

Evaluation of Pharmaceutical Industry-Based Medical Information Websites for Healthcare Providers

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Background

Increasingly, healthcare providers (HCPs) are seeking faster and easier ways to access Medical Information (MI). As a result, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies are developing innovative ways to deliver MI. This trend has led to an increasing number of companies developing websites that contain both MI responses as well as disease state information. Not only does this online service allow HCPs to obtain immediate answers, but it also allows them to search for responses at their own convenience. Currently, many companies are seeking best practices from other companies who have developed a successful website to assist in the development of their own company's website.

Objectives

- Evaluate how many companies are utilizing an MI website to deliver medical information to HCPs.
- Evaluate what resources are made available to HCPs via MI websites.
- Summarize the features of web-based MI resources in order to provide information to companies looking to create or enhance an MI website.

Methods

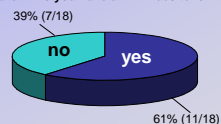
- A 26-question online survey was sent via electronic mail (e-mail) to 23 pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies in which MI personnel contact information was available.
- MI personnel were given three weeks to respond with a reminder e-mail sent 10 days into the survey period.
- After demographic information was collected, companies identified as having an MI website could continue the survey to answer a maximum of 26 questions.
- Participants were informed that results would remain anonymous and the information obtained would only be used to monitor which companies completed the survey to ensure accurate analysis.

Results

- Of the original 23 companies surveyed:
 - 18 completed the survey
 - 3 partially completed the survey (not included in the results)
 - 2 did not respond to the survey
- Type of companies responding to the survey:
 - 67% (12/18) pharmaceutical
 - 11% (2/18) biotechnology
 - 22% (4/18) pharmaceutical/biotechnology companies
- Employees within the company:
 - 50%, ≤25 MI specialists
 - 39%, 26-50 MI specialists
 - 11%, ≥51 MI specialists
 - 50%, ≤15 products
 - 50%, ≥16 products

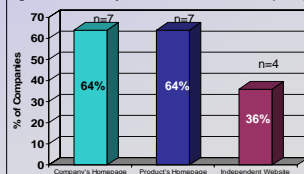
Results

Figure 1. Do you have an MI website for HCPs?



- For the companies with a website, 73% (8/11) were restricted to U.S. residents only.
- For the companies without a website, 29% (2/7) were in the process of developing an MI website.

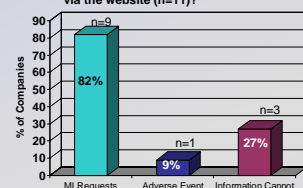
Figure 2. How can you access the MI website (n=11)?*



*Companies could select more than one answer

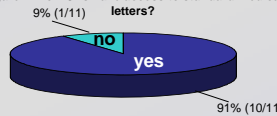
- 82% (9/11) of the company's websites had a disclaimer regarding the use of MI website content for promotional purposes.
- Registration:
 - 55% (6/11) required HCPs to use a professional license number.
 - 45% (5/11) required no professional license number for registration.
- If HCPs were required to register:
 - 73% granted immediate access *without* receipt of a registration confirmation e-mail.
 - 9% granted immediate access *with* receipt of registration confirmation e-mail.
 - 18% sent a registration confirmation e-mail that required a reply back, or contained a password before access was granted.

Figure 3. What information can be submitted via the website (n=11)?*



*Companies could select more than one answer

Figure 4. Do HCPs have access to standard medical letters?



- Medical letters available for print were associated with:**
- A watermark and/or prescribing information (PI) on 60% (6/10) of the websites.

- On the website, in addition to approved product information:**
- 73% (8/11) of companies provided off-label product information.
 - 36% (4/11) of companies provided investigational product information.

Figure 5. How can medical letters be searched?

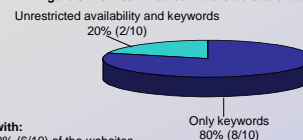
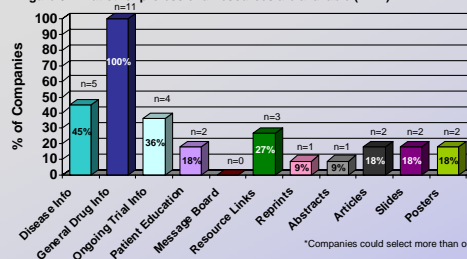
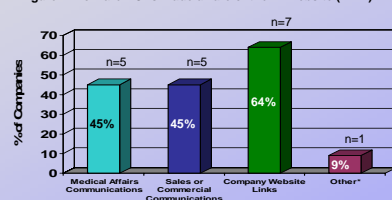


Figure 6. What other professional resources are available (n=11)?*



*Companies could select more than one answer

Figure 7. How are HCPs made aware of the MI website (n=11)?



*Respondent wrote N/A in free text box

Summary

- Out of 18 companies surveyed, 61% had MI websites for HCPs.
- There was no correlation between the size of the company or the number of products supported, and the availability of an MI website.
- Over half of the companies required HCPs to register with their license number before access was granted to the MI website.
- Current MI websites provided access to MI letters, slides, articles, posters, patient education materials, and general disease state information.
- MI letters available for print were associated with a watermark and/or PI for 60% of the websites.
- In addition to approved product information, 73% of companies provided off-label product information and 36% of companies provided investigational product information.
- A majority of companies (82%) allowed MI requests to be submitted via the website if information was not found.
- All company websites were updated on an as needed basis; two companies also updated their website weekly.
- Only 27% of MI websites had a survey to evaluate customer satisfaction.

Limitations

- Not every company with an MI website was surveyed, since obtaining company contacts was difficult.
- A few companies (n=3) partially completed the survey and were not included in the analyses.
- Respondents may not have been completely familiar with the contents of the MI website.

Conclusions

- Some pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies are utilizing technology to deliver MI to HCPs via MI websites.
- Resources provided by pharmaceutical industry-based MI websites include MI letters, slides, articles, posters, patient education materials, and general disease state information.
- Customer satisfaction surveys could be used to improve a company's website.
- The results of this survey can be utilized by companies to establish or enhance an MI website.

Disclosure

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