

Guidance offered to help doctors deal with 'Dr. Google'

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Photo: U.S. National Institutes of Health

(HealthDay)—Good communication is the key to resolving conflicts between the tests and treatment a patient may want based on online searches and those a physician believes are necessary, according to an article published online in *Medical Economics*.

Noting that many [patients](#) will have obtained health-related information from the Internet before visiting their physician, the article discusses how to deal with conflicts between patients and physicians with respect to unnecessary testing.

The article notes that [physicians](#) should listen to patients and

acknowledge their concerns, being attentive to underlying emotions. Physicians may resist or resent 'Dr. Google,' as patients come with misinformation and preconceived ideas about their diagnosis or treatment. However, the trend toward online research accompanies the growing emphasis on [patient engagement](#); even after doing research online, patients need the expertise of the provider to navigate valid information. When a patient requests an unnecessary test, it's important to deal with the motivation for their desire for the test; conversely, when a patient objects to a test, it's important to respect a patient's autonomy.

"There's always the possibility that a patient could leave a provider's office and say, 'I did not get what I wanted,'" Larry Brown, M.D., from the CHI Health Alegant Creighton Clinic in Omaha, Neb., explains in the article. "But there should never be a situation where they weren't listened to and a clear diagnostic process was put in place."

More information: [More Information](#)

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