A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a person's eye, looking directly at the camera. The image is partially obscured by the text overlay on the left.

# Investigating Information Seeking Behaviors Of Primary Care Physicians Who Take Care of Older Depressed Patients and their Family Caregivers:

A Pilot Study

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# Objective

*To describe preliminary findings from a study of information seeking behaviors of primary care physicians who care for elderly and depressed patients.*

With mounting evidence of the Internet being used for patient self care, it is essential to understand if primary care physicians understand the scope and breadth of information readily available to their patients.



# Setting

Physicians in large ambulatory primary care practices throughout urban Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who take care of large numbers of geriatric patients.



Map not to Scale

# Methods

Structured interviews, with common questions, were conducted via SurveyMonkey<sup>®</sup> software with 12 primary care physicians to determine patterns of information seeking behaviors.



SurveyMonkey<sup>®</sup> <http://surveymonkey.com/home.asp>

# Methods

## The Survey, questions 1-3

Please answer the following as they pertain to your clinical practice setting.

1. What percentage of your practice involves providing care to elderly patients who may be depressed?

Self-reported number

2. How many hours per week of your time is spent doing the following?

select  
one  
answer

Providing clinical care?

Pursuing personal study/CME?

Information seeking for patient education?

Information seeking for clinical decision-making (evidence-based medicine)?

Drop-down menu options:

0-10

11-20

21-30

31-40

41+

3. Place a check in the box next to items that you yourself use in your office.

Computer

Internet access

PDA

✓ as applicable

# Methods

## The Survey, questions 4-5

4. Place a check in the box next to each of the methods you use to find information that you give to your patients. You may check more than one.

- Search Internet using a search engine such as Google
- Search Internet using your institution's website and resources
- Search a Library website
- Search professional resources such as MEDLINE/PubMed
- Search professional resources such as MEDLINE/Ovid
- Search professional resources such as UpToDate
- Search professional resources such as MDConsult
- Search consumer health websites such as MedlinePlus
- Scan textbooks or printed materials from a personal collection
- Offer pre-printed materials from your institution
- Offer pre-printed materials from a pharmaceutical or medical device agency
- Consult a colleague
- Consult a Librarian
- Other (please specify)

✓ methods of finding info

5. When you need information on these specific topics for a patient or family member, where do you typically go?

Internet   Printed literature   Colleague   Librarian   Other (please list in Question 6)

	Internet	Printed literature	Colleague	Librarian	Other (please list in Question 6)
Info on general medical conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Info on new medications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Info on new psychopharmacology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Info on assisted living	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Info on suicide	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Info on spirituality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Info on euthanasia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

✓ specific topics

# Methods

## The Survey, question 7

Please do an environmental scan of your office. Tell us which of the following you have in your primary care office.

### 7. I have the following items in my clinical care office where I see patients:

- computer
- internet connection
- PDA
- printer
- textbooks
- reprints or copies of journal articles
- hanging files
- commercially produced pamphlets
- pharmaceutical company pamphlets
- local institution produced pamphlets
- information on clinical trials
- audio equipment
- video equipment
- models or charts on walls in visible areas
- Other (please specify)

✓ relied on self-assessment rather than a third party objective observation

# Methods

## The Survey, questions 8-10

Please provide information for demographic purposes.

### 8. Degree and Board Certifications

- MD
- DO
- MBBS
- Board Certification in Internal Medicine
- Board Certification in Family Practice
- Board Certification in Osteopathy
- Board Certification in Geriatrics
- Other, please specify in final comments

✓ basic demographics

### 9. Number of years in practice:

- |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0-5                      | 6-10                     | 11-15                    | 16-20                    | 21+                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

10. Optional contact information: your name, address, and preferred Email address ( in case you would like to see the results of this project; this information will be kept separately from your responses). Also, if you have comments or additional information that you would like to share with respect to your information seeking activities, please feel free to enter those comments, etc. here.

# Results

This pilot study provided a snapshot of the resources primary care physicians use to seek information to provide to patients and caregivers.

# Results (Demographics)

## Credentials:

MD 100%

## Board Certifications in:

Internal Medicine 91%

Family Practice 9%

Geriatrics 9%

Other\* 36%

### \*Other included:

- cert. Royal College of Physicians, London
- fellow American College of Physicians

## Number of years in practice:

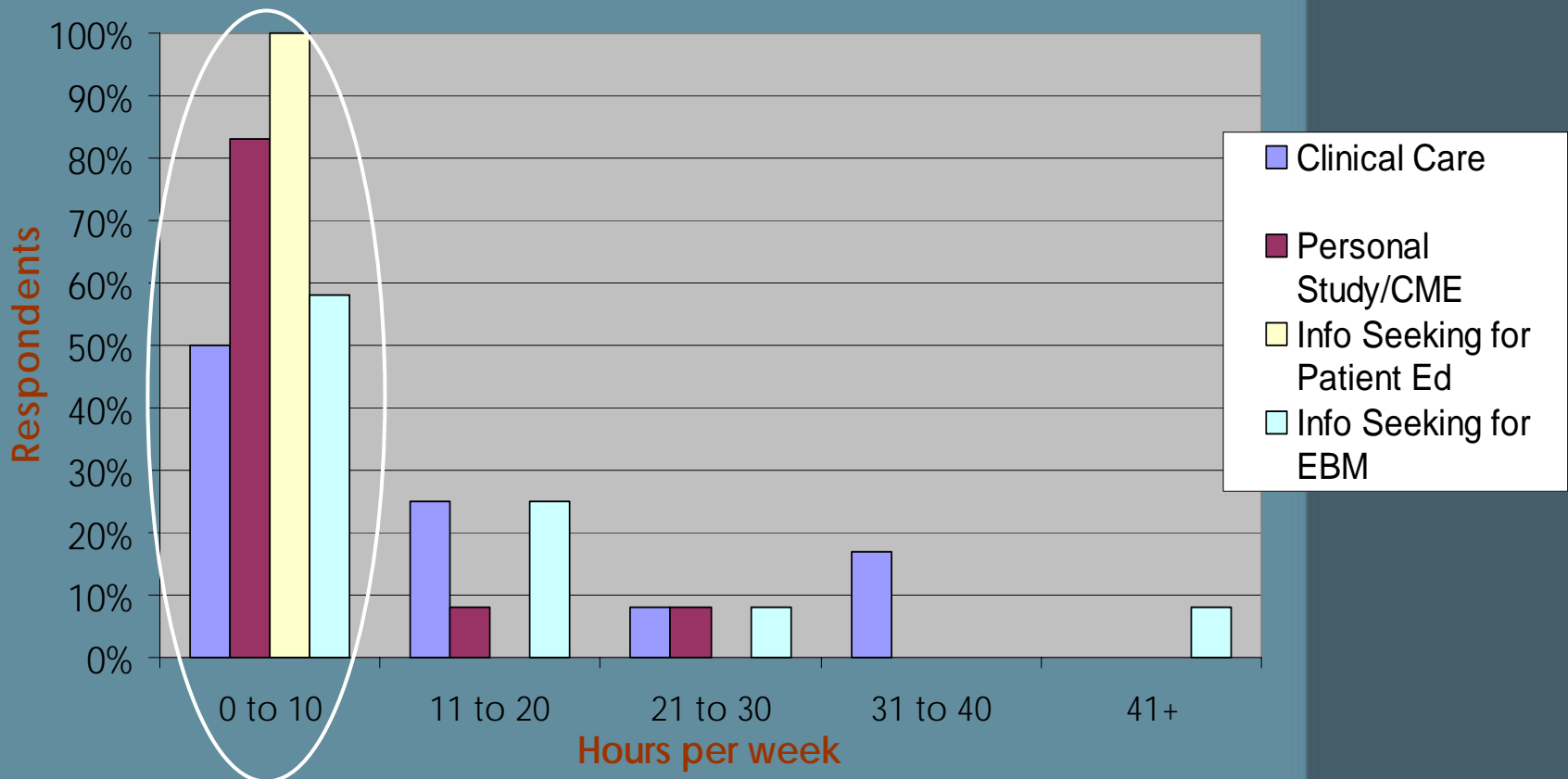
0 - 5	18%
6 - 10	27%
11 - 15	18%
16 - 20	0%
21 +	36%

# Results (question 1)

Time spent treating elderly patients ranged from 5% - 30% of the physician's work week.

# Results (question 2)

## Time spent Information Seeking



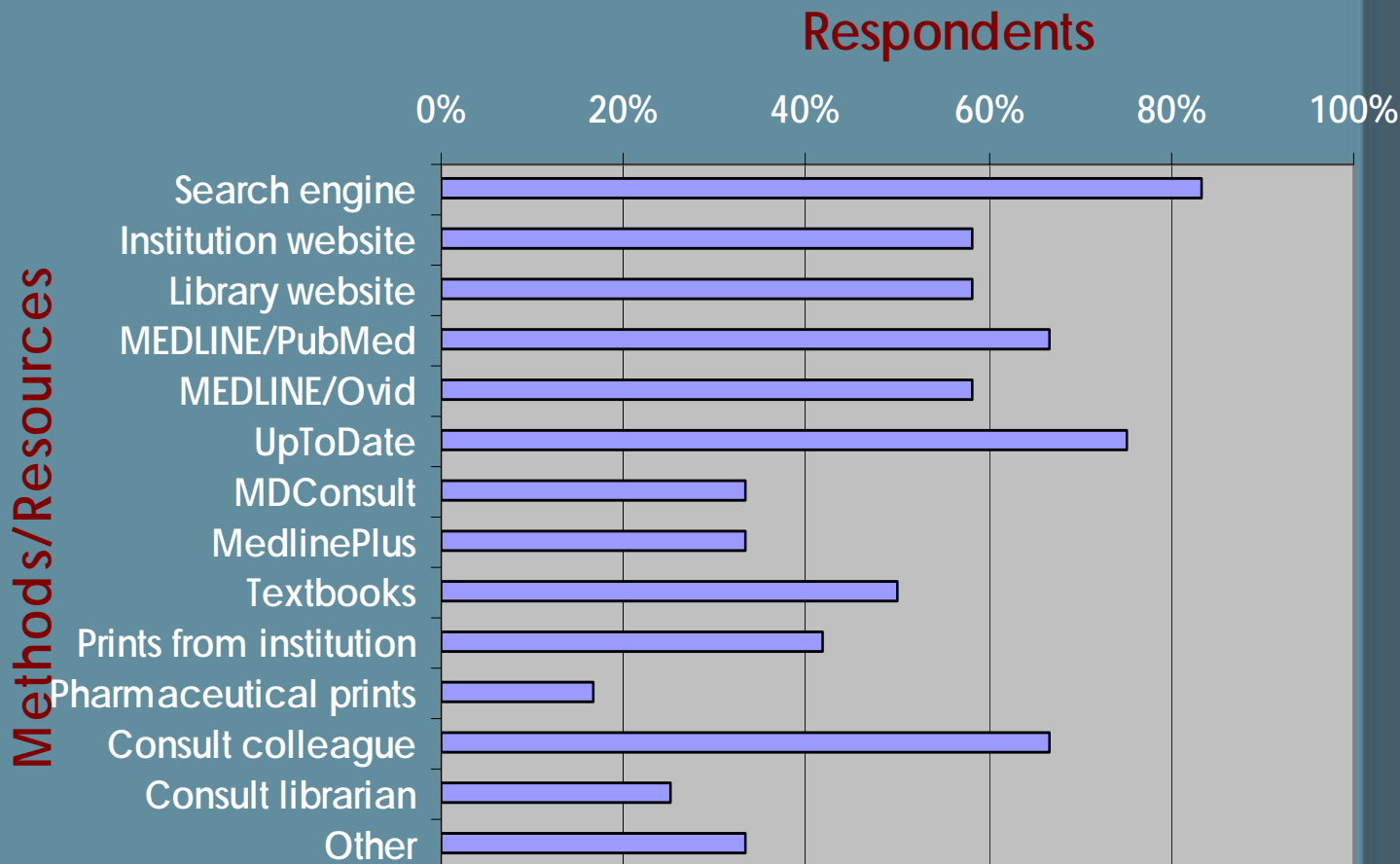
# Results (question 3)

## Items physicians used in office

- 100% reported using a *computer*
- 92% had *Internet access* in office
- 50% used a *PDA*

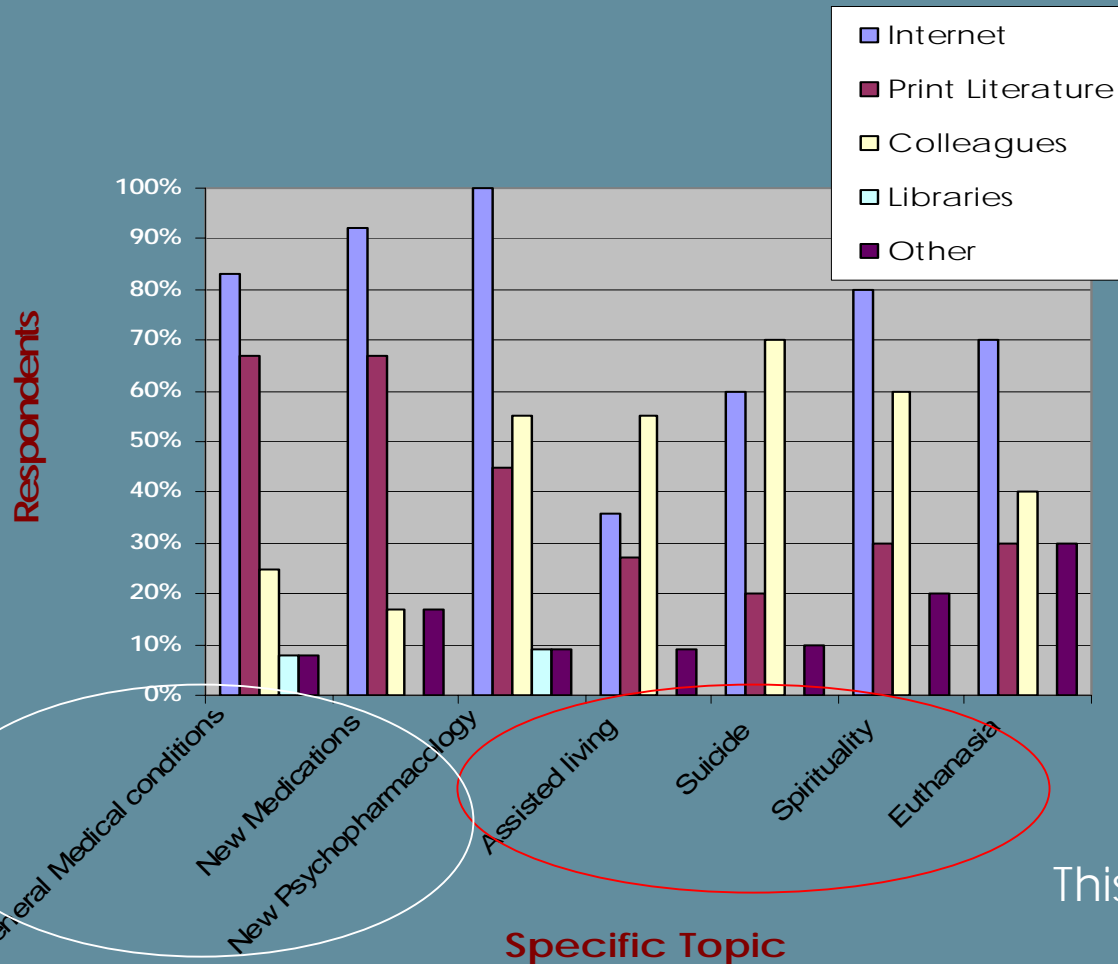
# Results (question 4)

What are the most common methods you use to find information to give to your patients?



# Results (question 5)

Where do you go for information on specific topics?

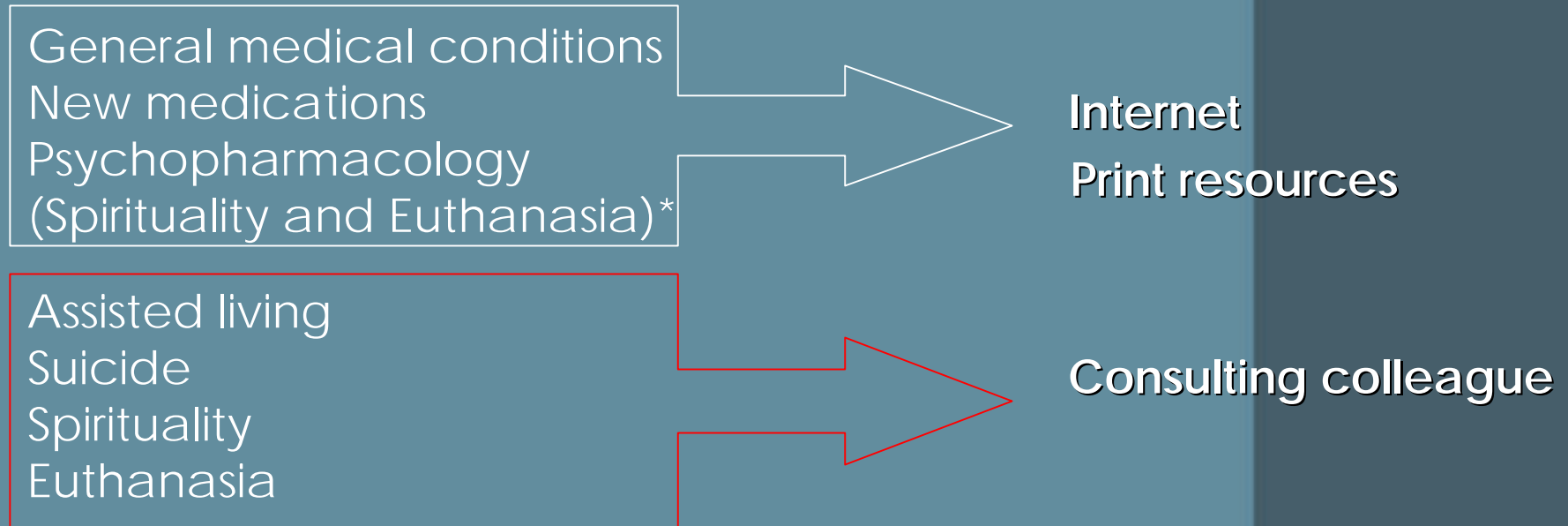


'Other' included:

- UpToDate®
- Area Adult Services
- Area Agency on Aging
- Chaplains
- Religious texts
- epocrates®

This translates ...

# Results

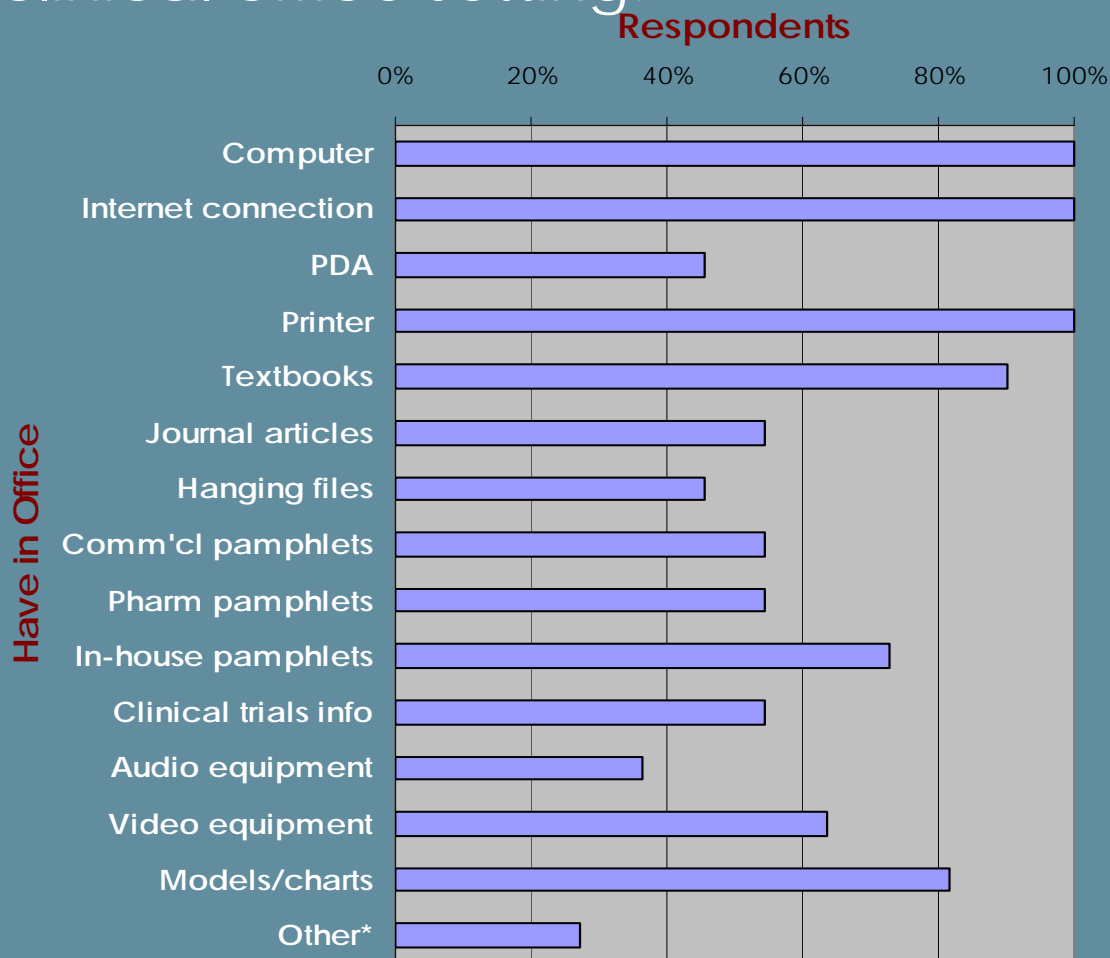


\* Although Spirituality and Euthanasia resources were mainly obtained from the Internet, it is worth noting that these resources were almost equally obtained from colleagues.

Hmmm . . . Library consulted < 10% consistently across the spectrum of these specific topics.

# Results (question 7)

Physician report of information resources and tools in the clinical office setting.



## \*Other included:

- Nurse educators
- Professional organization pamphlets
- "We have PDA's but I have not found them useful. Too complex, inadequate instruction on use, and with computer readily available not sure PDA helps."

# Conclusions

Our preliminary analysis shows:

1. Methods used to find information to give to patients
2. Most common and least common places physicians go for information on these specific topics
3. Most common and least common information resources and tools in clinical office setting


# Conclusions

1. Methods used to find information to give to patients:

## Most common

- a) Search Internet using a search engine such as Google
- b) Search professional resources such as UpToDate
- c) Consult a colleague

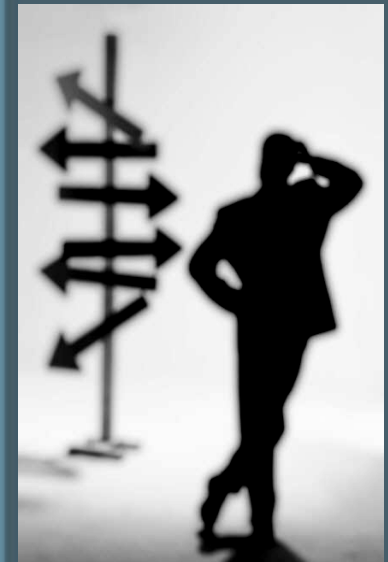
## Least common

- a) Pre-printed materials from pharmaceutical/medical device agency
- b) Consult a Librarian 
- c) Search professional resources such as MDConsult or MedlinePlus

# Conclusions

2. Most common and least common places physicians go for information on these specific topics:

	<u>Most common</u>	<u>Least common</u>
General medical conditions	Internet	Library
New medications	Internet	Library
New psychopharmacology	Internet	Library
Assisted living	Colleague	Library
Suicide	Colleague	Library
Spirituality	Internet	Library
Euthanasia	Internet	Library



# Conclusions

## 3. Most common and least common information resources and tools in clinical office setting:

### Most common



Computer



Internet connection



Printer



Textbooks



Models and/or charts

### Least common

Audio equipment



PDA/Hanging files



Journal articles



Commercial or pharmaceutical pamphlets



Clinical trials information



# Discussion

**A caveat:** this is preliminary work for a larger, *multi-modal study* to be undertaken in 2005 looking at primary care physicians who are participating in a research network affiliated with a newly-funded center for interventions and services research on late life mood disorders.

One reason for the study was to see if these physicians would be willing to answer a web-delivered questionnaire instead of a paper and pencil or telephone survey.

This was a test of a novel methodology and data collection method!

Another reason was to see if the categories of resources and tools were likely candidates for a larger survey to be conducted with added environmental scans.

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[http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/assets/UVAHealth/ssi/includes/images/ei\\_0970.jpg](http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/assets/UVAHealth/ssi/includes/images/ei_0970.jpg)

Image 2: Location map of Pennsylvania, Maps of the World

<http://www.mapsofworld.com/usa/states/pennsylvania/maps/pennsylvania-location-map.gif>

Image 3: map of Pennsylvania, Enchantedlearning.com

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