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MEDICAL BLOGS IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

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Introduction. The impact of medical blogs on public health is evidenced by their ability to reach diverse social groups. Video blogs on YouTube are popular among young people who prefer visual content, while older audiences are more drawn to text-based blogs on specialized platforms or those that provide detailed explanations.

Relevance and purpose. The development of information technologies in the 21st century has led to the emergence of new forms of communication, including blogs. Medical blogs, as a phenomenon of the information society, have become an important element of the digital space, combining the functions of information dissemination, education, and communication. The article aims to elucidate the distinctive characteristics of medical blogs within the contemporary information society and to examine their influence on public health and the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

Methodology. To examine contemporary approaches to the study of the phenomenon of medical blogs, the analytic-synthetic method was used. For this purpose, a survey method was applied, in which 194 respondents voluntarily participated. Their responses were analyzed and systematized using statistical methods and content analysis.

Results. In 2024-2025, we invited those interested to take part in a survey and answer several questions. The proposed survey will be an interesting addition to a number of materials on the relevance of preparing medical blogs on various platforms, the characteristics of an important segment in the training of a medical specialist and the development of his professional qualities.

Conclusions. The analysis of medical blogs regarding their role in disseminating reliable information and shaping the health of the population has shown their significance in the information society. First, quick access to information and simplicity of presentation are paramount, as they provide information about health and contribute to medical education. Second, medical blogs have a wide audience, but their relevance depends on the quality of the content, ethical issues, etc.

Keywords: *information society, communication technologies, manipulation in online media, medical blogs, health, medical education, healthy lifestyle, mental health.*

Introduction. The modern information space is characterized by rapid technological progress in the development of digital platforms, which significantly affects the availability of medical information. A special place is occupied by medical blogs - online resources that play an important role in the dissemination of medical and scientific concepts and information about health, prevention, treatment and a healthy lifestyle [1-3]. Increased



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attention to privacy, changes in regulations, innovative research contribute to a wide discussion of health issues on various platforms. The authors of such platforms i. e. bloggers can be both professional doctors and amateurs who offer information to a wide audience, while competing with traditional medical institutions or official websites [4; 5].

The relevance of studying the role of medical blogs is due to certain factors. The popularity of social networks, public activity, combined with openness, contribute to the rapid and targeted dissemination of information about a healthy lifestyle or health, and thus have a significant impact on the behavior and decisions of citizens [6; 7]. In the context of information dissemination due to the absence of a geographical factor, Medical blogs have both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, they contain information directly from medical specialists with the knowledge and experience to provide accurate information on specific issues or encourage reassessment of non-professional information, and on the other hand, amateur bloggers report unverified data or promote self-medication.

The topic of medicine remains highly relevant in contemporary society, featuring prominently in specialised literature, social media platforms, and medical websites. As a result, it attracts a wide audience of interested individuals. On the one hand, readers are frequently confronted with eye-catching medical headlines designed to prompt them to click on hyperlinks for further information [8; 9]. Such reviews or presentations of medical information are often authored not by healthcare professionals, but by individuals whose primary aim is to attract a large number of followers.

On the other hand, as M. Nedopytanskyi points out on thematic specialisation in his discussion, the modern journalist or reporter “must serve as a universal retransmitter – that is, as an intermediary who is responsible for obtaining, processing, and communicating information” [10]. It is evident that in a highly specialised field such as medicine, the distinction between the work of a professional and that of a layperson is particularly noticeable.

The development of information technologies in the 21st century contributed to the emergence of new forms of communication, among which blogs occupy a special place. As O. Mykhaylova emphasizes, the blogosphere in Ukraine is developing in symbiosis with the “most mediatized countries” [11, p.131]. It is clear that blogs and the blogosphere have gone beyond the scope of one profession and have covered various spheres of life, including medicine. The spread of blogs is the result of the transformation of social needs in access to health information, which has made them a peculiar phenomenon of the information society. Medical blogs as a specific type of this phenomenon have become an important element of the digital space, combining the functions of informing, socialization, psychotherapy, advertising, reflection, education and communication [12; 13].

Meanwhile, blogging is given an honorable role in facilitating communication, as a significant number of those who consider themselves bloggers try to popularize themselves and their activities and share their thoughts through social networks [14, p.142].

The article aims to elucidate the distinctive characteristics of medical blogs within the contemporary information society and to examine their influence on public health and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. To achieve this purpose, the study sets out the following objectives: to ascertain the role of medical blogs in fostering health preservation among the population, and to delineate both the beneficial and adverse effects of medical blog content within the broader context of the information society.

Research Methods. The study involved the use of the following methods: literature and source analysis – to investigate the specificity and impact of medical blogs on the target audience. The method of generalization made it possible to identify key trends in the transformation of content in medical blogs and to assess potential risks related to the inaccuracy and fragmentation of information provided, which often contradicts the principles of official medicine. Content analysis and statistical methods were employed for a systematic and objective examination of respondents' answers concerning the content of medical blogs. The questionnaire included questions about viewing, searching, frequency, topics and formats of medical blogs, as well as

the professional competencies of their authors. A systems analysis was used to determine both the positive and negative impacts of the information presented in medical blogs.

Results and discussion. The emergence of medical blogs is associated with several factors that are characteristic of the media society, because it is associated with free access to information, when the Internet gives each respondent the opportunity to exchange opinions, knowledge or experience [15]. Very often, a person looks for alternative sources of information when there is no good communication with medical specialists. Sometimes patients try to find the necessary information in professional literature, but due to the complexity or incomprehensibility of the scientific text, they look for a quick way to get the necessary health information for free without contacting specialists.

On the one hand, blogs contribute to the popularization of medicine, because complex medical terms can be explained in a language understandable to the general public and have a significant social impact on society due to their accessibility to a wide audience, uniting interested parties into certain groups or communities of interests [16]. On the other hand, medical blogs, despite the speed of distribution, do not provide complete information on the topic of interest, offering only fragmentary and superficial data in an informal style of presenting information, and bloggers are not responsible for the reliability of the materials. Very often, such information on medical issues, disease prevention, and ensuring a healthy lifestyle is offered by individuals without special education.

Medical blogs perform certain functions related to public health issues. First, informative, because medical blogs are a source of knowledge about symptoms, disease prevention, treatment methods and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, often filling in the gaps when the patient either does not receive detailed information from a specialist, or tries to engage in the process of self-treatment. As K. Honcharova notes, the number of doctor-bloggers is constantly growing, especially popular ones remain posts by bloggers who offer information about anti-aging nutrition, diets, etc. [17, p.142]. Through simple language and visual examples (such as recipes or exercise instructions), blogs make information understandable even to people without a medical background. This is especially important in conditions of limited access to specialists, for example, in rural areas or during pandemics or wars, when online resources become the main channel of communication.

Another function of medical blogs is motivational. Medical blogs not only offer structured information, but also inspire subscribers to take action, namely, to change their lifestyle, consult a doctor or undergo preventive examinations. For example, the same blogs about nutrition often contain stories of successful transformation, “before and after” photos, which, in turn, motivate the readership to be active [18]. From doctors’ blogs about the fight against chronic diseases, subscribers not only receive inspiring practical advice, but also provide psychological support, which contributes to trust in doctors’ recommendations.

Another important function is educational. Medical blogs contribute to the popularization of science by explaining complex medical terms in understandable language. For example, during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic medical blogs contained information about vaccines, explaining the algorithms of vaccine action from a scientific point of view, thereby debunking myths about the threats to humans after vaccination, thus contributing to an increase in the level of trust in medicine [19]. At the same time, blogs run by medical professionals often become a kind of link between academic science and society, bringing complex content to the needs of the average reader. In turn, this contributes to an increase in the level of medical literacy, because in the modern world, misinformation spreads much faster than proven facts.

The impact of medical blogs on public health is confirmed by their ability to reach different social groups. Young people prefer visual content, and therefore they are more likely to choose video blogs, while text material is more likely to be read by an older audience, who is trying to find a detailed explanation of the topic of interest. Such adaptation to the age, cultural, and social needs of society contribute to obtaining the necessary information and strengthens the role of medical blogs in shaping a healthy lifestyle of the population [20].

It is also worth paying attention to the negative aspect of medical blogs, because it depends on the quality of the material and the competence of bloggers. On non-professional platforms, amateur authors may appeal to abandon traditional treatment in favor of dubious and untested methods that contradict the standards of evidence-based medicine and proven results. The content of medical blog authors who do not have a medical education may be based on certain subjective experiences, emotional stories, and not scientific data. It is the lack of reliability and fragmentation of information that indicate the search for the necessary balance between popularity and responsibility. The latter is in great doubt, because creating a medical blog does not require the author to have a doctor's diploma, a qualification test, or a license [21]. Here we can talk about the dual role of blogs: they can be both a valuable resource and a source of risks, depending on the approach and use. Therefore, the most important aspects of medical blogs are the reliability of information, ethical issues, and information overload.

In 2024-2025, we invited those interested to take part in a survey and answer several questions. A total of 194 respondents voluntarily participated in the survey regarding the relevance of medical blogs.

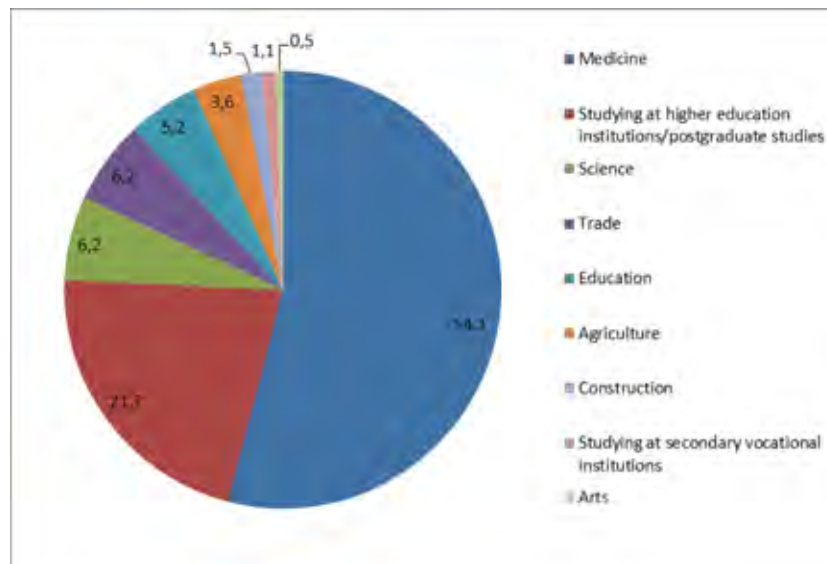


Fig. 1. Field of activity of respondents (%)

Respondents' age: 18-25 years – 69 (35.6%); 26-45 years – 74 (38.2%); 46-60 years – 39 (20%); 60 and older – 12 (6.2%).

Regarding gender: female – 139 (71.6%), male – 55 (28.4%) of the respondents.

Field of activity of the respondents: medicine – 105 (54.1%); studying at higher education institutions/postgraduate studies – 42 (21.7%); science – 12 (6.2%); trade – 12 (6.2%); education – 10 (5.2%); agriculture – 7 (3.6%); construction – 3 (1.5%); studying at secondary vocational institutions – 2 (1.1%); arts – 1 (0.5%) respondents.

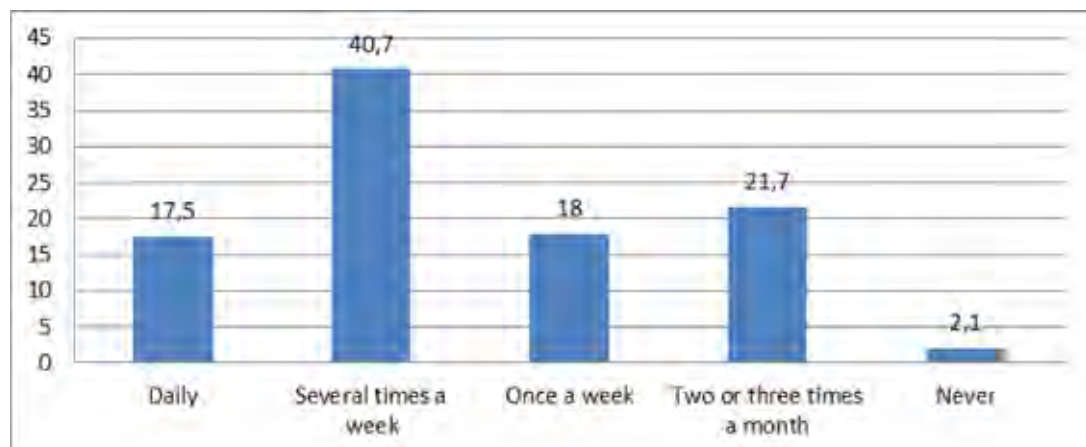


Fig. 2. Interest in medical blogs (%)

To the first question: “How often do you view medical blogs?”, 34 (17.5%) respondents answered “daily”, 79 (40.7%) participants answered “several times a week”, 35 (18%) participants answered “once a week”, and 42 (21.7%) two or three times a month) answered “daily”, never 4 (2.1%) respondents.

When asked where respondents find medical blogs, we received the following answers (multiple choice): 112 (58%) – on social networks (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.), half of the survey participants, namely 97 (50%) – on special medical sites, 64 (33%) respondents – on search engines Google, etc., 33 (17%) survey participants find them on the recommendations of friends/colleagues/relatives, and 15 (7.5%) respondents – on the recommendations of doctors.

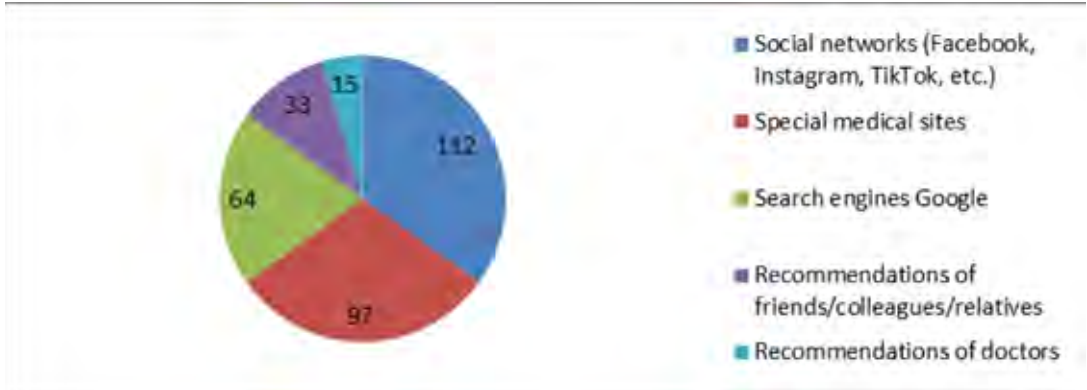


Fig. 3. Search for medical blogs (number of people)

To the third question about the topics that interest respondents, it was possible to choose multiple answer options, so 97 (50%) participants chose a healthy lifestyle; 89 (46%) respondents chose the topic of mental health; 56 (29%) were interested in chronic diseases, and 48 (25%) survey participants chose infectious diseases; 46 (24%) respondents were interested in blogs on radiology (CT, MRI); 45 (23%) respondents were looking for blogs on cosmetology; 35 (18%) – materials on pediatrics, 34 (17.5%) – on surgery, and 29 (15%) participants – on gynecology; 18 (9.5%) – on dentistry; 15 (7.5%) respondents showed interest in the issue of internal diseases and the same number (15 (7.5%)) in the issue of tactical med-

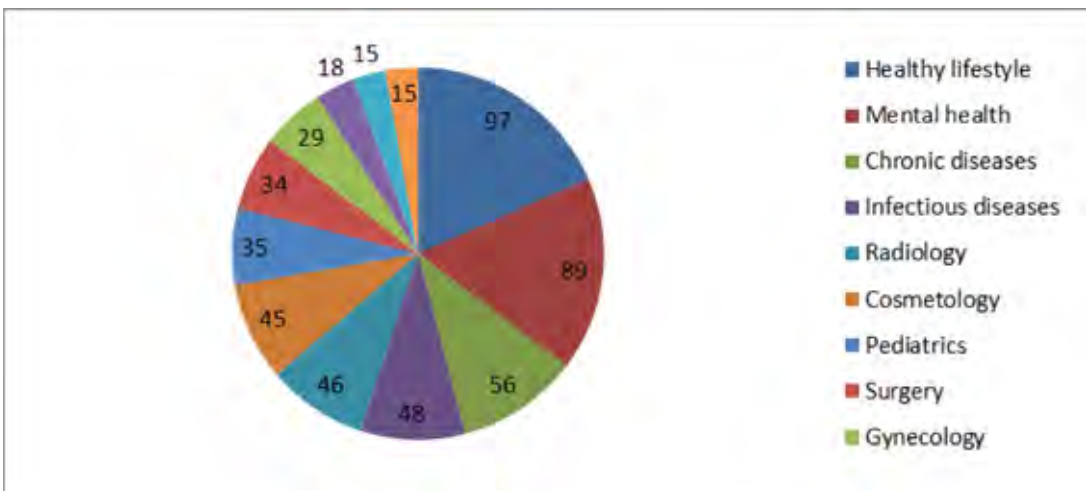


Fig. 4. Topics of medical blogs

icine; 10 (5.2%) survey participants indicated interest in materials on mental health. Survey participants were less likely to show interest in public health issues, the organization of the healthcare system, and hygiene.

When asked what prompted them to read medical blogs, the survey participants indicated (multiple choice): 96 (49.5%) – personal interest in health, search for information on a specific disease – 79 (40.7%) survey participants, 68 (35%) respondents want to lead a healthy lifestyle, 42 (21.7%) respondents indicated preparation for various medical procedures, 38 (19.5%) people want to hear from their colleagues because of their teaching activities. In addition, the survey participants indicated other reasons, including: professional interest, the need to treat relatives, disease prevention, preparation for classes, familiarization with the latest diagnostic methods, the specifics of the work, it is interesting to listen to colleagues, how they convey the material, etc. It should be noted that 2 (1%) respondents purposely skip medical blogs, even if they come across them. We believe that information overload is a big problem. Bloggers often offer information in a simplified and abbreviated form, avoiding the use of incomprehensible medical terms, ignoring the needs and desires of readers, which does not contribute to a proper understanding of the topic of health, and sometimes even contradicts the algorithms of official medicine.

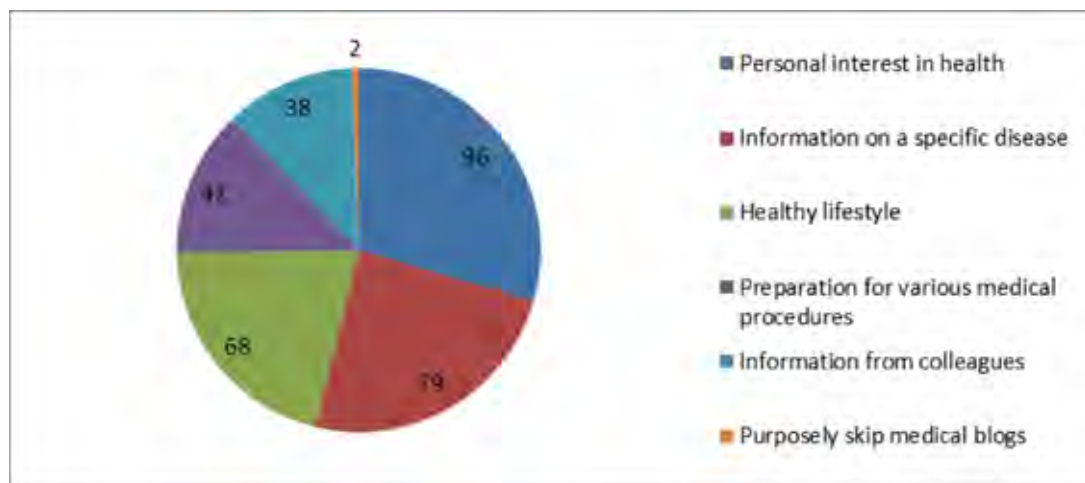


Fig. 5. Interest in medical blogs (number of people)

Another question in the questionnaire concerned the types of content that the survey participants like the most. It is clear that the format diversity of medical blogs reflects their adaptation to the needs of the modern user who is looking for the necessary information regarding his interests, style, and worldview. We obtained the following results (multiple choice): videos – 122 (63%) respondents. The second position was given by the respondents to articles – 84 (43.5%); podcasts – 77 (39.5%); doctors' advice was chosen by – 54 (28%) respondents; patients' stories are trusted by 53 (27.5%) survey participants. In this case, it is worth paying attention to the fact that the publication of personal stories of patients without their consent or with a violation of confidentiality can lead to ethical problems, especially when this blog is led by a doctor. This not only discredits an individual specialist, but also forms the basis for an opinion about all medical blogs.

At the same time, we asked how much respondents trust the information they receive from medical blogs: yes, always – 34 (17.5%) people answered, yes, but they check additionally – 157 (81%) respondents and do not trust the information contained in blogs – 3 (1.5%) survey participants.

It is worth paying attention to ethical aspects here. Very often, medical blogs created by good specialists can face a conflict of interest when, for example, there is some advertising of

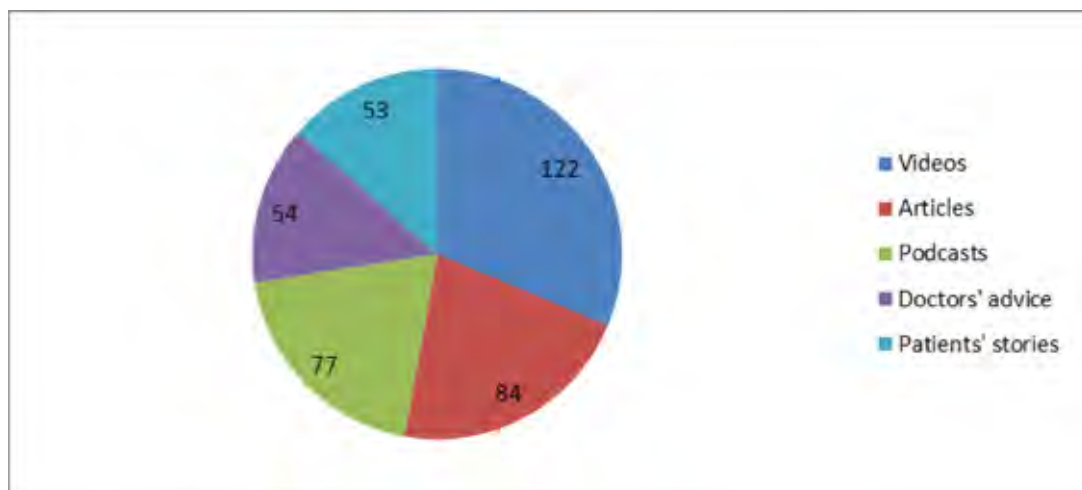


Fig. 6. Format of medical blogs (number of respondents)

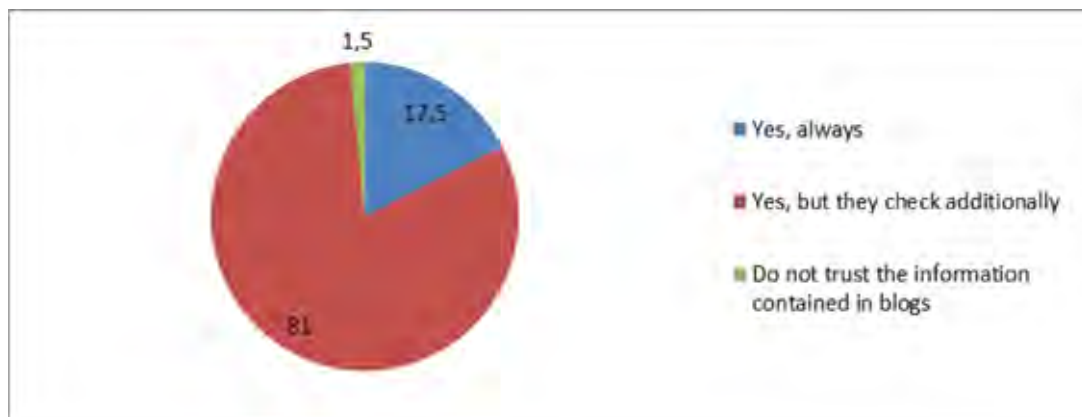


Fig. 7. Trust in medical blogs (%)

a certain product or even services, namely drawing attention to cosmetics or private clinics under the guise of objective recommendations. On the one hand, this can misinform readers or viewers, and, on the other, cause a destructive understanding of the content.

Another question concerned what qualities (multiple choice) medical blog authors (bloggers) should have. 158 (81.5%) respondents indicated that they had a medical education, 127 (65.5%) people indicated that they had experience in the relevant field. According to many survey participants, an important role is played by the blogger's objectivity in covering information – 80 (41%) respondents and the presentation of the material, namely, it should be prepared in simple and understandable language – 75 (38.5%). A large number of respondents indicated a pleasant manner of presenting the material – 67 (34.5%) respondents. We believe that the medical content of doctor bloggers will be available to patients, who will be able to study them at a convenient time and in a convenient way and will make the right accents on the need to consult a specialist in a timely manner. The motives for blogging may vary, change, but a doctor blogger can get pleasure from the very process of communicating with his colleagues, which will contribute to both qualification and certain factors of fame or profit.

We asked the survey participants whether they would like more interaction with blog authors. The results are as follows: yes – 65 (33.5%) people, rather yes – 30 (15.5%), rather no – 84 (43.5%), no – 15 (7.5%) respondents, survey participants.

The next question was whether the survey participants would recommend medical blogs to their relatives and friends. Yes – 70 (36%) people, rather yes – 98 (50.5%) respondents, rather no – 20 (10.5%) and categorically on this issue were 6 (3%) of those who participated in the survey.

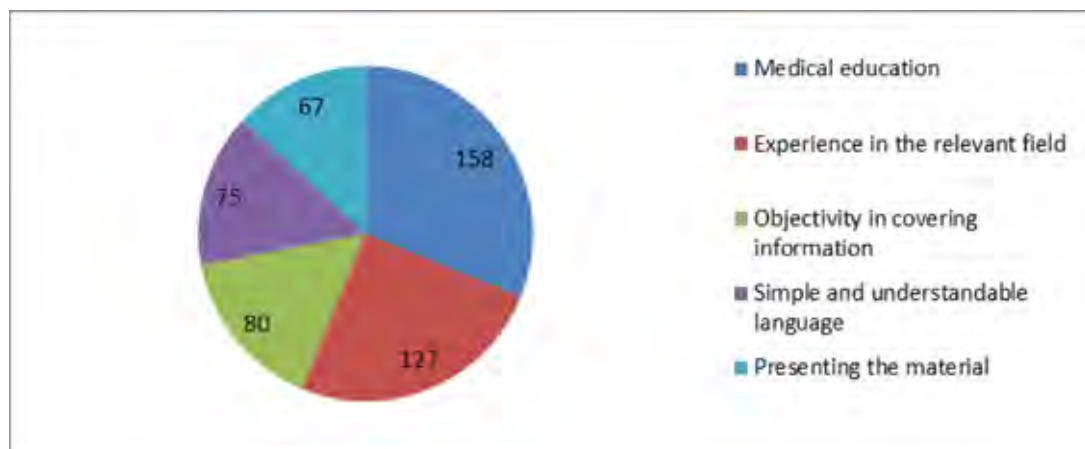


Fig. 8. Wishes for a medical blogger (quantitative choice)

To the question: “Do blogs affect your health and lifestyle? ”, we received the following answer options: 47 (24.5%) people chose the answer “yes”; “probably yes” - 98 (50.5%) respondents; “probably no” - 41 (21%) participants, “no” – 8 (4%) respondents.

The last question concerned the reliability of the information contained in blogs and its importance. Yes – 130 (67%) people answered, 62 (32%) respondents rather think so – and 2 (1%) respondents rather think no – it is not important. It should be noted that no respondent considers the reliability of the information unimportant. In our opinion, one of the problems of medical blogs is the lack of reliability and fragmentation of the information provided, which indicates the need for a balance between popularity and responsibility. Here it is necessary to pay attention to the prospects for the development of medical blogs, which may be associated with professional cooperation, technological innovations, which, in turn, will open the way for their improvement in the future. It is here that we can talk about the dual characteristics of blogs. First, they can be a valuable source of information, and secondly, the basis of risks, depending on the purpose of their functioning.

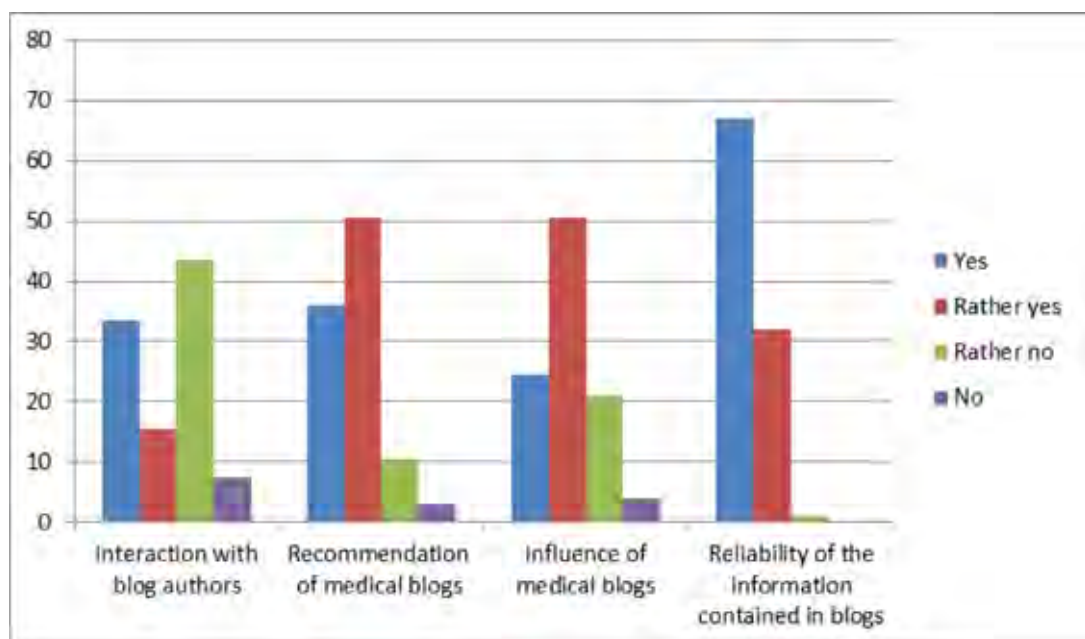


Fig. 9. Importance of medical blogs (%)

Therefore, we believe that the proposed survey will be an interesting addition to a number of materials on the relevance of preparing medical blogs on various platforms, the characteristics of an important segment in the training of a medical specialist and the development of his professional qualities.

Conclusions and perspectives of further study. The analysis of medical blogs regarding their role in disseminating reliable information and shaping the health of the population has shown their significance in the information society. First, quick access to information and simplicity of presentation are paramount, as they provide information about health and contribute to medical education. Second, medical blogs have a wide audience, but their relevance depends on the quality of the content, ethical issues, etc. Since their popularity is significant, it is worth paying attention not only to the positive impact, but also to the negative experience of their popularization, which should become part of the state strategy to combat disinformation. This may involve involving professional medical unions that would control the content of blogs from various directions to increase the reliability of the material and the trust of the audience, or conducting trainings and master classes on evidence-based medicine for blog authors in order to minimize the spread of unverified information.

We believe that the increase in the number of medical blogs, which are run by professional doctors, will contribute to obtaining information from the medical field directly from specialists, which will allow the revalorization of material «from the Internet». The development of professional standards for bloggers will become a far-reaching direction, because for authors of medical blogs it is possible to introduce certification programs or establish a code of ethics, which would increase their responsibility and trust in them, since the decisions on which they have, a direct influence are related to health, when certain decisions can lead to serious consequences.

In the context of information dissemination due to the absence of a geographical factor, Medical blogs have both advantages (contain information directly from medical specialists with the knowledge and experience to provide accurate information on specific issues or encourage reassessment of non-professional information) and disadvantages (amateur bloggers report unverified data or promote self-medication).

Medical blogs have already changed the information space, their potential is far from exhausted and, if properly directed, they can become not only a source of knowledge, but also a catalyst for a healthy society. Further research could be aimed at quantifying their impact or comparing the effectiveness of different types of blogs.

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МЕДИЧНІ БЛОГИ В ІНФОРМАЦІЙНОМУ СУСПІЛЬСТВІ

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Вступ. Вплив медичних блогів на формування здоров'я населення підтверджується їх здатністю охоплювати різні соціальні групи: відеоблоги на YouTube є популярними серед молодих людей, які віддають перевагу візуальному контенту, старшу аудиторію приваблюють текстові блоги на спеціалізованих платформах, тобто тих, хто шукає детальні роз'яснення. Ця гнучкість впливу дозволяє адаптовувати медичну інформацію до культурних, вікових і соціальних особливостей читачів, що підсилює їх роль у здоров'язбереженні населення.

Актуальність і мета. Розвиток інформаційних технологій у XXI столітті призвів до появи нових форм комунікації, зокрема блогів. Медичні блоги, як феномен інформаційного суспільства, стали важливим елементом цифрового простору, поєднуючи функції інформування, просвітництва та спілкування. Мета статті – з'ясувати відмінні характеристики медичних блогів у сучасному інформаційному суспільстві та дослідити їхній вплив на охорону здоров'я та пропаганду здорового способу життя.

Методологія. Для вивчення сучасних підходів щодо феномену медичних блогів застосовано аналітико-синтетичний метод. Для цього обрано опитування, в якому добровільно взяли участь 194 респонденти. Їхні відповіді проаналізовані та систематизовані за допомогою статистичних методів та контент-аналізу.

Результати. У 2024-2025 рр. ми запропонували охочим узяти участь в анкетуванні й дати відповіді на кілька запитань. Запропоноване опитування є цікавим доповненням до низки матеріалів щодо актуальності підготовки медичних блогів на різних платформах, характеристики важливого сегменту у підготовці спеціаліста медичної сфери й розвитку його професійних якостей.

Висновки. Аналіз медичних блогів щодо ролі у поширенні достовірної інформації та формуванні здоров'я населення засвідчив їх значущість в інформаційному суспільстві. По-перше, швидкий доступ до інформації та простота подання є надзвичайно важливими, оскільки дають інформацію про здоров'я, сприяють медичному просвітництву. По-друге, медичні блоги мають широку аудиторію, проте їх актуальність залежить від якості контенту, питань етики тощо.

Ключові слова: інформаційне суспільство, комунікаційні технології, маніпуляції в онлайн-медіа, медичні блоги, здоров'я, медична освіта, здоровий спосіб життя, ментальне здоров'я.

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