions are not only limited to the selling of health insurance policies but we cater to the needs of our clients for advising them about the right doctors & hospitals for various ailments,

provide facilitation at the various hospitals for getting cashless hospitalization and ensuring that they get the right treatment at the right place. Our deep knowledge of the healthcare industry gives us the strength to get the best for our clients.

#### 6. Online Marketing

We have an array of online solutions to suit our clients. Ranging from creation of websites to web based promotions and Social Media Optimisation through various stories, blogs and discussions, the options available are galore. The deep insight on how internet can be utilized to maximum advantage enables us to carry out the task perfectly.

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## **1. Introduction**

Social media is the process of people using online tools and platforms to share content and information through conversation and communication over the internet. In more technical terms it can be defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content"<sup>[1]</sup>. Social media includes social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Wikipedia, Weblogs, Discussion Forums, Linked in, Google plus etc. The speed at which social media has been adopted in one short decade is without parallel. Facebook was famously launched in a Harvard University dormitory in 2004 and at the end of 2011 counted 845 million users worldwide.<sup>[2]</sup> Twitter was launched in 2006 and had over 200 million accounts by early 2011.<sup>[3]</sup> Social media sites are among the most popular internet websites throughout the world.

### **Social Media in healthcare**

One of the most intriguing developments in healthcare during the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the role played by social media. Once confined to areas of entertainment and life management, social media usage has blossomed to become an integral part of healthcare.

An increasing number of people now use the web to communicate and are more likely to use social media websites and portals to procure healthcare-related information. 2011 Pew Research Center's Internet study showed that among US adults approximately 80 percent of the internet users use online media for healthcare information. The same study also revealed that 15 percent of US adults use their cell phone to access healthcare information.<sup>[4]</sup> Across developing economies as well, using the internet to access healthcare information is fairly popular. An online survey conducted by Max Bupa Health Insurance in 2010 revealed that of 1,004 Indians surveyed, 39 percent use the internet for general healthcare information.<sup>[5]</sup>

### **Healthcare providers and consumers use of social media**

Healthcare organizations have been slower to adopt social media than other business organizations. Thus far, hospitals, as a group, have higher adoption rates than other sectors of the healthcare

economy. Research indicates that consumers are increasingly going online and to social media sites to get health information. Social media has become a particularly important tool for use in educating, supporting, and communicating with patients. Armed with knowledge gained from reputable sites, patients are better positioned to play an active role in deciding about their doctor, service provider and treatment. Through social media, patients can offer emotional support to other patients suffering from the same or similar diseases and disorders. Healthcare providers (physicians and hospitals) also benefit from social media. Healthcare providers have started relying on the Web and social media sites to communicate with patients and the wider community. Social media has proven particularly useful in crisis situations, allowing healthcare providers to quickly update patients and the community with information as soon as it becomes available and so is the case vice versa, patients are also able to search important information in emergency situations. Providers have used social media to improve training to staff and patients and disseminate educational materials to a wide audience.

One interesting issue illustrating the interplay between social media and healthcare involves risk management or precisely feedback management. The managers review comments posted by patients to learn about the patient's perception and feedback about the care they received and to identify the gaps and take necessary action to mend it. Physicians can also use social media platforms as a specialized form of professional development. They use social media in their professional lives to locate educational information and communicate with their peers. Apart from just connecting with their peers they are found discussing critical cases with their fellow doctors so to provide the exact line of treatment to their patients. Social media can be a tool to optimize customer service, to identify and discuss patient needs, to keep an eye on the competitor and to grow the practice.

### **1.1 Rationale of the study**

Social media is changing the nature and speed of healthcare interaction between consumers (mainly patients) and healthcare organizations (providers). Although healthcare has been slower on the adoption curve than other business, hospitals have been engaging consumers via social media and patients are using it for obtaining health related information for better care and treatment. Very few studies have been conducted on role of social media in healthcare as it is a new concept as far as healthcare industry is concerned. Our study aims to explain how social media is emerging as a helpful tool in integrating consumers and healthcare providers, what is the consumer perception about the



social media, and how healthcare providers are using it now to market their services to a larger customer base and what better can be done to use the social media platform more effectively.

## **2. Literature Review**

Social Media in Healthcare: What are the Effects of the Use of Social Media on Patients' Health and Care: an Explorative Study by Bert Tage<sup>[6]</sup>

This report describes the effects of the use of social media by chronic patients on the quality of their health and care. Because a direct relationship between social media and the quality of patients' health and care has never been established, the concept of patient empowerment was included in this study as an intermediate variable. The conceptual framework in this study defines patient empowerment as: "The extent to which patients are equipped to help themselves with respect to their own health management". Five aspects were taken into account: (1) Health knowledge, (2) Self-confidence and acceptance, (3) Self-care and Self-management skills, (4) Self-efficacy and (5) Motivation. The most important result of this study was the establishment of a linear relationship between the use of social media by chronic patients and satisfaction with their current care. A significant linear relationship was also discovered between the use of social media and the level of health-related knowledge, self-confidence and acceptance level and the motivational level of chronic patients. This study concludes that for social media to affect the quality of healthcare it should be understood primarily as 'visiting and consuming social health content', where the information is made available mainly by other users. In this way social media contributes to the improvement of a patient as a conversation partner. This can lead to a better relationship between a chronic patient and his or her health care provider / professional, and to more loyalty towards his or her therapy. Finally, the use of social media will enhance confidence, acceptance and motivational levels of chronic patients, making them less likely to become socially isolated. Their social network will remain intact or might even expand. Furthermore, the use of social media by patients may increase efficiency and may have a cost reducing effect through a reduction of absenteeism and lost working days, less rapid calls on a professional or healthcare provider and increased awareness which can result in earlier detection of problems which decreases the number of hospitalizations.

## The changing social media landscape in healthcare: <sup>[7]</sup>

The report shows how doctors, patients/consumers and pharma engage (and seek to engage) with each other. Report helps us understand the potential for future change in terms of the use of social media in relation to health.

Study includes researching HCPs, pharmaceutical professionals and consumers/patients within the ‘top-5’ EU countries. The key objectives of the research were to understand:

- The extent to which the respondent groups interact with each other via social media, why and what for.
- Whether more HCPs and patients would use social media for health if it was regulated.
- What the potential is for future change in terms of the use of social media in relation to health.
- Providing a snap shot of both current and future opportunities in the digital social space.
- Aiding consideration of whether there are sufficient patients/consumers and HCPs interested in using social media to justify significant investment at this time.
- Identifying those areas within social media where marketing spend is best placed and most appropriate.

**Key findings:** The results of the study indicate that all three target groups (HCP, patient/consumer and pharma) seek further engagement in the social space for health and would increase their involvement given clarity of regulation and governance of fact. HCPs want to talk to other HCPs and with patients/consumers. Likewise, patients/consumers would like to talk with each other and with HCPs. Both groups seek to engage on a range of topics from personal experiences of illness and treatment, through to seeking education and guidance.

However, the pharma group, whilst it has the desire to engage with patients and doctors in the social networking environment – driven by the marketing and commercial benefits – may find its promotional message lost in digital space.

Health Personnel’s Perception On The Use Of Social Media In Healthcare Delivery System In Rural and Urban Communities of Oyo State, Nigeria by Thomas,KA Adeniyi<sup>[8]</sup>

The study examined health personnel's perception on the use of social media in healthcare delivery system in rural and urban communities of Oyo state, Nigeria. Randomly, 2 Local Government Area (LGA) each were selected from rural and urban communities. Purposively, medical centres were sampled based on the concentration of health practitioners in selected health centres. In all, 112 health personnel were used from the 124 personnel sampled. A good number of the respondents were below 50 years, data obtained indicated that there were more female medical personnel (66.1%) than male (33.9%). All the respondents had more than one year of working experience with 33.9% of them having less than five years work experience. Majority (58.9%) are aware of social media. Respondents have a high knowledge of social media, favorably disposed to the use of social media in healthcare delivery. There exist a significant relationship between respondents' knowledge and the perception of health personnel on the use of social media for health care delivery, while there is no significant difference in respondents' perception of health personnel on the use of social media for health care delivery across the medical personnel interviewed. Social media encourages youth participation and consequently can promote energies of rural youths for innovative effort to use social media to bring healthcare to rural communities.

College students' uses and perceptions of social networking sites for health and wellness information by Yan Zhang:<sup>[9]</sup>

This study explores college students' use of social networking sites for health and wellness information and their perceptions of this use. Thirty-eight college students were interviewed and the interview transcripts were analyzed using the qualitative content analysis method.

Results: Those who had experience using social networking sites for health information used the platform mainly to check health updates of a loved one find lifestyle information and ask about treatments for mild conditions. Overall, participants were skeptical about the quality of information, concerned about the lack of medical knowledge of their friends or peers and wary about possible social risks and invasion of privacy. Based on the results, a model of users' acceptance of social networking sites for health and wellness information was proposed and implications for designing social platforms to better support health inquiries were discussed.

Conclusions: Using social networking sites for health and wellness information is not a popular behavior among college students in this study and social networking sites seem not to be a well-perceived platform for health and wellness information

The use of social media in healthcare: organizational, clinical, and patient perspective by Mowafa Househ<sup>[10]</sup>

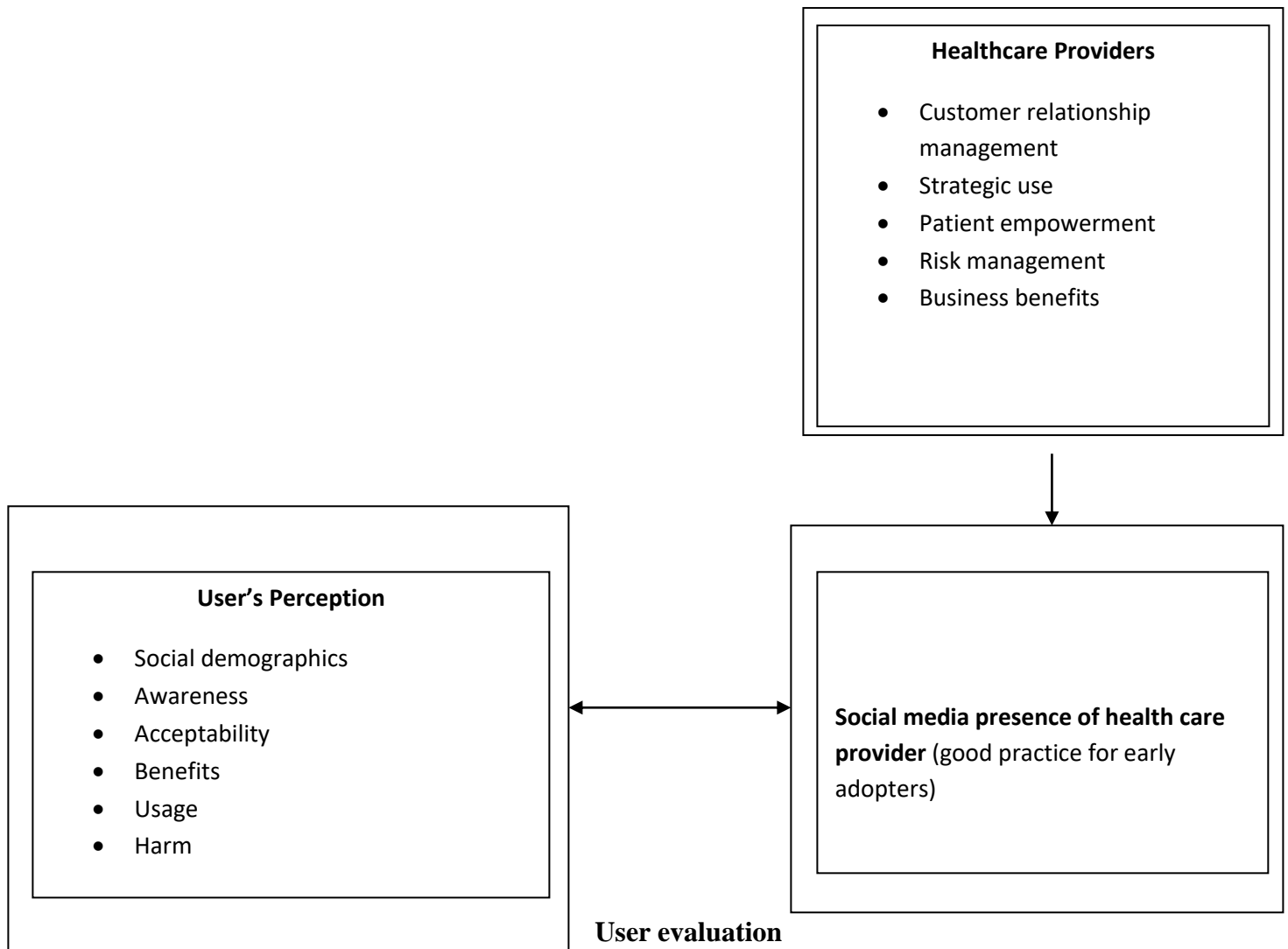
The purpose of this review paper was to explore the impacts of social media on healthcare organizations, clinicians, and patients. This study found that healthcare organizations, clinicians and patients can benefit from the use of social media. For healthcare organizations, social media can be used primarily for community engagement activities such as fundraising, customer service and support, the provision of news and information, patient education, and advertising new services. The study also found that the most widely used social media venues for physicians were online communities where physicians can read news articles, listen to experts, research new medical developments, network, and communicate with colleagues regarding patient issues. Patients can benefit from the use of social media through education, obtaining information, networking, performing research, receiving support, goal setting, and tracking personal progress. Future research should further examine other financial, technological, informational, ethical, legal, and privacy issues surrounding the use of social media in healthcare.

### **3. Conceptual Framework**

Social media as a platform has increasingly become an integral part of most modern businesses and is now emerging as a new trend in healthcare industry as well. Traditional approaches like visiting doctor/hospitals at the time of sickness have given way to being consistently in touch with your patients (now referred to as target markets). This eventually focuses on the role of social media as a useful tool in integrating customers (patients) and healthcare providers (physicians and hospitals).

Like elsewhere around the globe the role of internet is growing in every sphere and the picture is not much different in the Indian subcontinent. The number of internet users is growing by 150k every month or 1.8 million users every year. India is not only the fastest growing online market in the world but more interestingly it's also a huge wave of young consumers with 75% users being below the age of 35<sup>[11]</sup> Reports suggest that an average urban Indian internet user is looking for communication and social networking while an average rural Indian internet user is looking for entertainment and communication. There is no shortage of evidences that point to the fact that social media if used effectively as a source of healthcare information it can reach large number of customers and can lead to better customer relationship. Very few studies have examined the use of social media in healthcare

and how it engages customers and healthcare providers and reached limited conclusions. Indeed the main conceptual areas that emerge from literature are the user's perception and expectation from social media and the requirement of healthcare providers to incorporate social media as a strategic tool for their organization. These conceptual areas and their interaction are depicted below:



(Table 1)

**User perception:** This area is associated with the perception that users have about social media and how they value characteristics such as benefits, risks associated with social media. It is suggested that social media pages will be perceived differently by users who will evaluate them with personal set of satisfaction levels, expectation and goals. Thus user perception is needed to be part of conceptual framework of social media usage in healthcare.

**Healthcare provider adoption of social media:** This area is associated with the reasons that healthcare providers have developed to incorporate social media into their marketing strategy and their motivation for providing extra customer value.

**User Evaluation:** This area is associated with the recommended good practices to implement in social media marketing, under three leading categories: strategy, content and feedback. These good practices will serve as an evaluation tool for understanding patterns of satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the user experience. Each of these areas will influence the implementation of social media by Health care providers: the users will give an indication of the support or rejection (according to their needs being fulfilled or not); the Healthcare providers through their adoption practices relating to strategy, benefits; and the current social media guidelines that are important for those who maintain the social media presences.

## **4. Objectives**

### **4.1 General objective:**

To assess, the usefulness of social media in, maintaining relationship between healthcare providers and consumers.

### **4.2 Specific objective**

1. To determine the consumer perception about the use of social media in healthcare.
2. To find out how the healthcare providers are using social media for their organization.
3. To identify the factors associated with utilization of social media in healthcare.
4. To recommend appropriate measures for better utilization of social media.

## **5. Methodology**

### **5.1 Study Design - Cross Sectional Study**

**5.2 Study Area** – General Public of Gurgaon for identifying the consumer perception and Healthcare providers (hospitals and doctors) to determine how they are currently using social media for their organization.

**5.3 Sampling Population** – Residents of Gurgaon and Healthcare providers (hospitals, diagnostic centre and doctors)

**5.4 Sampling Method** – Purposive sampling for Healthcare providers and general public both.

**5.5 Data Collection Tools** - Data is collected through a semi structured Questionnaire for general public and interview schedule for healthcare providers.



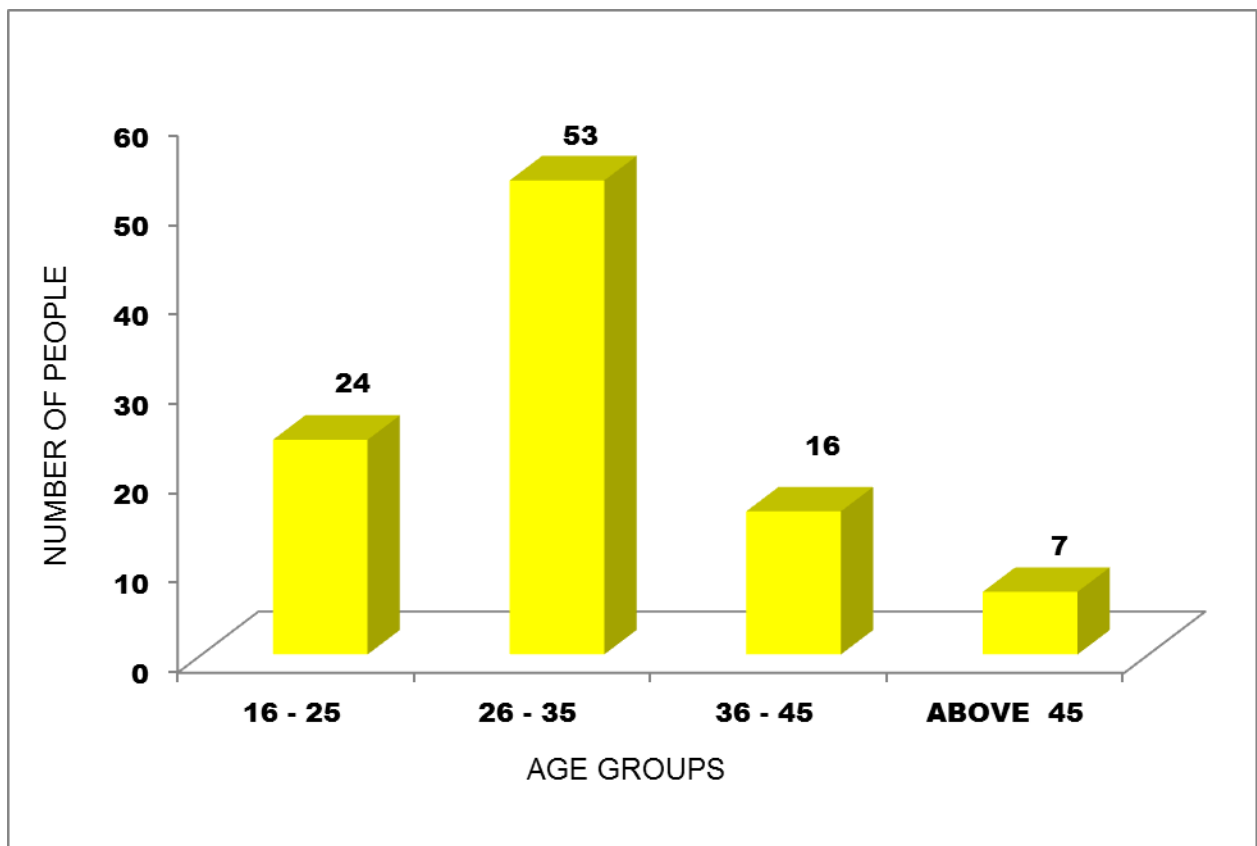
## 6. STUDY FINDINGS

### 6.1 Customer perception about the use of social media in healthcare

#### Social demographics

#### Age Pofile

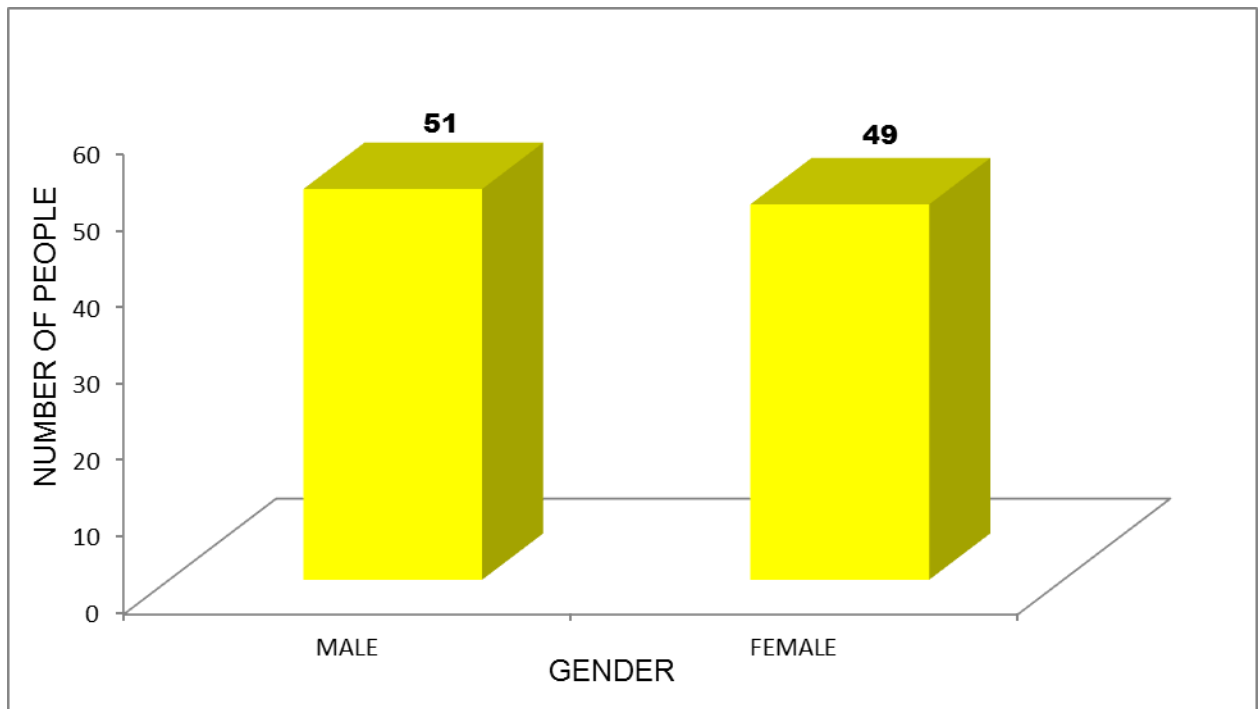
(Figure-1)



Out of 100 consumers the majority are under the age group 26 to 35. Next large number of consumers is under the age of 16 to 25 years. Basically most of the people surveyed are young population.

## Gender profile

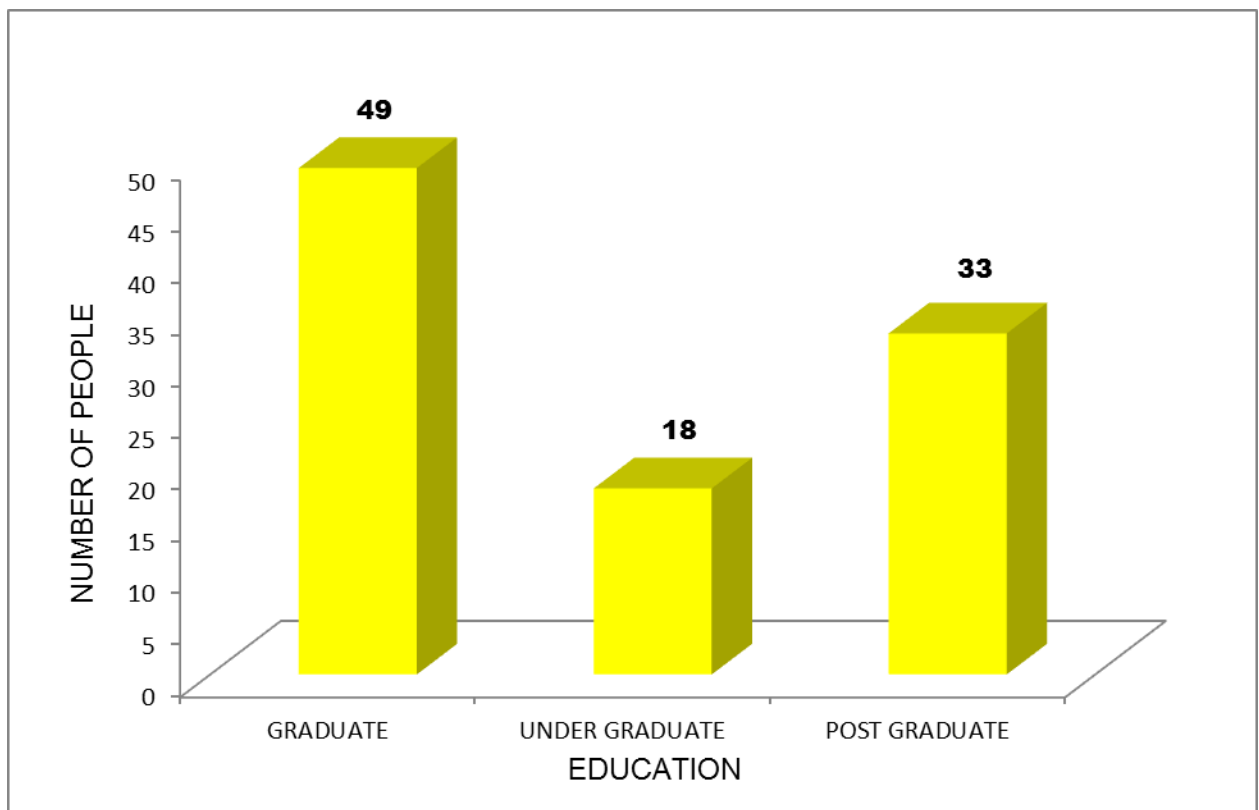
(Figure -2)



**Out of 100 people who were surveyed more than half are males and 49% are females.**

## Education

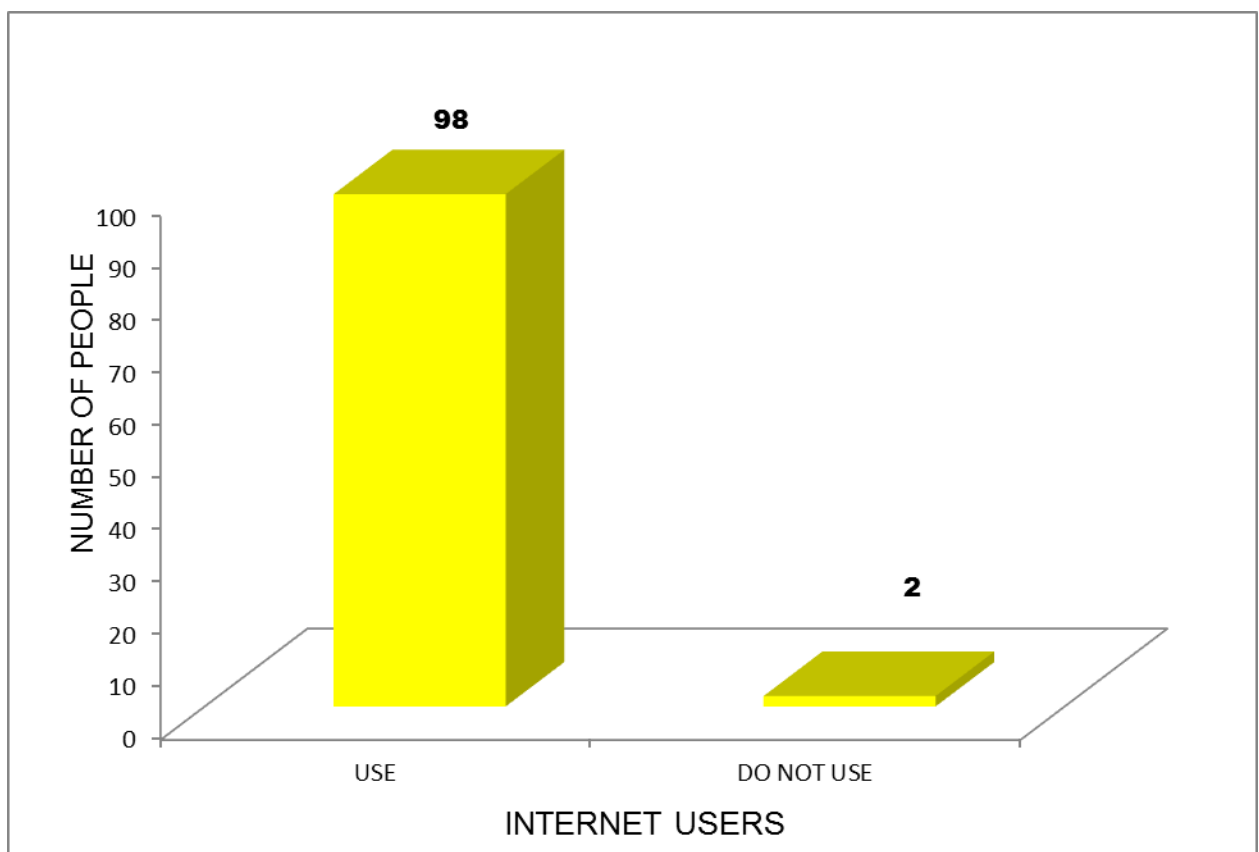
**(Figure-3)**



**Out of 100 people who were surveyed majority of them were well qualified 49% were graduate and 33% were post graduate. Only 18% were under graduate and these were mostly the students.**

## Internet usage

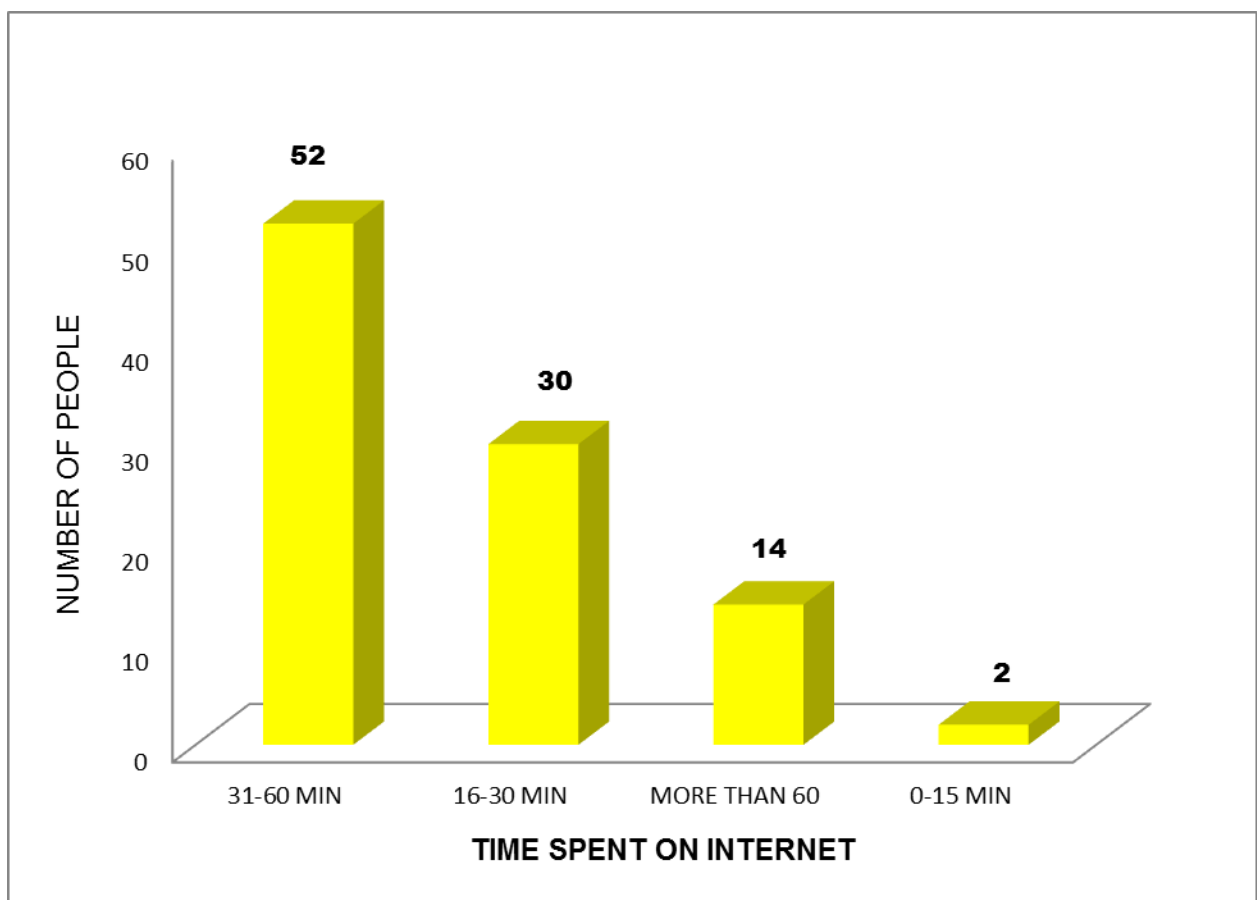
(Figure-4)



Out of 100 people who were surveyed almost all of them were using internet for something or the other except 2% who were not using internet at all.

### Time spent on internet

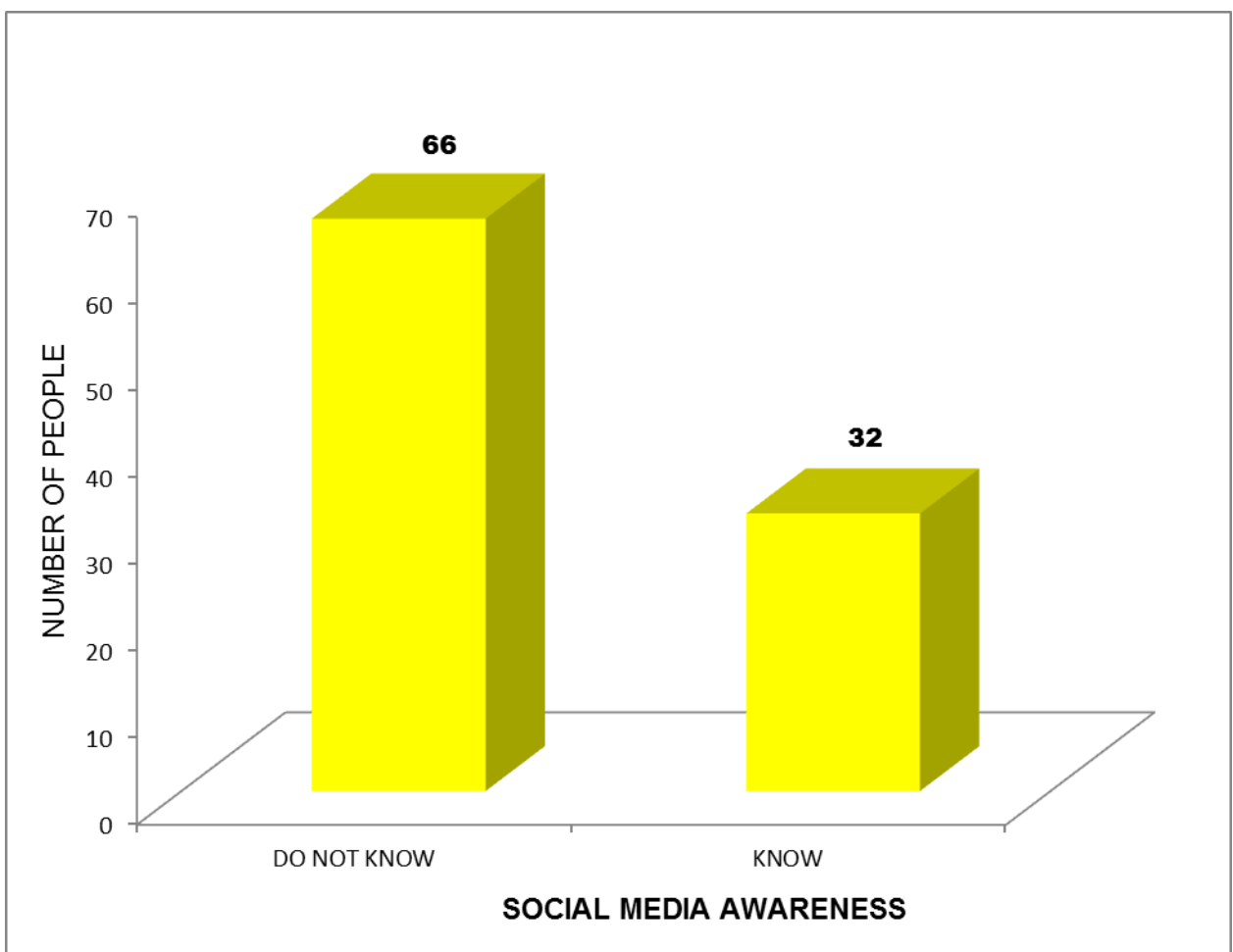
(Figure- 5)



Almost more than half of the internet users spend between 30 minutes to an hour on internet. 30% of 100 people who were surveyed spend 15 minutes to half an hour on internet. Only 14% spend more than an hour and 2% devote less than 15 minutes on internet.

## Social media awareness

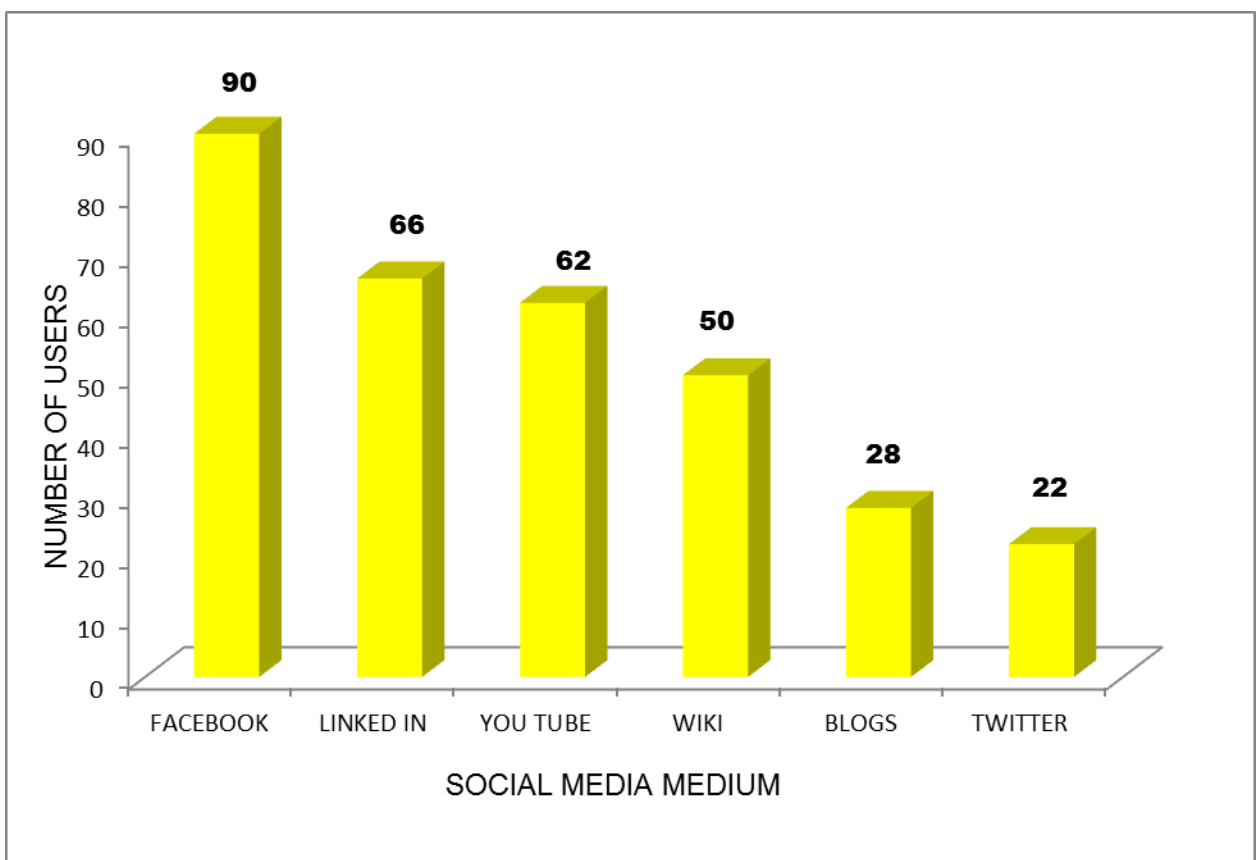
(Figure- 6)



Out of 98% of internet users 32% were aware of social media, while 66 % were not having a clear idea for what social media term is used.

## Social media usage

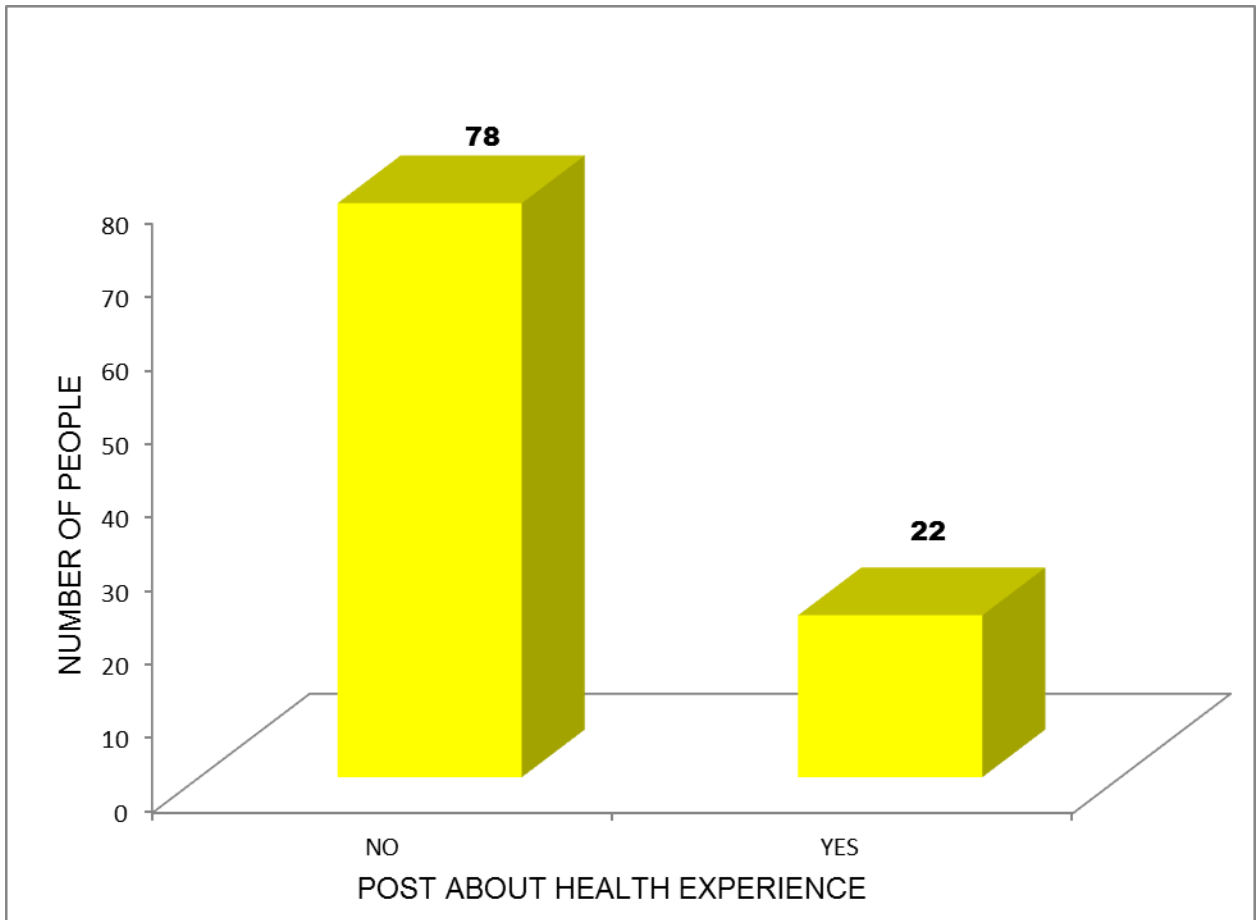
(Figure-7)



Majority of internet users are using more than one form of social media. Out of the social media tools usage Facebook got the highest number of users followed by linked in, you tube and wiki. Web blogs and twitter has comparatively less number of followers.

## People Posted about health experience

(Figure-8)

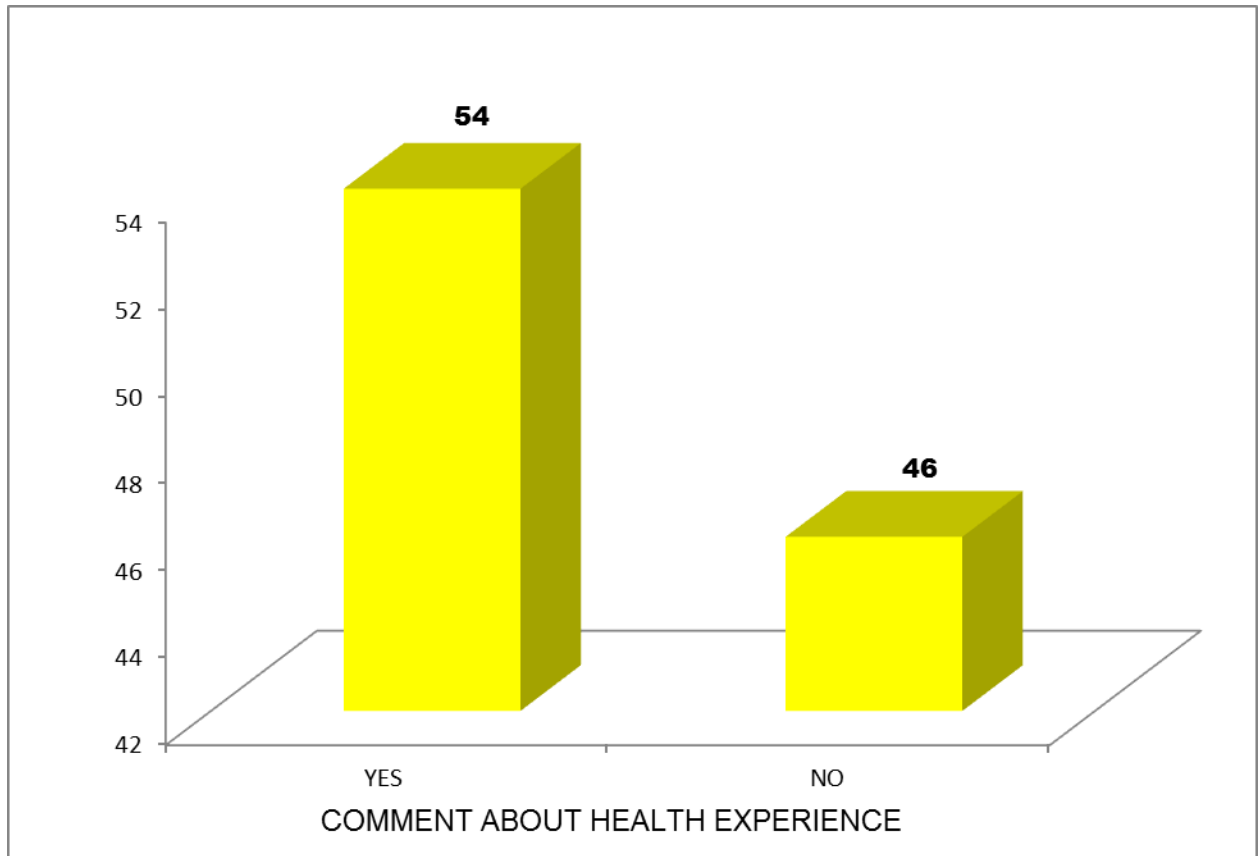


When asked whether they post or update about their health experience only 22% of people said yes they have posted or updated about their health experience.



## People comment about health experience

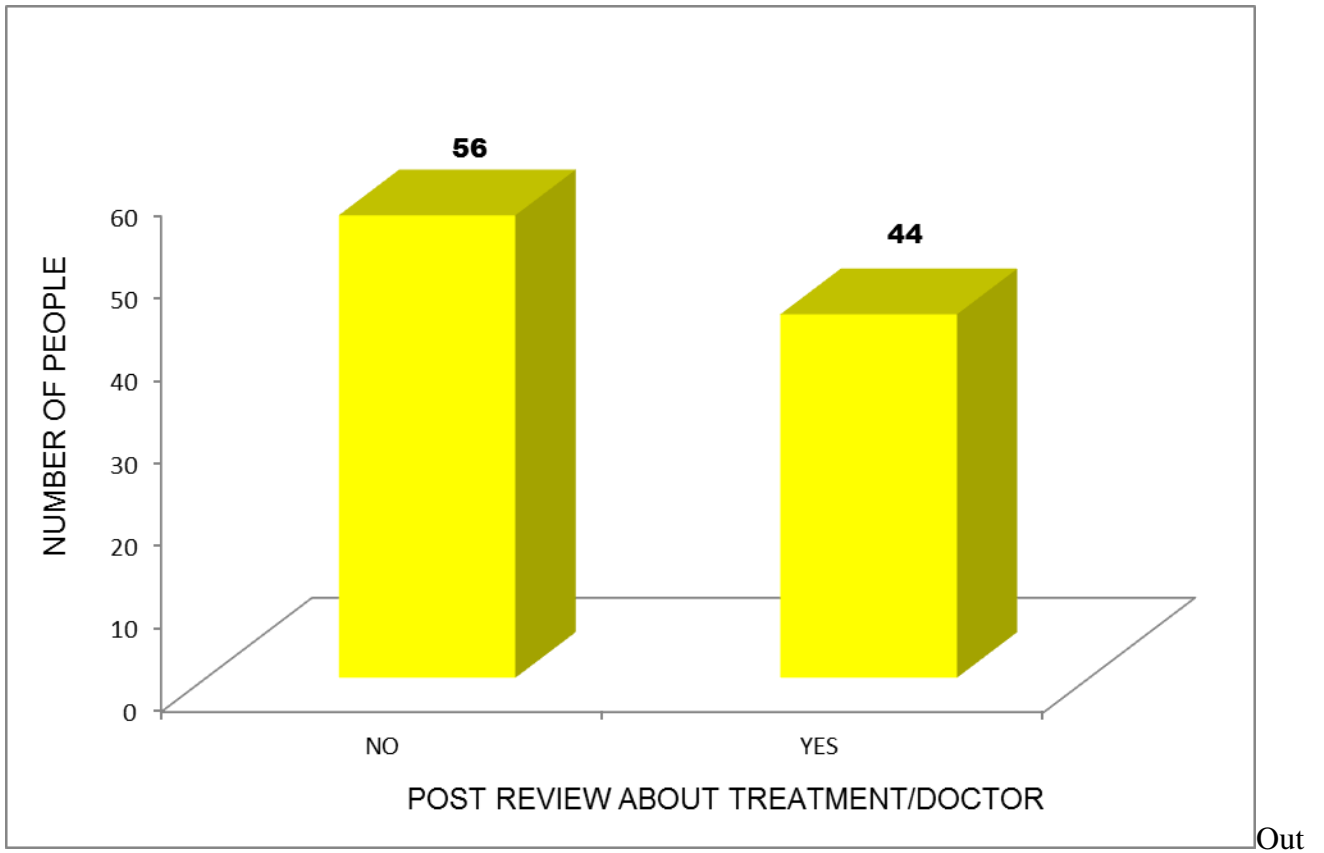
(Figure-9)



When asked whether the consumers have commented about their health experience on someone else's health related post using social media 54% said yes they have commented while 46% have not done such activity.

## People posted review about treatment/doctor

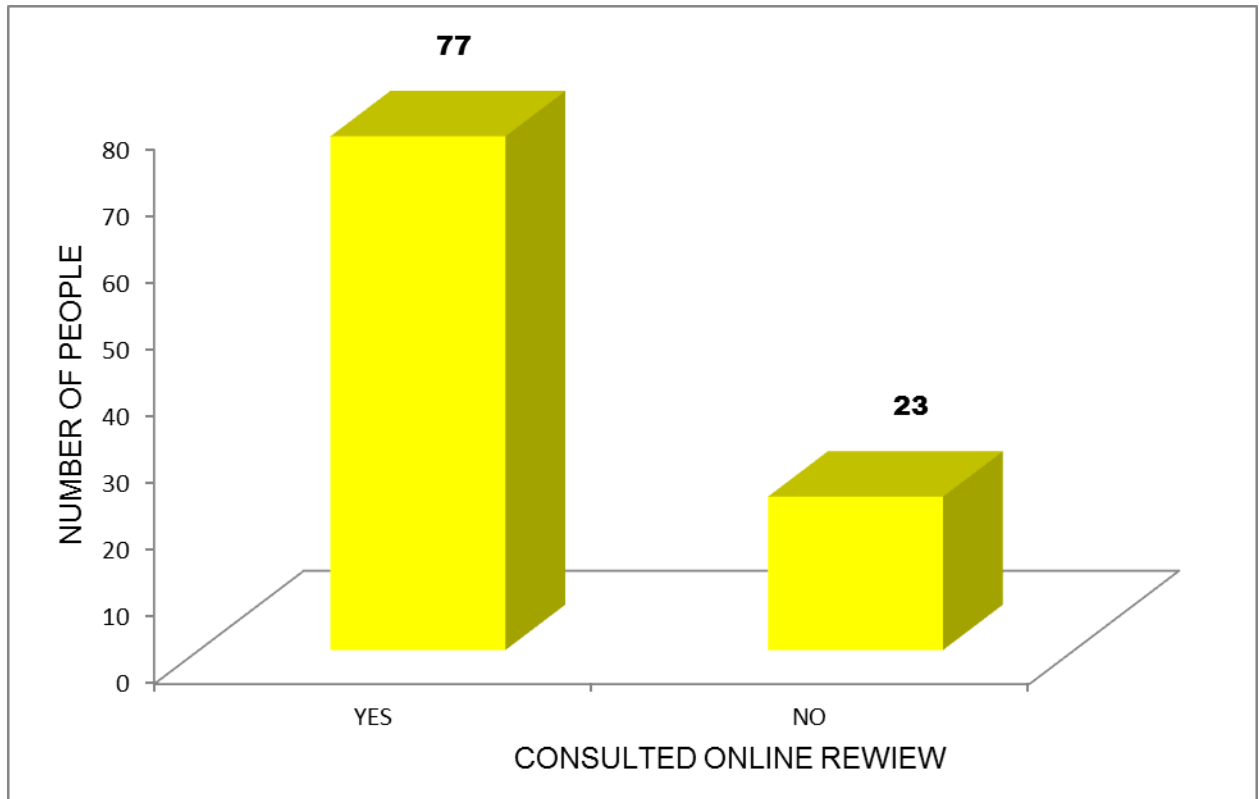
(Figure-10)



of 100 people surveyed 44 percent said yes they have post review about the doctor the treatment, doctor or hospital they have visited. At the same time 56% of people have not done such activity.

## People consulted online review of doctors/hospitals

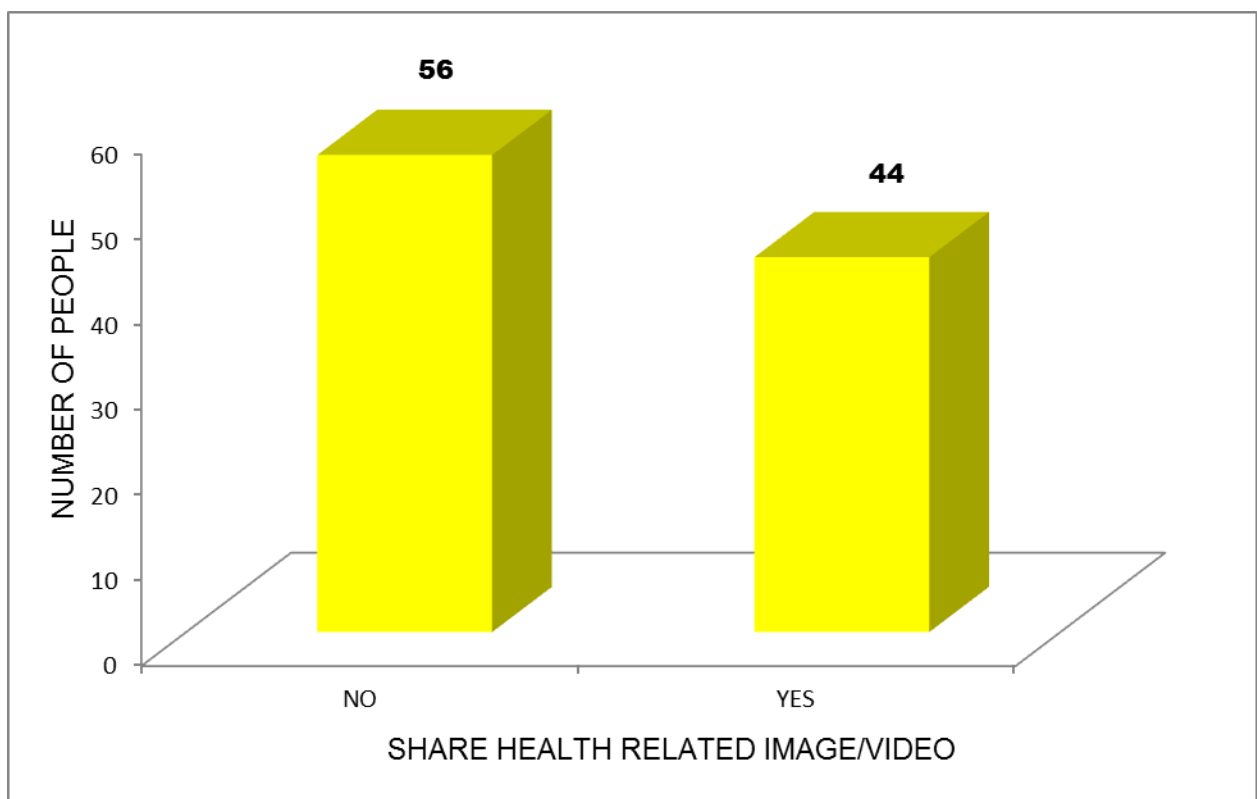
**(Figure-11)**



When asked whether they have consulted online reviews about the doctor or the hospital before going to them. Majority of them answered yes they have consulted online reviews. While 23% said they did not search anything on internet.

### People shared health related video/images

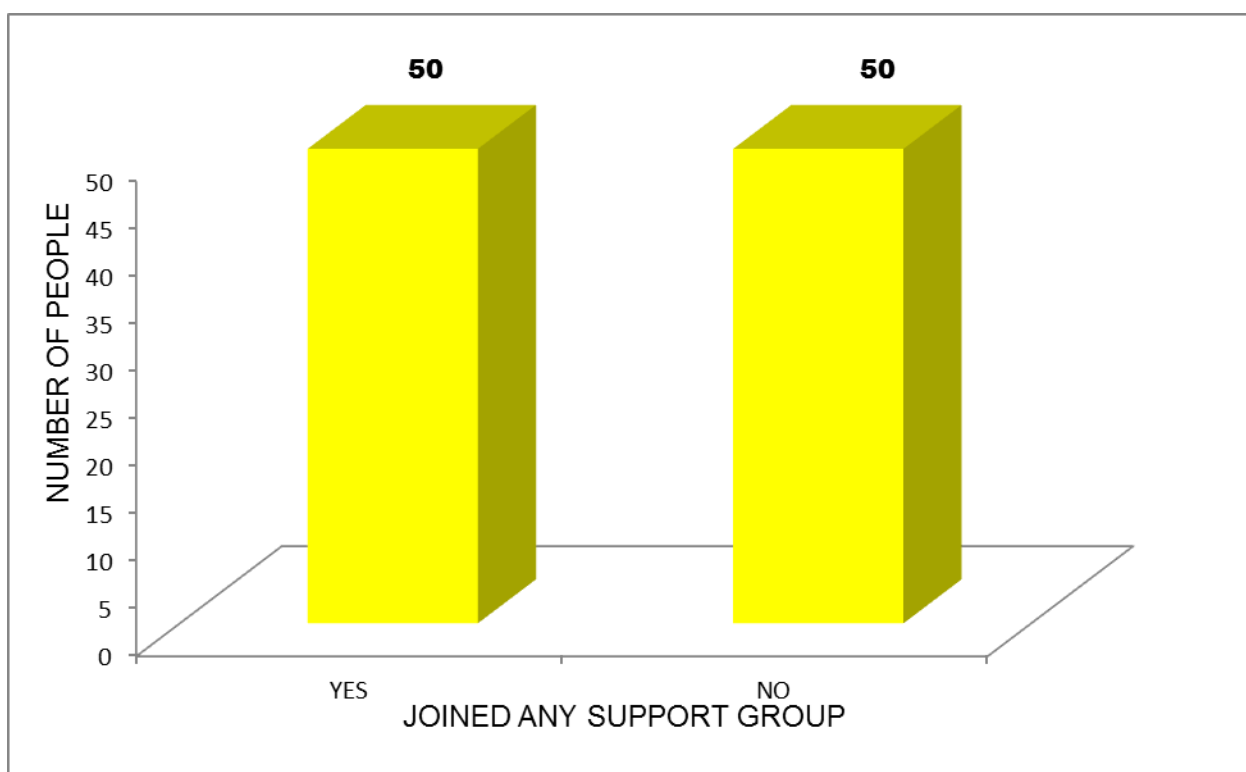
(Figure-12)



Out of 100 people surveyed 44% have shared health related images or videos on internet using social media and at the same time 56% have not done such an activity.

### People joined any health related support group

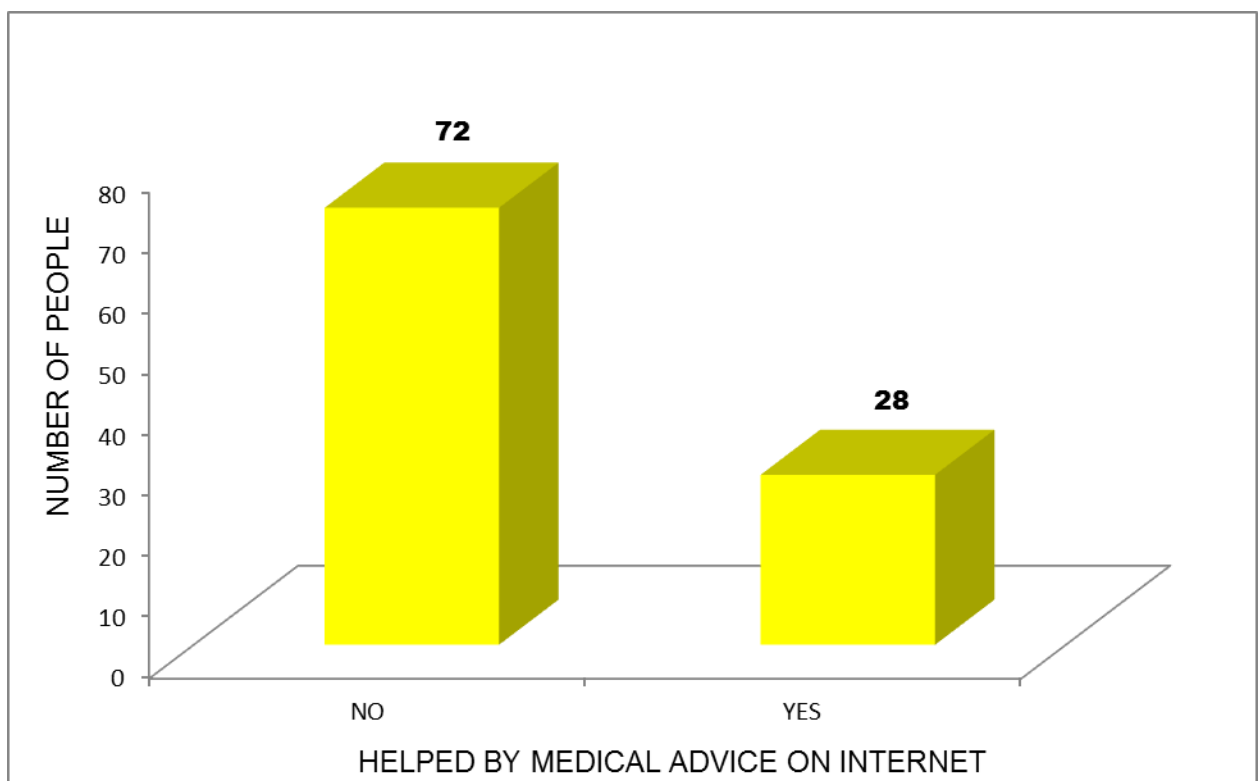
(Figure-13)



When asked whether the person has joined any health related support group half of them responded yes they have joined while other half have not done anything of that sort.

## People helped by medical advice given on the internet

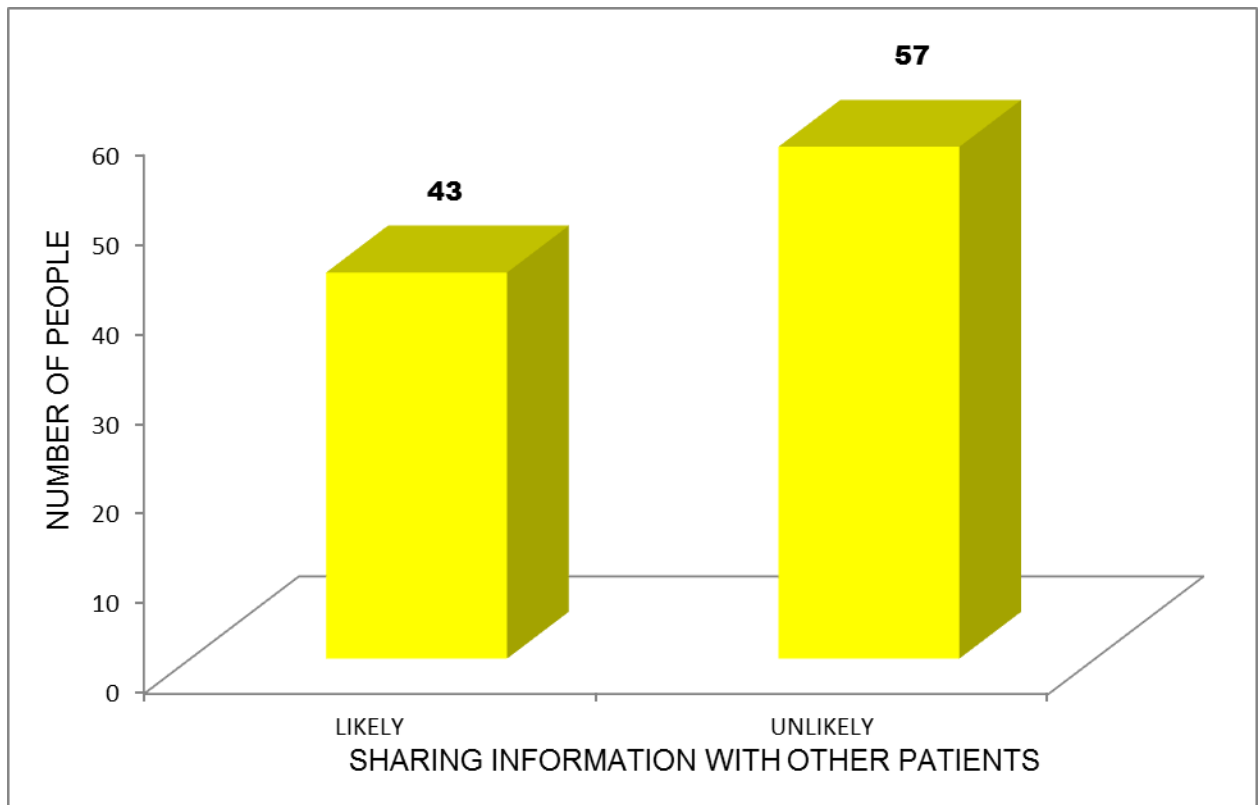
(Figure-14)



Out of 100 participants only 28% knew someone who was helped by medical advice given on internet while majority respondents did not know about anyone helped by medical advice given on internet.

## Sharing information with other patients

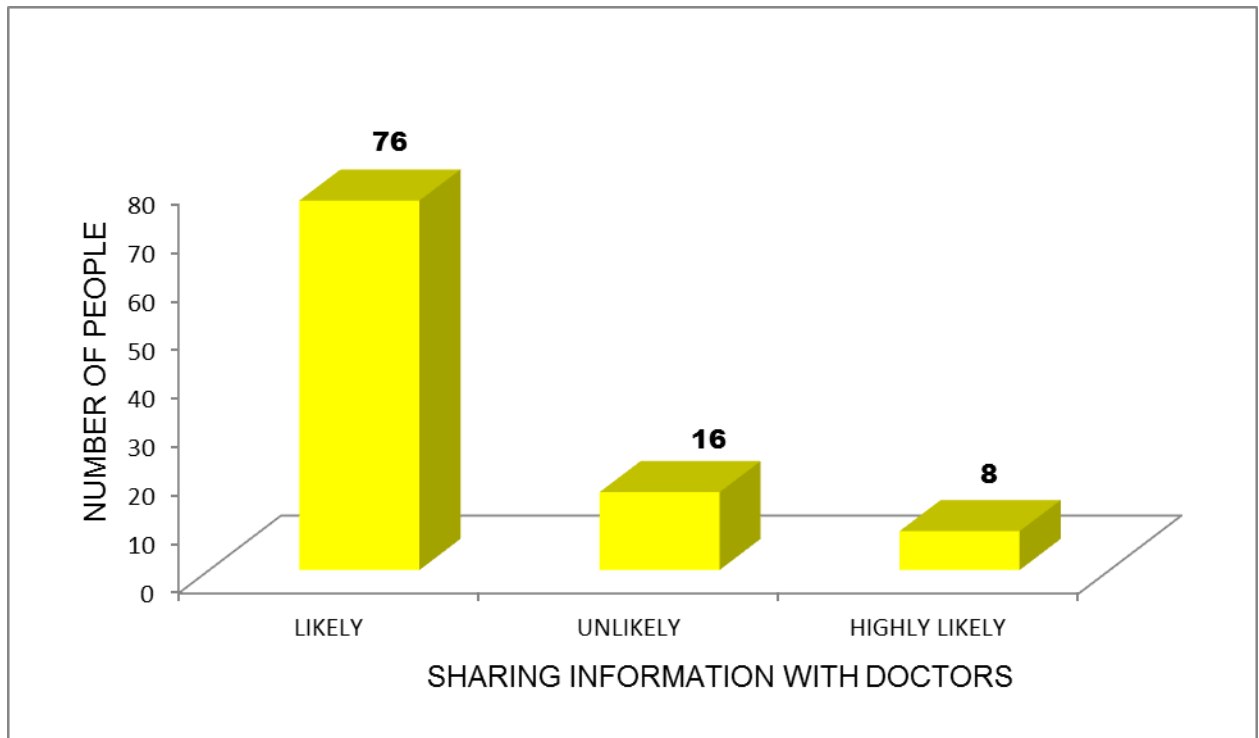
(Figure-15)



Out of 100 respondents 57% said they are unlikely to share their health related information with other patients using social media .However 43% of them were willing to share information.

## Sharing information with doctors

(Figure-16)

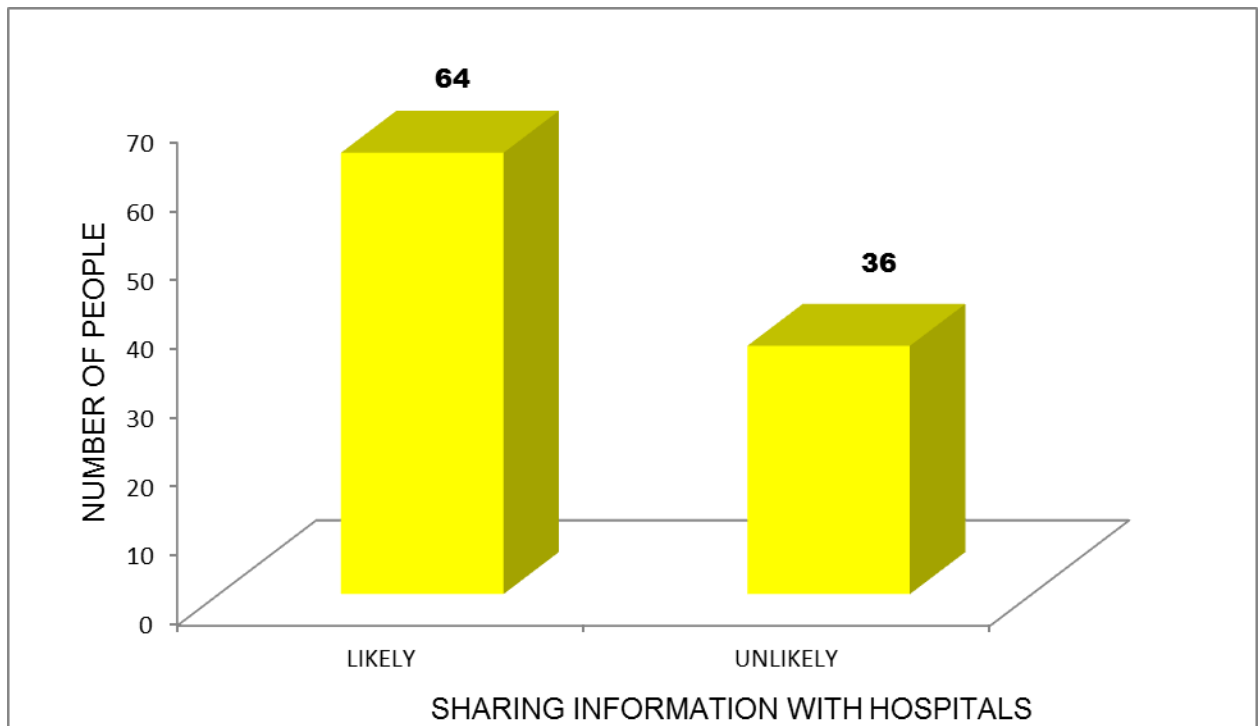


Majority of respondents were willing to share their health related information with doctors .However 16% are unlikely to share such information and 8% are highly unlikely to use social media to reveal their personal health records to doctors.



## Sharing information with Hospitals

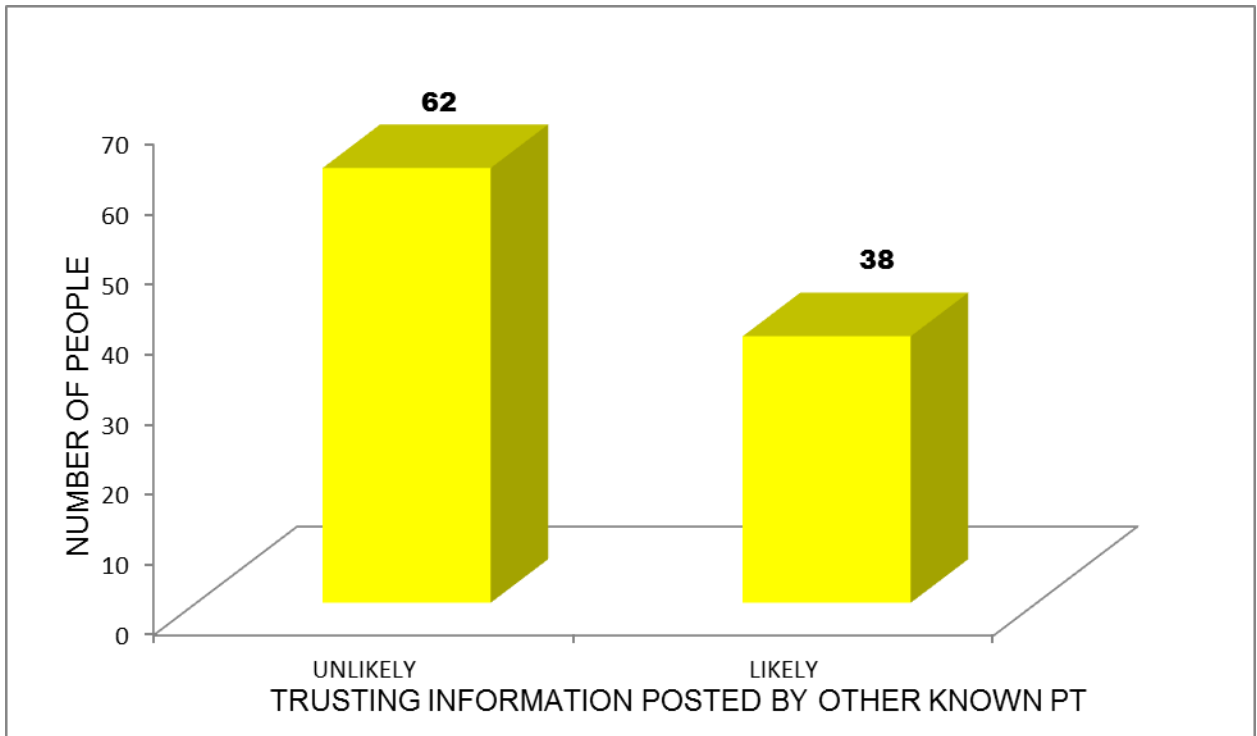
(Figure-17)



With 64% more than half of the respondents were likely to share their health information with the hospitals. However 36% were unlikely to use such platform to share their health records.

## Trusting information posted by other known patients

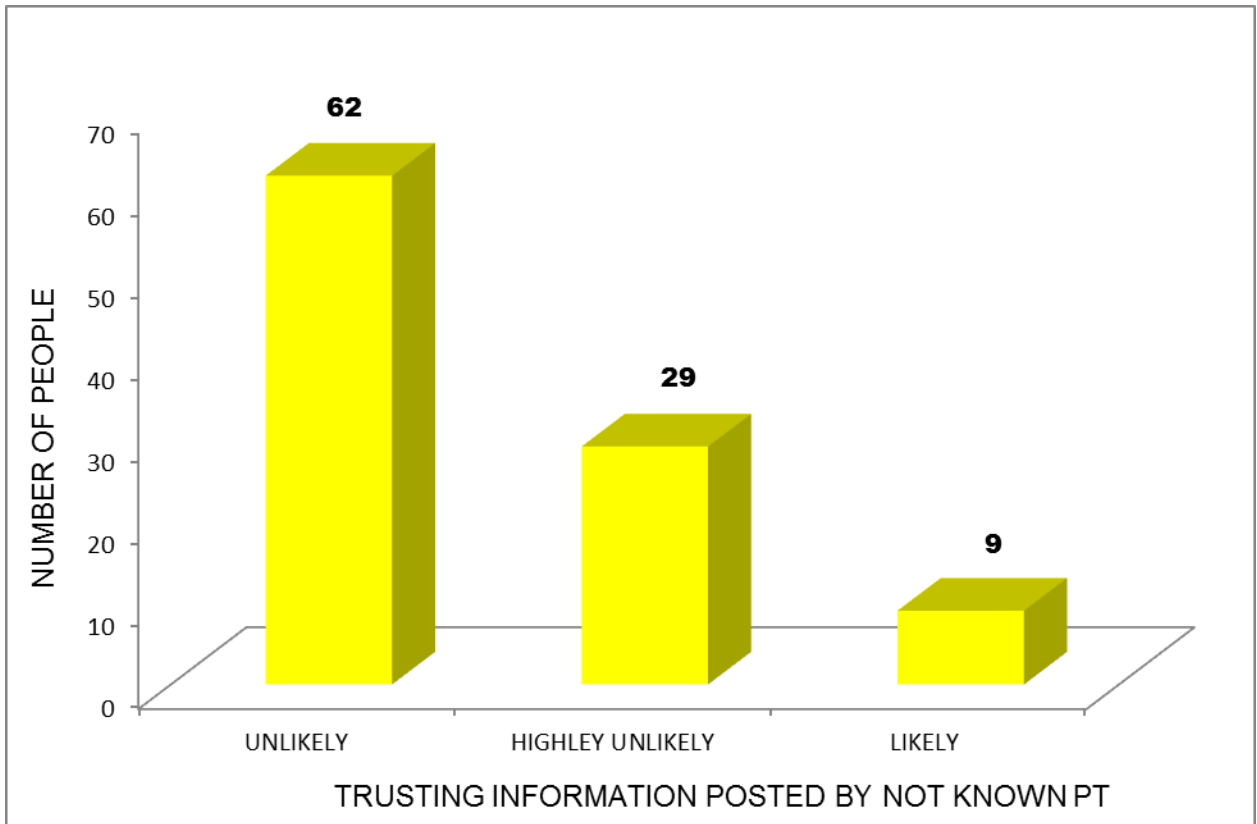
(Figure-18)



Out of 100 respondents 62% said they are unlikely to trust any information posted by other known patients while 38% were likely to trust the information given to them using social media.

## Trusting information shared by unknown patients

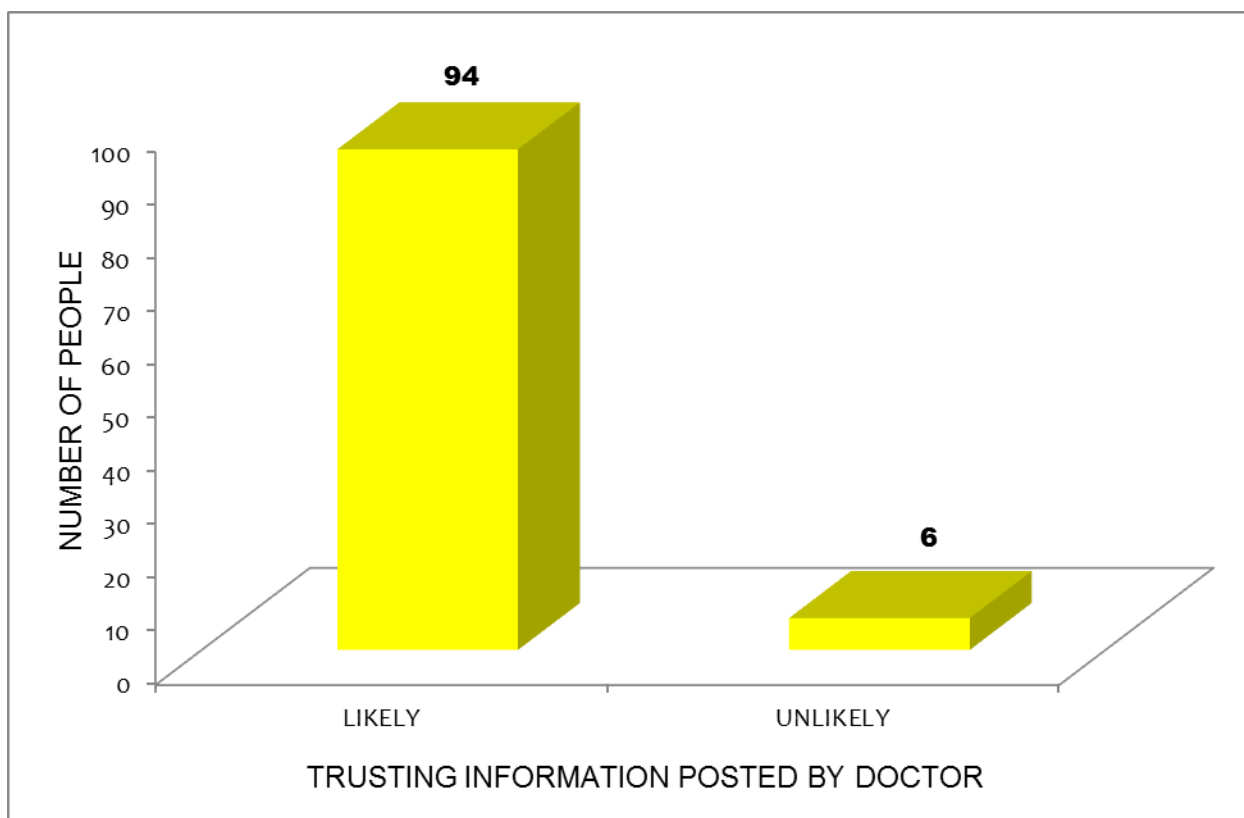
(Figure-19)



Majority of respondents are unlikely to trust information posted by the patients they do not know and at the same time 29% are highly unlikely to trust information posted on internet by those who they don't know.

## Trusting information posted by Doctor

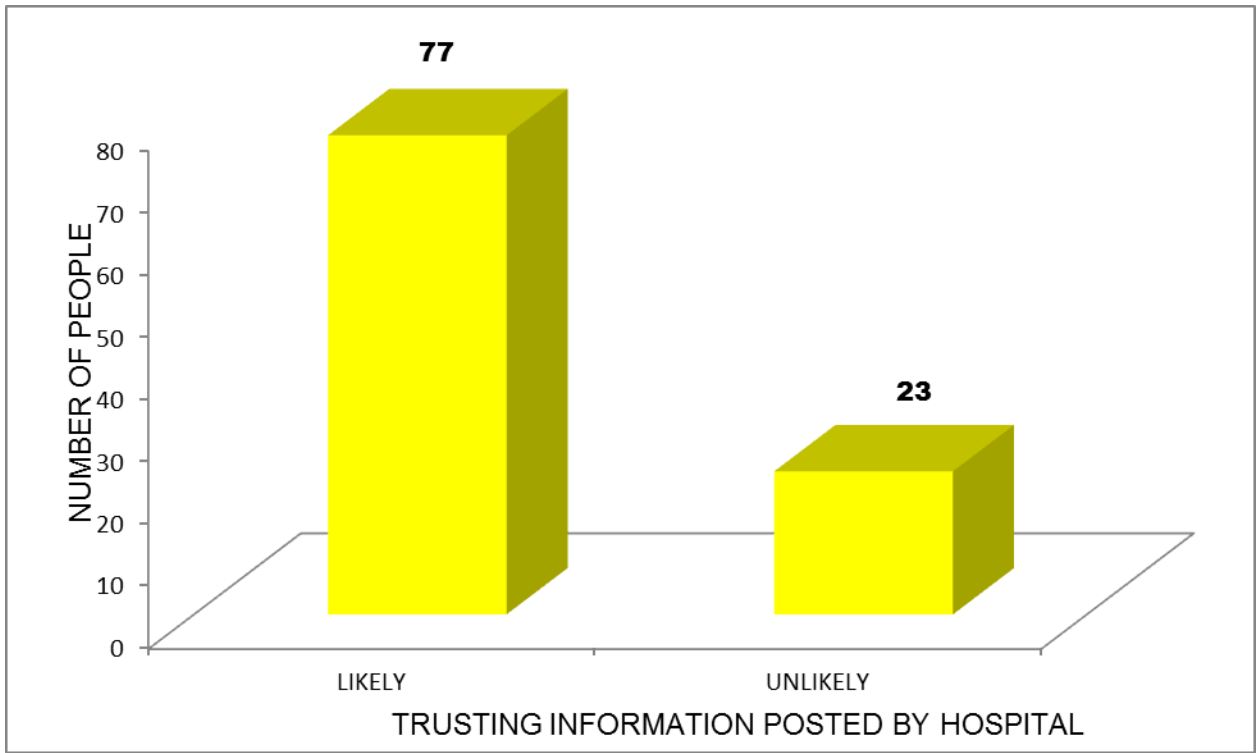
(Figure-20)



With high percentage of 94% respondents are likely to trust information posted by doctor. Only 6% are unwilling to trust information posted by doctor using social media.

## Trusting Information posted by hospitals

(Figure-21)

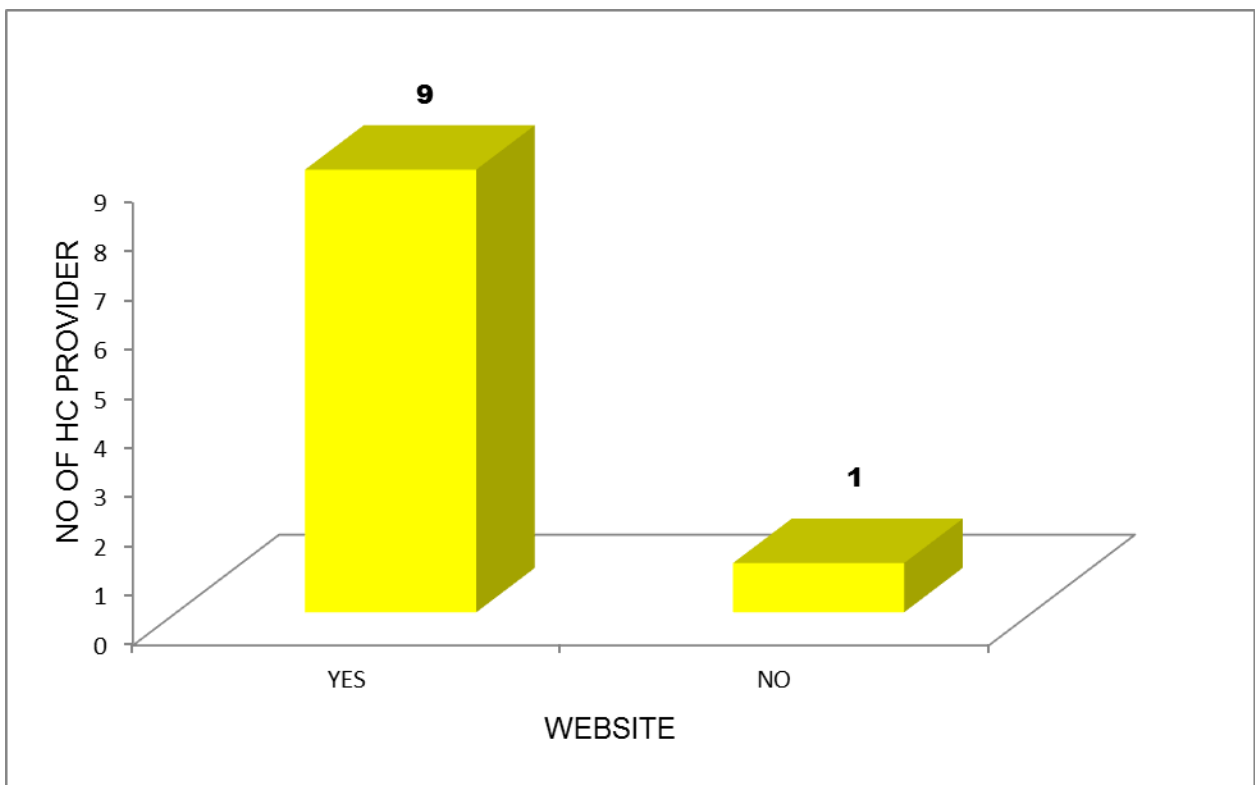


Out of 100 people surveyed 77% were likely to trust information posted by hospital using social media. However 23% are unlikely to rely on such information.

## 6.2 Healthcare provider's usage of social media for their organization

### Healthcare providers having their own website

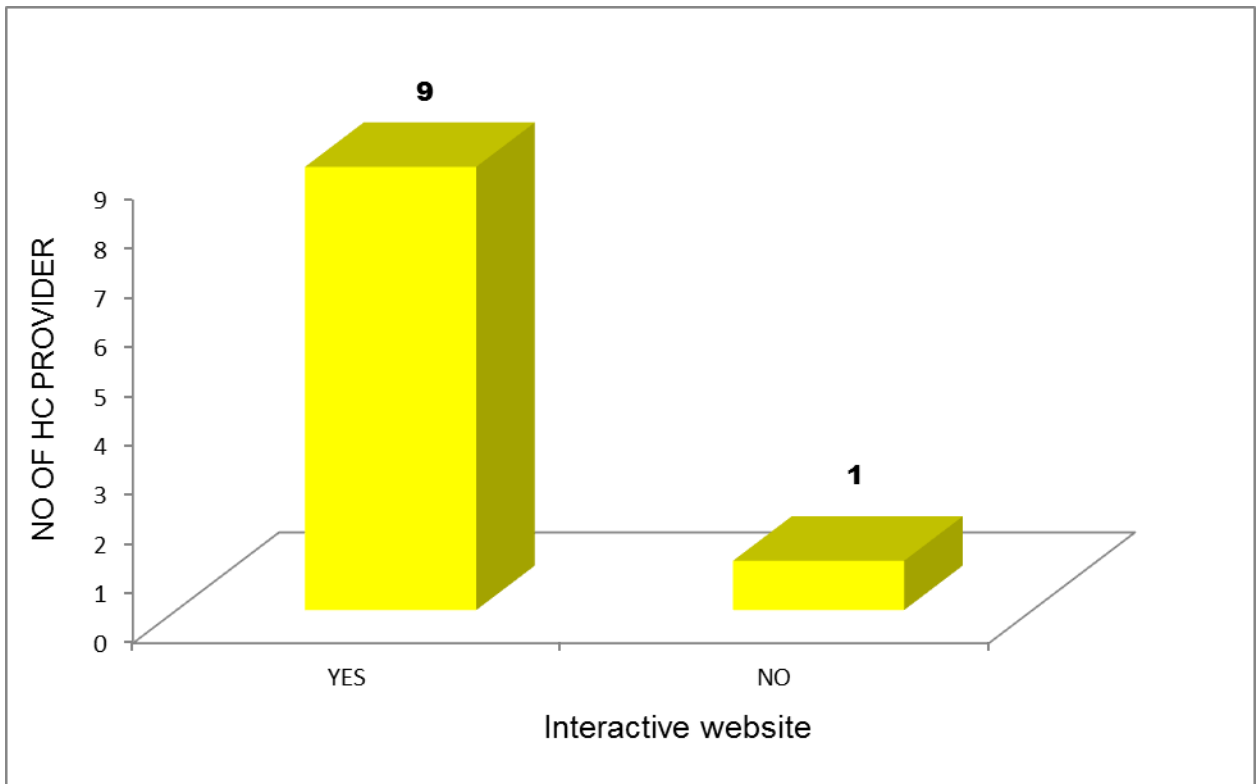
(Figure-22)



Out of 10 healthcare providers 90% have their own website. However there was one who was not having a website.

## Healthcare providers having interactive website

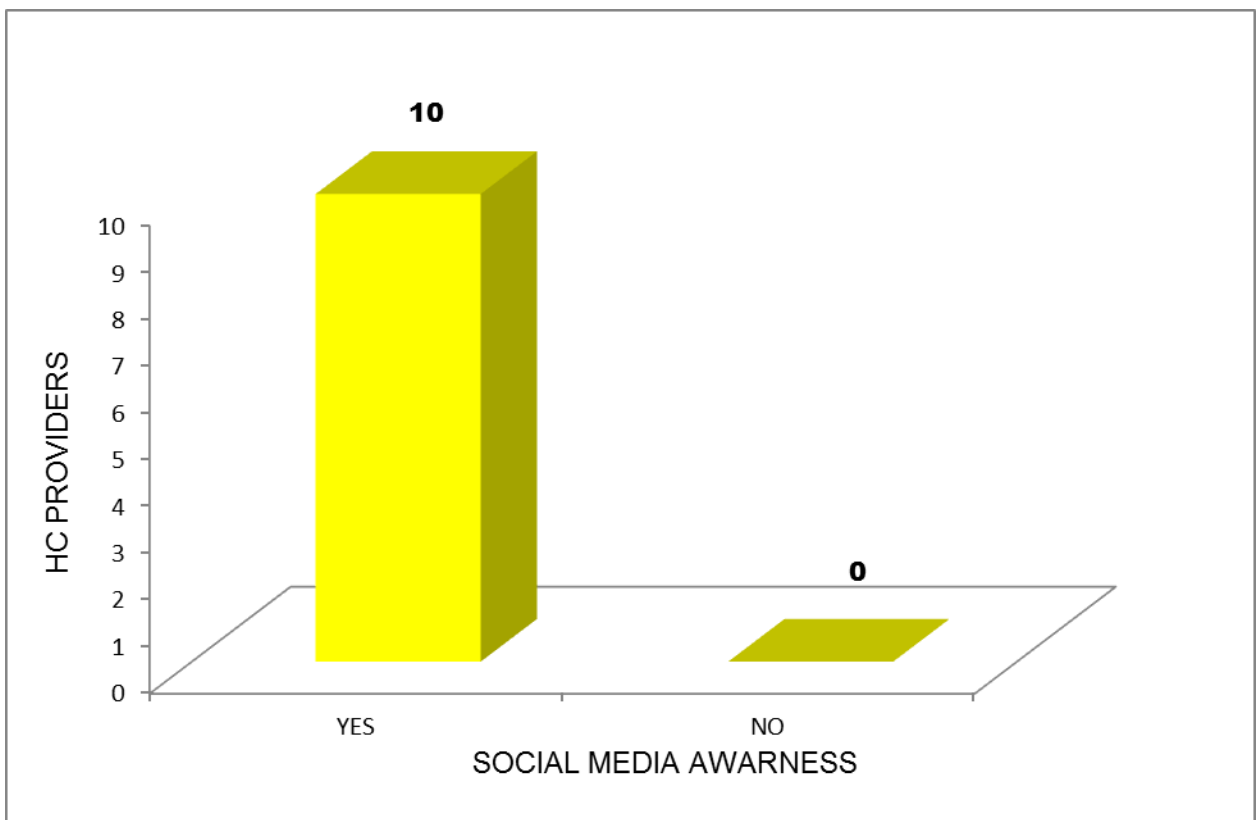
(Figure-23)



Almost all the healthcare providers who were having their own websites said their sites are interactive.

## Social media awareness among healthcare providers

**(Figure- 24)**

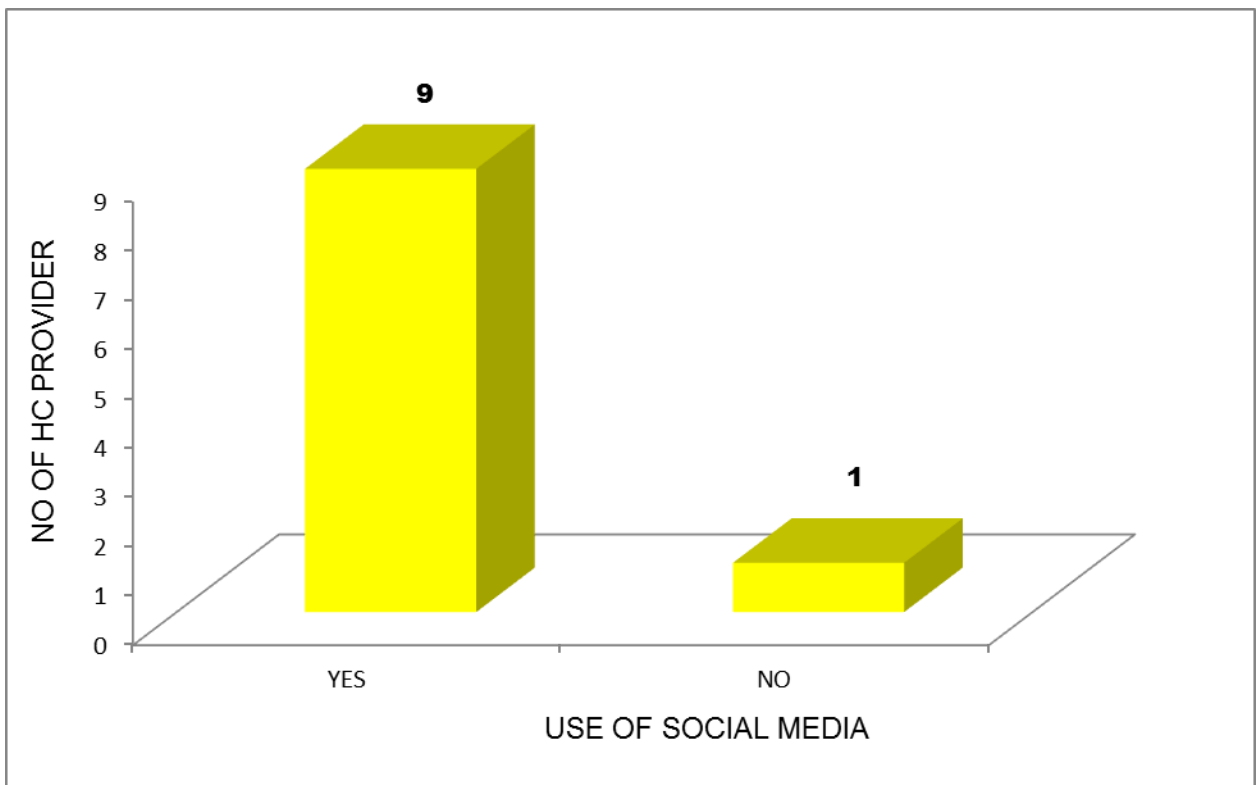


Out of all the healthcare providers everyone was aware of what social media is and for what purpose it is used.



### Usage of social media for organization

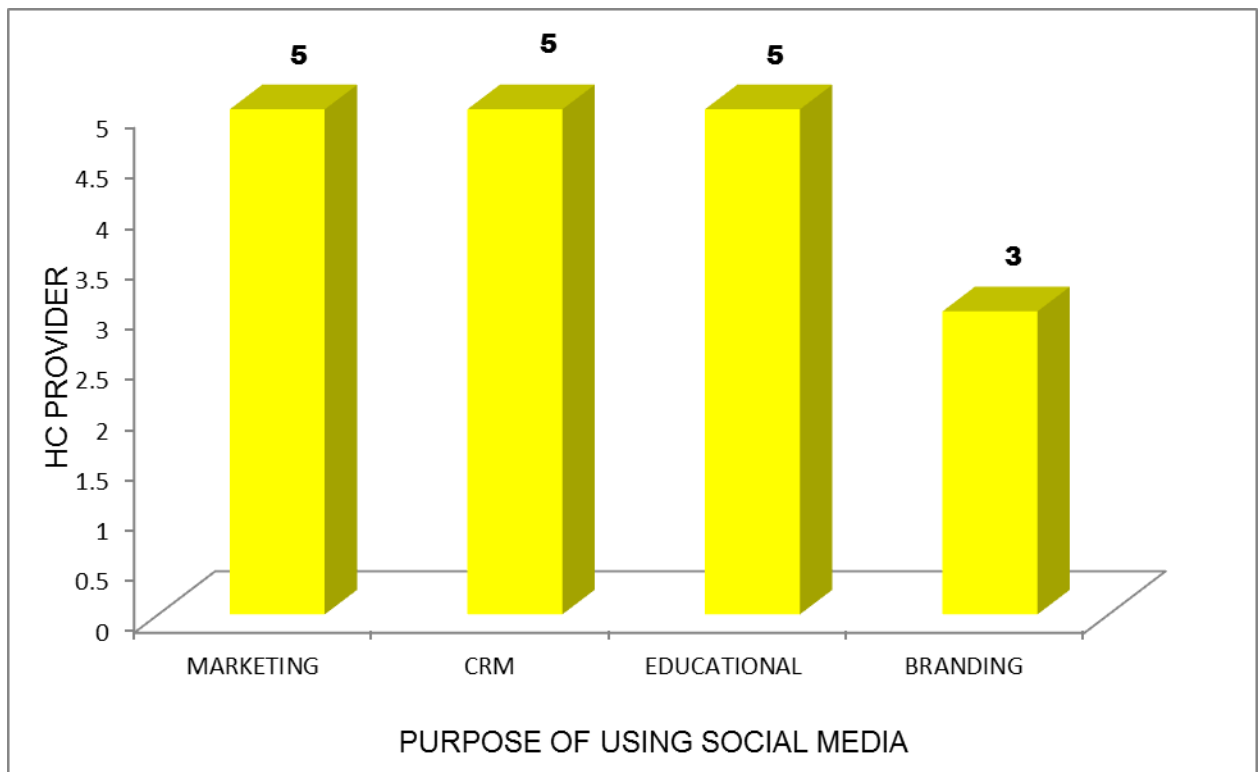
**(Figure-25)**



Out of 10 healthcare providers nine were using social media for their organization.

### Purpose of using Social Media for organization

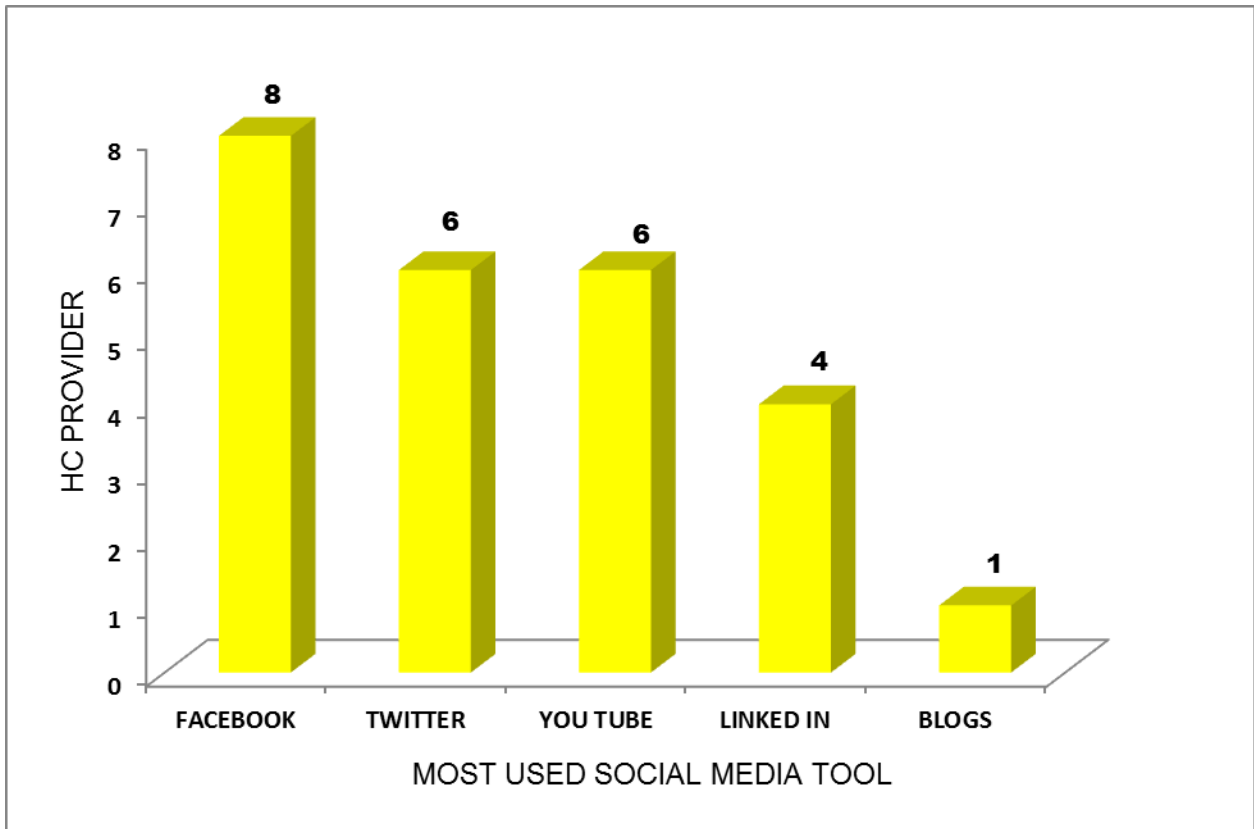
**(Figure- 26)**



When asked for what purpose they all are using social media, some common responses came up which were marketing, customer relationship management and for educational information. While some of the healthcare providers said they use it for branding also.

### Most commonly used social media tool by healthcare providers

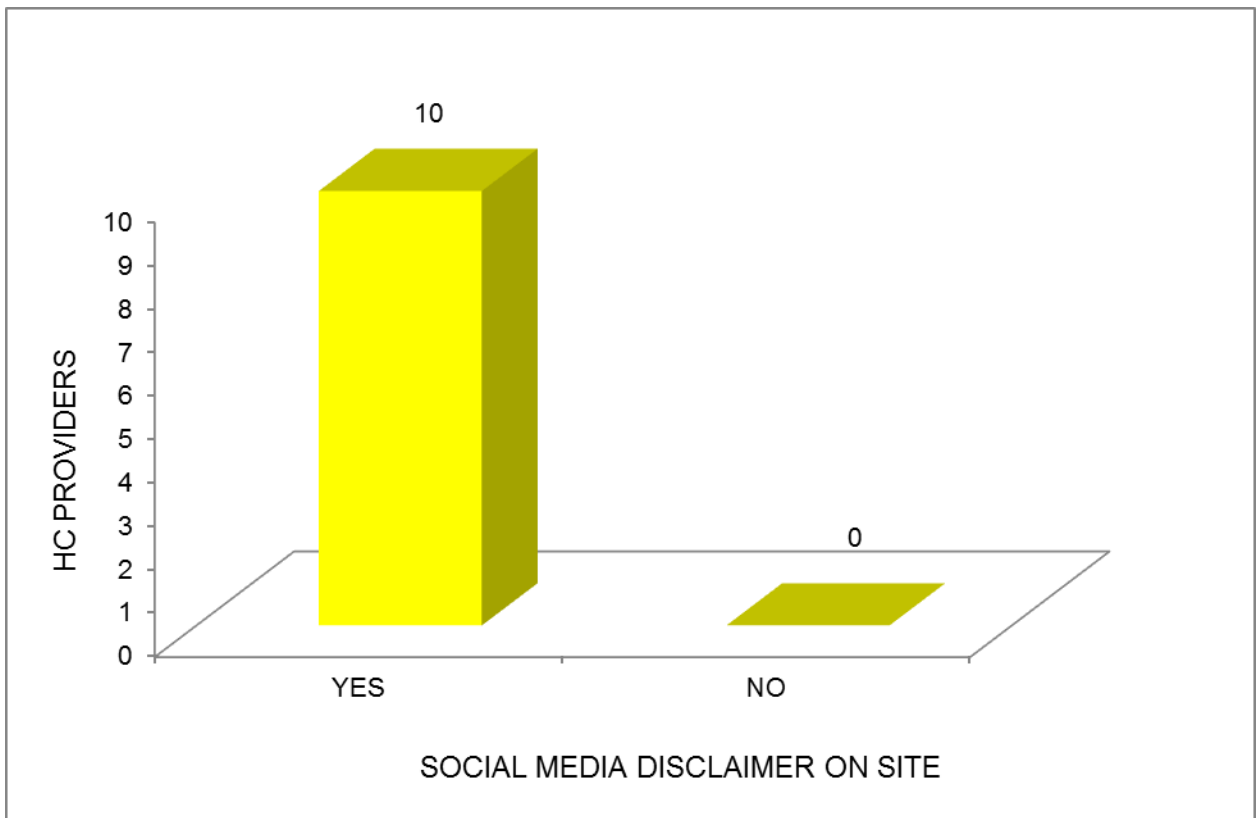
(Figure- 27)



When asked which is the tool healthcare providers are using for their organization. Mostly answered Facebook because it is easy to use and have large number of followers followed by twitter and YouTube. Few answered they use linked in for exchanging information most of them were doctors. Blogs were also being used by some.

### Use of any Social Disclaimer on the site

(Figure- 28)



None of the healthcare providers have social media disclaimer on the site which mentions that patient not to take information shared on the site.

## 7. Discussion

Social media as fundamental tool to reach target customers has most certainly arrived. The results of the study confirm the current views on social media. Social media as a marketing tool though becoming increasingly popular is still relatively basic in complexity and sophistication.

Though the adoption rates (almost 90%) were significantly higher than other researchers, this can best be explained by the skewed social demographics of the study population. 53% of the participants were in the age group of 26-35 years and only 13% were undergraduate. Findings pertaining to the adoption of social media for the purposes of marketing, customer relationship management, communications and brand management are very consistent with the research conducted previously.

Some research also suggests that the vast majority of institutions use social media for unidirectional communication. Having built familiarity and comfort with basic social media use, it is now time for healthcare providers to use social media in a more advanced way to achieve their strategic goals. With millions of active users this movement of attaining new business while maintaining constant touch with the existing client base, has its foundations on mature and time tested technology. For many people it has the cachet of being new, fast, exciting and more “authentic” than many traditional modes of communication (e.g., commercials, printed literature, and press releases).

Research has found that some 52% of the consumers are spending up to 1 hour daily on internet and are expanding their personal peer network to online peers, and are increasingly using this network as a source of health-related information and advice. Study found that 52% of participants have commented on the health status of others and 44% have shared images and health related videos. Many consumers report benefitting by going through the online reviews of doctors and hospitals before making the decision, 77% of the participants have consulted online reviews of doctors and hospitals. Health professionals, of course, do continue to play a central role for people when they need health information and attention. 76% said they are likely to share information with doctors.

Social media is presently having strong influence on where patients should go and to whom they turn to at times of need. Healthcare providers can not only use social media to help achieve strategic goals but also look for opportunities to go beyond. This can be via gaining insights by simply listening and

connecting to the consumers while simultaneously informing them about product development and responding to patient needs in a timelier manner. Social media can also be a tremendously powerful tool for enhancing patient satisfaction. Another important aspect of the next generation of care is patient engagement. Social media, which often complements mobile devices, can help organizations motivate patients to become more active participants in their own care and thus empowering them.

## 8. Recommendations

The best practices and leading edge ideas for social media are still evolving, but some basic recommendations include:

- Develop an overarching strategy of how to make social media work for you. Begin with easy areas such as marketing and communications, proceed to patient education and announcements, and then look for ways to leverage social media to improve care and generate other benefits. Look for ways to connect patients to providers and vice versa.
- Health care providers should make conscious efforts to get involved in social media. In case they do not have the resources to do so this should be outsourced without any room for “let’s wait-and-see” attitude. High number of patients now sees this as a sign of embracement of modern ideas. It is often possible to recruit savvy users internally who are excited about the technology.
- Health care providers should develop a social media policy that outlines appropriate use for staff, and post a disclaimer on site informing patients that information provided is not meant to serve as medical advice. Social media is a force for good; concerns about the use of social media are often overstated. Individuals are more likely to share positive health-related experiences via social media than negative experiences. However, since social media as a term often gets mixed with likes of Facebook and Twitter it should not serve as a source of entertainment or time pass but as serious and integral part of a organizational strategy.
- Establishing policies to govern employees’ use of social media is a critical step that organizations must take to protect themselves. An effective social media policy should reiterate that employees must adhere to legal requirements, federal regulations, and corporate policies and procedures in their social media use and that patient privacy and confidentiality standards apply in all settings,

including the Internet. Policies should clarify what information can and cannot be published on social media sites, and encourage individuals to keep the content of postings professional and respectful of colleagues and patients.

## **9. Conclusion**

In this study, the usage of social media among healthcare providers has been quantified along with the perception of consumers and the factors that promote or limit its use. Based on our findings, the further development of social media is anticipated to unfold in two major ways: First, as social media continues to be widely adopted, healthcare providers may formulate clear guidelines to facilitate its meaningful use. For example, hospital employees may be given “social media time” at work to communicate with patients. Second, new social media platforms may emerge to serve specific patient groups. In specific social media platforms, subscribers may seek social support more easily from others with similar health conditions or interests. While some organizations have taken the lead in this area, many others are struggling to understand this new medium of opportunity. Developing a social media policy is no longer an option today, it is a necessity. If healthcare providers do not take efforts in this direction, they run the risk of becoming stagnant and perhaps obsolete in the long run. Social media is here to stay. Healthcare organizations are using it as an important tool to connect consumers and providers. Early adopters show through numerous examples that social media can be used to influence customers and accomplish

Strategic business goals. Healthcare organization needs both a social media policy and a social media strategy. One cannot afford to take a “wait-and-see” approach or to sit idly by while the social media revolution overtakes the information revolution and radically changes the way we communicate and accomplish healthcare goals.



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## **11. STUDY LIMITATIONS**

Study methodology yields a few limitations.

1. As with all single-site research, the findings are unlikely to generalize completely to all the consumers and healthcare providers.
2. Convenience sample of both the general public and healthcare provider was used and as such the potential for bias exists.

## **12 Annexure (A)**

### **Questionnaire for General Public**

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Date:

Q1. Do you use Internet?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Can't say

Q2. Do you know what social media is?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Can't say

Q3. If yes, then which medium you use the most?

- a. Face book
- b. Twitter
- c. Blogs
- d. Linked in
- e. wiki

- f. you tube
- g. any other

Q4. How much time do you spend on internet daily?

- a. 0 – 15 min
- b. 15 – 30 min
- c. 30 – 60 min
- d. More than an hour

Q5. Have you done any of the following health related activities using social media?

- a. Post or update about your health experience (Yes/No)
- b. Comment about your health experience (Yes/No)
- c. Post review about treatment or doctors (Yes/No)
- d. Share health related information in form of images and videos (Yes/No)
- e. Consulted online reviews about particular drug, treatment, doctor or hospital (Yes/No)
- f. Have consulted online rankings or reviews of doctors or other providers (Yes/No)
- g. Have you joined any health related group (Yes/No)
- h. Have you or anyone you know been helped by medical advice or health information found on the internet? (Yes/No)
- i. Have you or anyone you know been harmed by following medical advice or health information found on the internet? (Yes/No)

Q.6 How likely would you be sharing your health information through social media with the following?

- a. Other patients (Highly likely, Likely, Unlikely, Highly unlikely)
- b. Doctors (Highly likely, Likely, Unlikely, Highly unlikely)
- c. Hospitals (Highly likely, Likely, Unlikely, Highly unlikely)

Q7. How likely would you trust health information posted online through social media by the following?

- a. Other patients you know (Highly likely, Likely, Unlikely, Highly unlikely)
- b. Other patients you don't know (Highly likely, Likely, Unlikely, Highly unlikely)
- c. Doctor (Highly likely, Likely, Unlikely, Highly unlikely)
- d. Hospital (Highly likely, Likely, Unlikely, Highly unlikely)

## **12.1 Annexure(B)**

### **Interview schedule for Hospital Managers**

**Name of the organization:**

**Place:**

**Person contacted:**

**Work area:**

Q1. Do you have a website?

Q2. If yes, is it interactive?

Q3. Do you know about social media?

Q4. Do you use social media for your organization?

Q5. For what purpose do you use social media?

- a. Marketing
- b. Customer relations
- c. Educational information
- d. Branding
- e. Any other

Q6. Which tools of social media does your organization use the most and why?

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Q7. Does your organization post a social media disclaimer on social media site that patient not to take medical advice shared on site?

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Q8. What challenges and benefits your organization face while using social media?

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