

Letters to the editor

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Misinformation online and its impact on the physician-patient relation

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Dear editor:

At present there is a great controversy with the information system and the recognition of non-scientific theories as truthful by the patients. The quality of the information obtained by the population through mass media is questionable; a clear and current example is the rejection towards vaccination [1]; which has generated specific situations such as low vaccination rates and measles outbreaks due to information from the anti-vaccination movements [2]. One of the most famous theories of these movements was the placement of vaccines as a source of autism in the 1990s, causing measles outbreaks in several European countries [3].

This type of information generates a certain distrust of the patient towards the doctor, which means a problem in the daily medical consultation and as such, can lead to the decrease of the number of consultations in the hospitals, the disruption of the same by the patients as well as incorrect use of medications [4],[5].

Faced with the expansion of bad information and the current crisis in certain countries such as Italy [1], doctors must be prepared to face the criticism and mistrust that can arise in the medical consultation and begin to adopt better communicative skills so that the patient increases his confidence in him, also a call is made to the institutions in charge of the regulation of the internet, so that the information spilled on the web, with the objective of improving the quality of information in health and avoid outbreaks of disease that can be prevented on time.

Notes

From the editor

The authors originally submitted this article in Spanish and English. The *Journal* has not copyedited this English version.

Declaration of conflicts of interest

None declared.

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