



2024 Report

4media / 4health

Atomik
Research
Insights & Analytics

THE **WHO, WHAT,**
WHERE, WHY & HOW OF
HEALTHCARE
COMMUNICATIONS

Method

The survey was conducted online by Atomik Research, part of 4media group, between April 2-10, 2024, among 2,003 adults aged 18+ within the United States. Data were weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region and income to reflect the actual proportions in the U.S. population. The margin of error for the overall sample is +/- 2 percentage points with a confidence level of 95 percent.

About the survey:

The survey explores U.S. adults' attitudes, behaviors and aspirations as they relate to health management and health decision making; looks into how they search for and utilize health-related information and some of the challenges they may experience along the way; and gauges their preferences for medical and health-related communications.

The goal of this research is to provide healthcare communicators, marketers and PR and media professionals with insights that can help inform their communications strategies and tactics and address some important questions:

- **WHY** is it more critical than ever before to provide general health consumers and patients with credible, reliable information that is tailored to their specific needs?
- **WHAT** medical and health-related content should be communicated and **WHO**, **WHERE** and **HOW** should it be delivered to activate, engage and empower consumers and patients?



HEALTH ACTIVATION, MANAGEMENT & DECISION MAKING

**Using the power of information
when you need it most**

Most U.S. adults are willing to take ownership of managing their health and are eager to actively participate in health decision making.

71% consider themselves **primarily responsible** for managing their health.

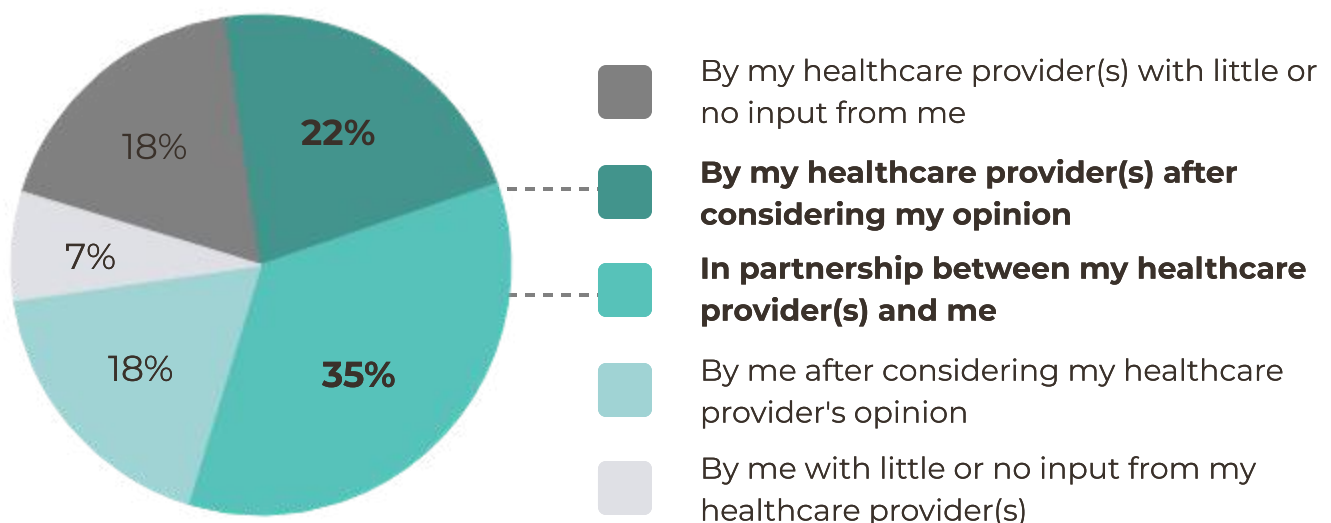


71% say that it's *absolutely essential* or *very important* for them to be **actively involved in shared decision making** with their healthcare providers.

In fact, more than half report that health decisions are typically made in partnership between them and their healthcare providers or by their healthcare providers after considering their opinion.

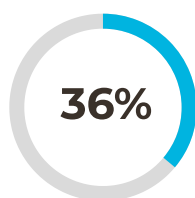


How health decisions are typically made:

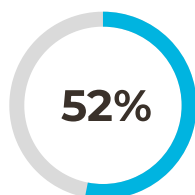


The sense of responsibility and ownership, however, does not always translate into action.

As **few** as...



report being *very proactive* about managing their health



stay up-to-date with **routine check-up visits**



stay up to date with **routine screenings** (40%) and/or **vaccinations** (43%)



Some of the more often cited **barriers for being more proactive** include:

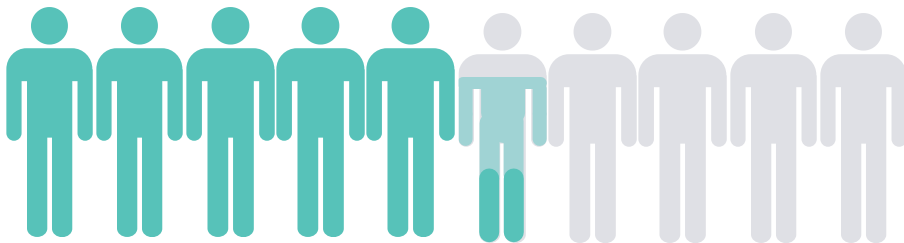
- Limited financial resources (31%)
- Unsure about what to do to be more proactive (29%)
- Other life priorities (24%)
- Lack of time (21%)

Despite the wealth of health-related information available, the majority of U.S. adults do not necessarily feel very well-informed.

Only **38%** feel that they are *very well-informed* to **manage their health**



Only **39%** feel that they are *very well-informed* to actively **participate in shared decision making** with their healthcare providers



58% *strongly/somewhat agree* that they are sometimes expected to **make health decisions** which they are **not necessarily well-informed** to make

53% *strongly/somewhat agree* that they are **not always clear on what they can do** to better manage their health

And while having access to health-related information is empowering, navigating through it is often a challenge.

There is a strong consensus among most U.S. adults that **doing their own research** on relevant health-related topics **enables them to take on a more active role** in the decisions about their health.

However...

U.S. adults *strongly/somewhat agree* that...

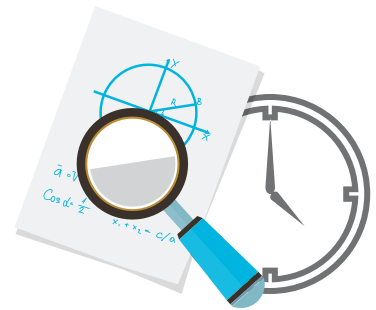
68% Finding relevant information for a specific health-related topic is **time consuming**

73% For each topic there is **so much information** available that it's sometimes **difficult to make sense** of it all

74% Some health-related information available online can be **very distressing**

77% wish there was an easy way to **determine how credible some of the medical and health-related information** they find actually is

87% say that having **access to credible sources** of relevant health information **would help them be more proactive in managing their health**

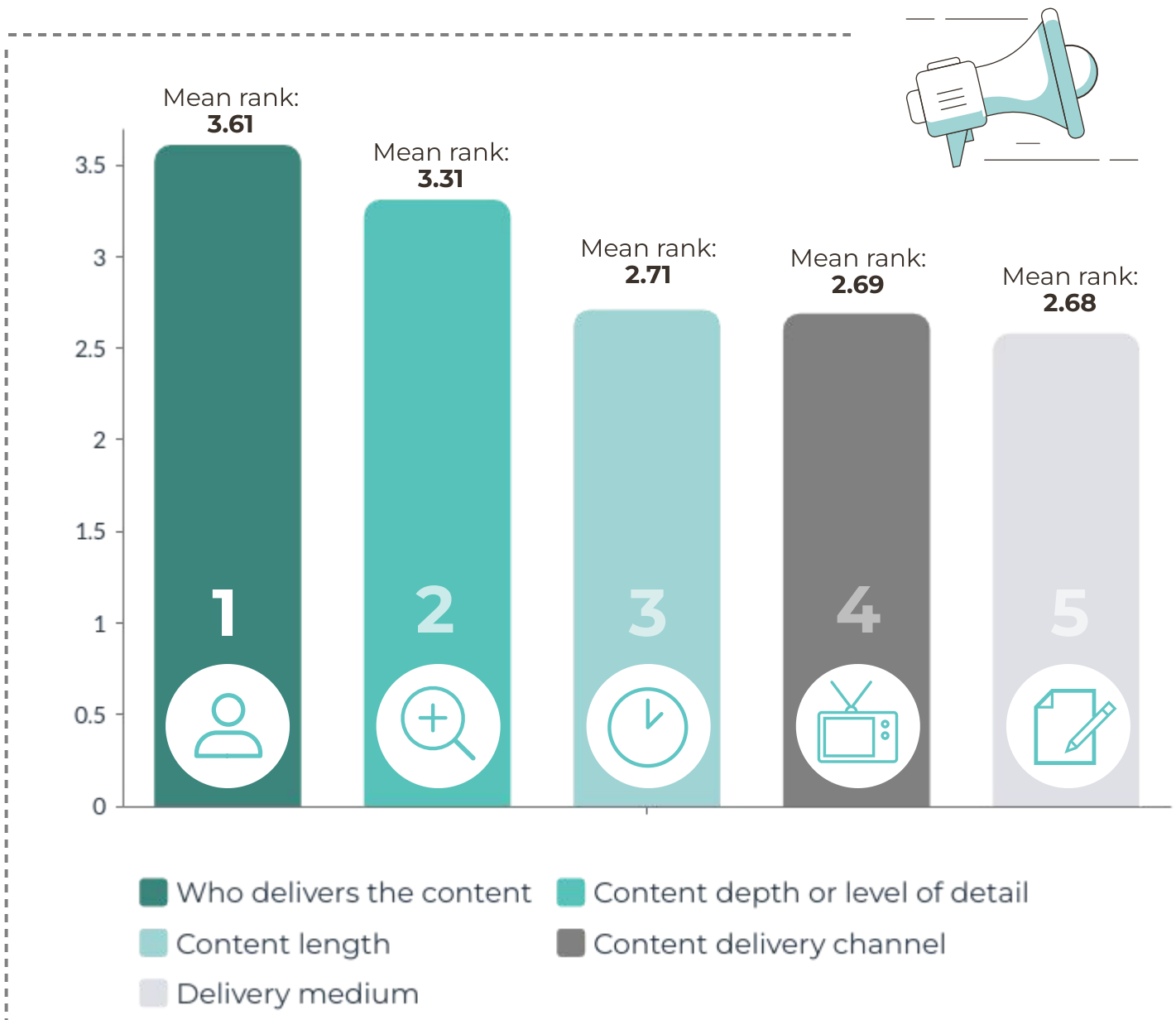




NAVIGATING THE COMMUNICATIONS CLUTTER





IMPORTANCE OF KEY FEATURES OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH-RELATED EDITORIAL CONTENT

WHO delivers the content is clearly the No. 1 feature, followed by **WHAT** (content depth and level of detail) as No. 2. **HOW** and **WHERE** (content length, delivery channel and delivery medium) come in next.



IMPORTANCE OF **KEY FEATURES** BY GENERATION

WHO delivers the message is the most important feature for every generation except Gen Z, for whom content depth/level of detail and content length are top priorities.

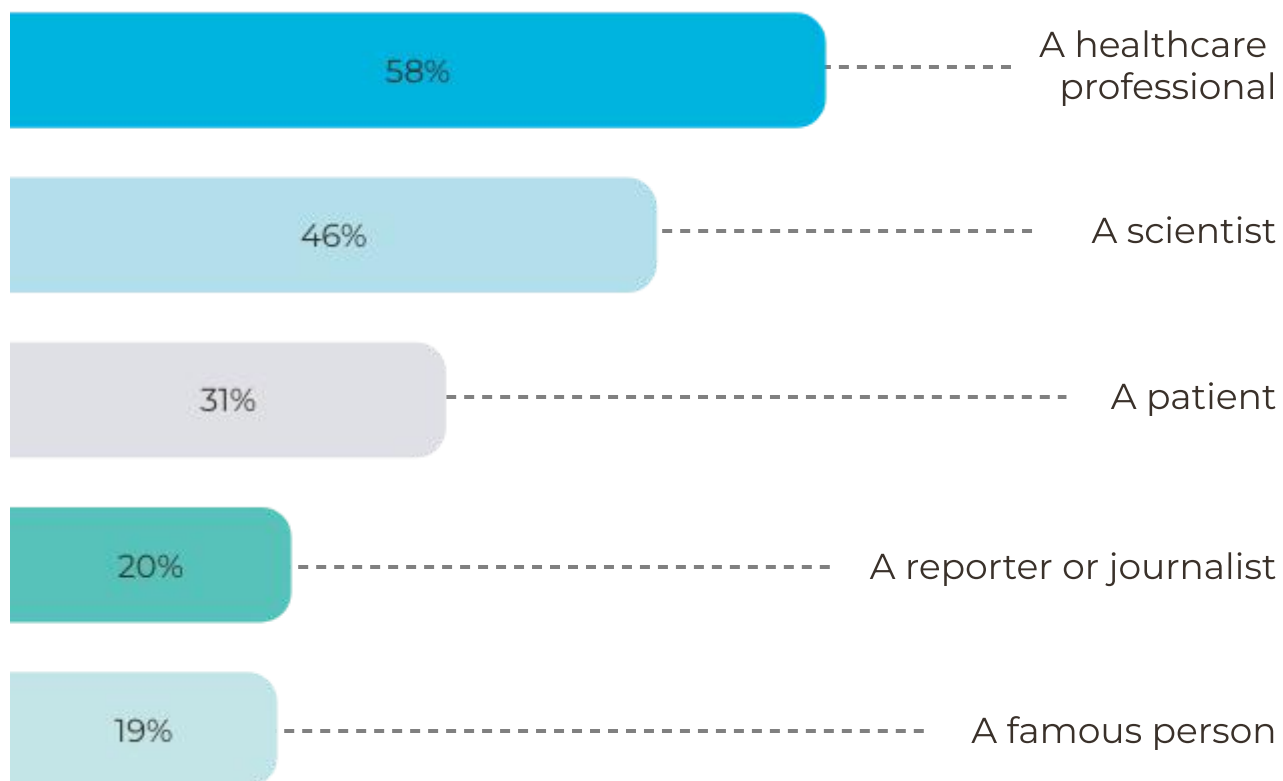
	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers
1	Content depth/level of detail  Mean rank: 3.21	Who delivers the content  Mean rank: 3.35	Who delivers the content  Mean rank: 3.75	Who delivers the content  Mean rank: 4.06
2	Content length Mean rank: 3.12	Content depth/level of detail Mean rank: 3.24	Content depth/level of detail Mean rank: 3.25	Content depth/level of detail Mean rank: 3.46
3	Who delivers the content Mean rank: 3.05	Content length Mean rank: 2.90	Content delivery channel Mean rank: 2.73	Delivery medium Mean rank: 2.67
4	Content delivery channel Mean rank: 2.86	Content delivery channel Mean rank: 2.85	Delivery medium Mean rank: 2.64	Content delivery channel Mean rank: 2.43
5	Delivery medium Mean rank: 2.76	Delivery medium Mean rank: 2.67	Content length Mean rank: 2.62	Content length Mean rank: 2.38

DELIVERING THE CONTENT

THE WHO

Having a **healthcare professional** or a **scientist** deliver medical or health-related editorial content tends to **add more credibility to the message** compared to when it's delivered by a reporter/journalist, a famous person or even a patient.

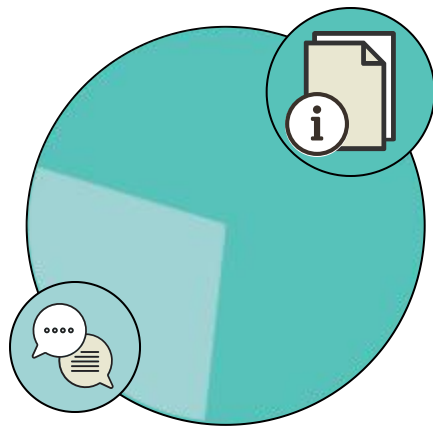
% saying it adds **a great deal/a lot of credibility** if content is delivered by...



CONTENT DEPTH/LEVEL OF DETAIL

THE **WHAT**

Ranked No. 2 in importance by U.S. adults – including Gen Z – is medical and health-related editorial content that is **facts-based and supported by scientific and survey data**. Physician and patient testimonials, references to relevant information sources and visuals are important enhancements that should not be overlooked.



- 72% prefer **facts-based** content
- 28% prefer **relatable, story-driven** content

Elements that have a **positive impact on making the content more compelling**:



Physician testimonial (70%)*
Patient testimonial (65%)*



Scientific data (68%)*
Survey-based data (57%)*

*% rating each element as having a *slight or significant positive impact* on making the content more compelling

When searching for medical or health-related editorial content, **46%** report that it **doesn't matter** for them **if the content is sponsored** or not.

CONTENT LENGTH

THE HOW

It comes as no surprise that most U.S. adults report that **a shorter form** of medical or health-related editorial content would **keep them most engaged**.

A shorter form of content (e.g. news article or short social media post) would keep me **most engaged**

A longer form of content (e.g., a journal article or documentary) would keep me **most engaged**



Ideal length for each form **of content**, according to the majority of U.S. adults:



News article
Under 500 words (71%)



An interview or feature story
Under 15 minutes (64%)



A podcast or radio program
Under 15 minutes (60%)



Journal article
Under 1,500 words (62%)

DELIVERY MEDIUM

THE HOW

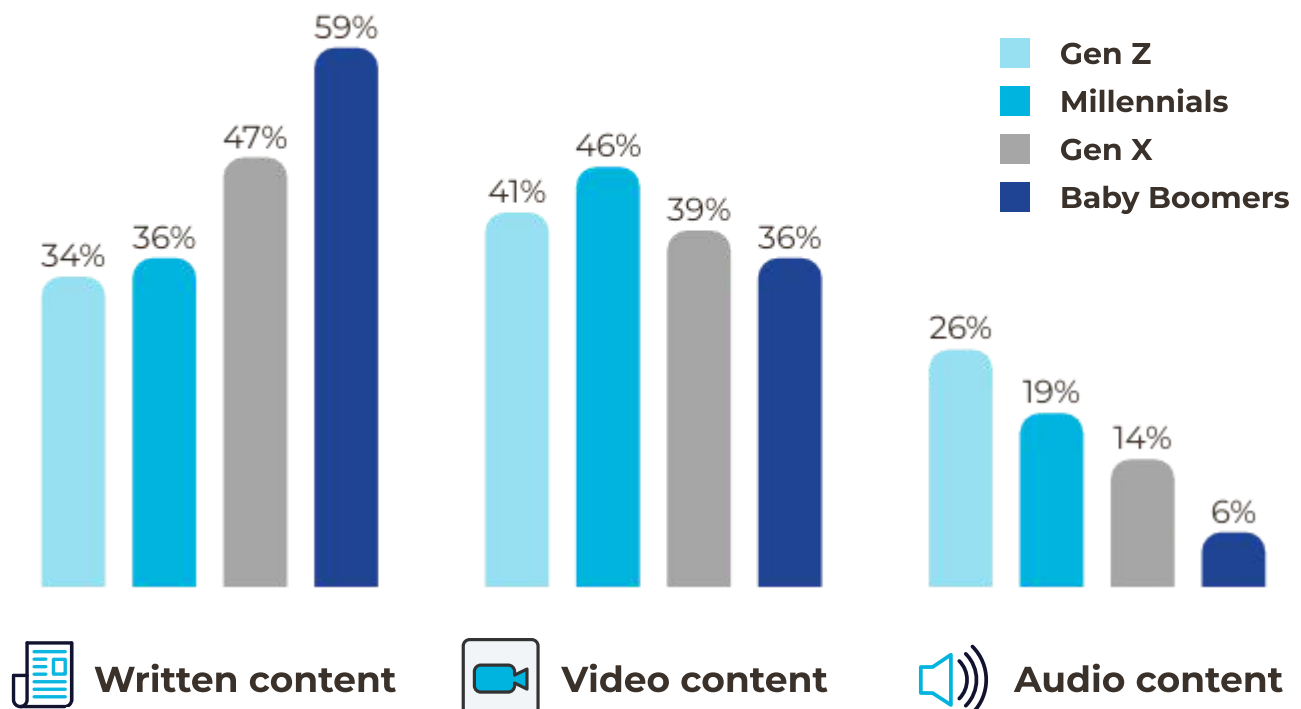


About **4 in 10** U.S. adults (45%) claim that they are most likely to **pay attention to written** medical or health-related content

40% would most likely **pay attention to video** editorial content

15% would most likely **pay attention to audio** content

Delivery Medium Preferences by Generation

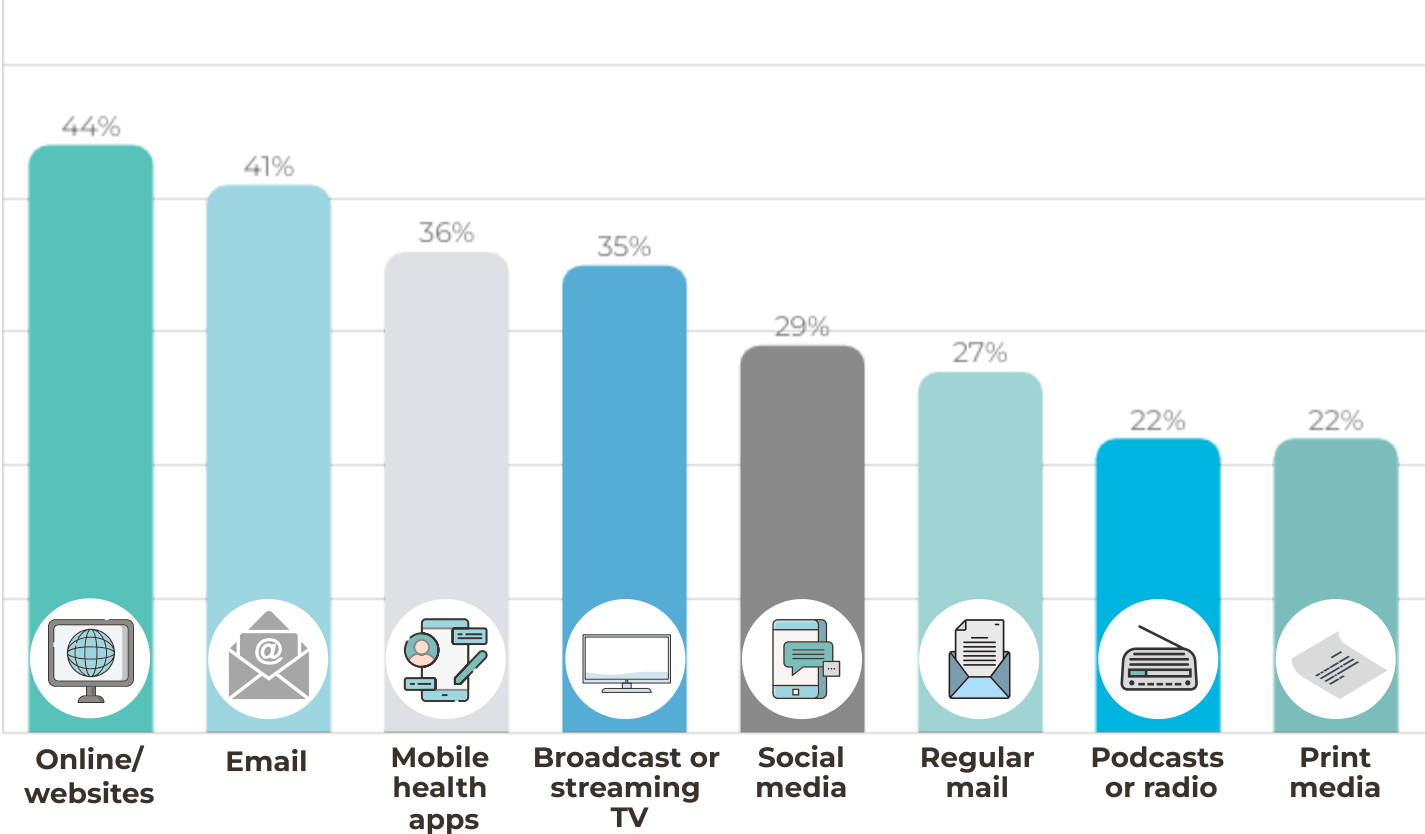


DELIVERY CHANNEL

THE WHERE

When it comes to channel preferences, findings suggest that a range of channels and multiple touchpoints must be considered. **More conventional channels seem to be still in fashion.** As people are looking for and searching for information, **online/websites** are not surprisingly leading the list, followed very closely by **email** that allows for more tailored and personalized content. As **mobile health apps grow in popularity**, these are becoming an important delivery channel providing convenience and again more personalized, tailored content. Preference for social media is as strong as that for regular mail, and the more passive broadcast/streaming TV channel is an important contender.

Delivery Channel Preferences



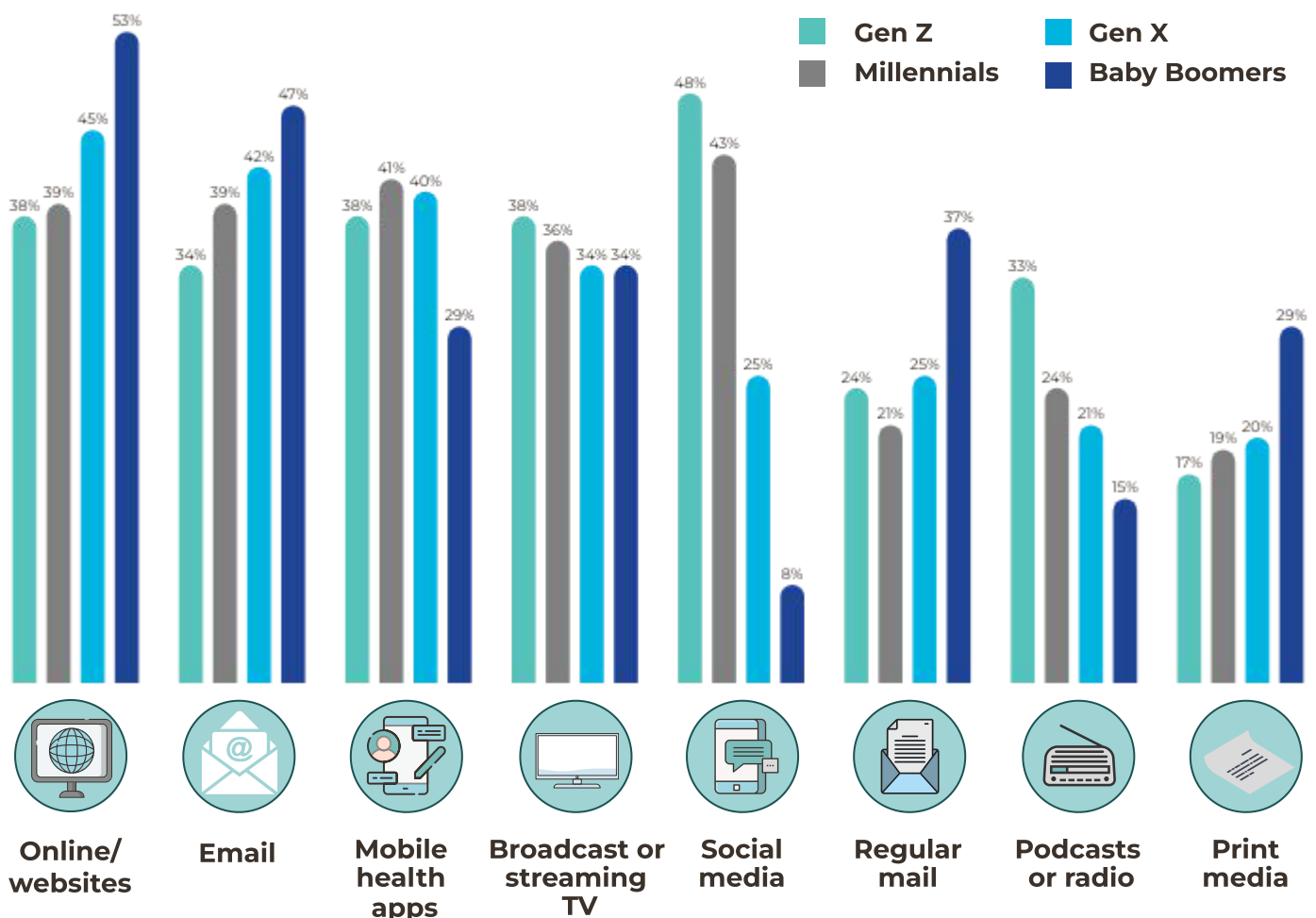
DELIVERY CHANNEL

THE WHERE

As could be expected, channel preferences are not exactly the same for all generations.

- **Gen Z** undoubtedly **favor social media**, and they are also the most likely to choose **podcasts** as their preferred channel.
- **Millennials** would **almost equally prefer** social media, mobile health apps, email and online/websites.
- **Online/websites, email** and **mobile health apps** are the top choices for **Gen X**.
- Of all generations, **baby boomers** have the strongest preference for **online/websites, regular mail** and **print media**.

Delivery Channel Preferences by Generation



Key Takeaways

This research provides compelling evidence that, with the advent of widespread access to information and digital technology, consumers and patients have become more knowledgeable about their health and are able, willing and expected to take greater control over their healthcare decisions and management. Online resources, health apps and wearable devices provide real-time data and insights, allowing individuals to monitor their health and make informed decisions. And while the access to information and resources is indeed empowering, it is also overwhelming.

General health consumers and patients often struggle to discern credible sources from unreliable ones, complicating their ability to make informed health decisions. Volumes of information from multiple sources and channels, including medical literature, online health resources, social media, and direct interactions with healthcare providers combined with the abundance of digital content, complexity and inconsistency of some of the information can cause confusion, anxiety and distress.

The role of those who provide healthcare communications centers on removing those stressors and other barriers inherent to the complexity of healthcare decision making, thereby cutting through the clutter and connecting in relevant, easy-to-understand ways that empower action from healthcare consumers and patients. A clearer sense of aligning messaging, channels of delivery and who delivers the message are arguably more important in healthcare communications than other purposes due to the life-affecting decisions being made.

To help foster consumers' and patients' involvement in health decisions and management that ultimately lead to better health outcomes, research findings provide a few tips for communicators, marketers, PR professionals and media members to keep in mind:

- Credibility of **WHO** delivers the message is essential
- **Content that is facts-based** and supported by scientific and survey data is strongly preferred
- All **delivery channels** must be considered, as each offers a unique advantage
- **Sponsored vs. non-sponsored** content is no longer a deal breaker

Demographic Profile

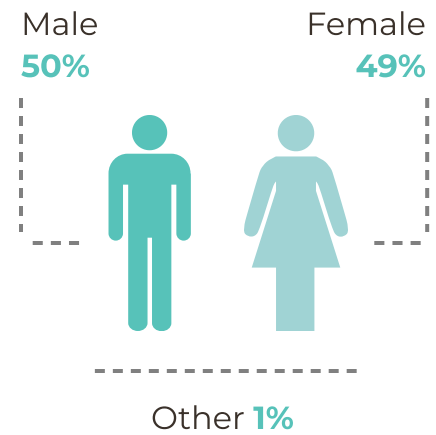
Age

18-24	12%
25-34	18%
35-44	16%
45-54	16%
55-64	17%
65+	21%

Generation

Gen Z	18%
Millennials	27%
Gen X	25%
Baby Boomers	27%
Silent Generation	2%

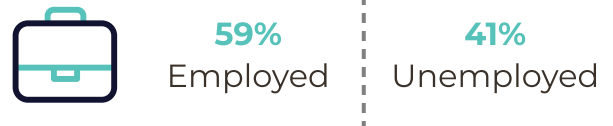
Gender



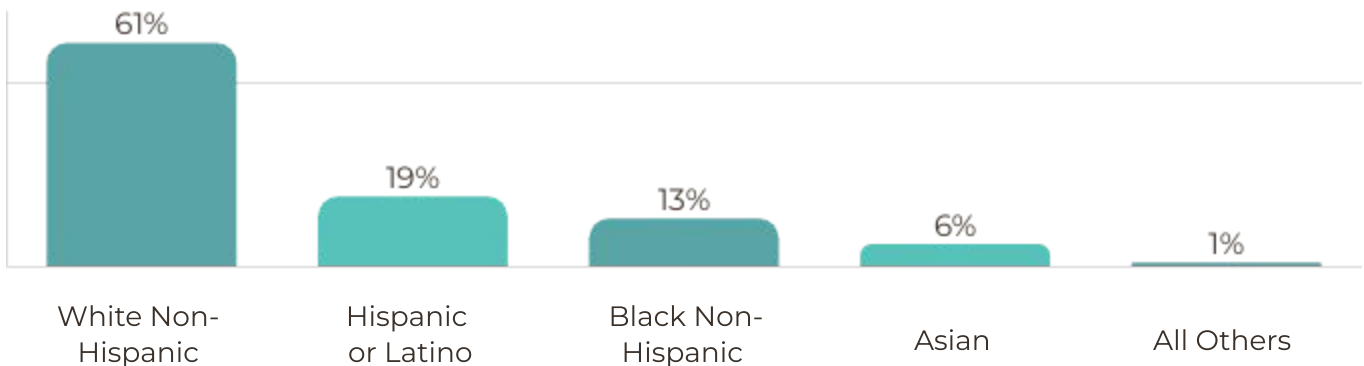
Marital Status



Employment Status



Race/Ethnicity



Demographic Profile

Education

Less than high school degree	5%
High school degree, but less than 4-year college degree	53%
4-year college degree or more	42%

Children in Household

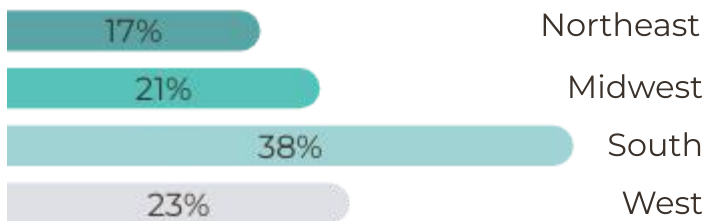


No children
60%



Have at least one child under 18
40%

Region



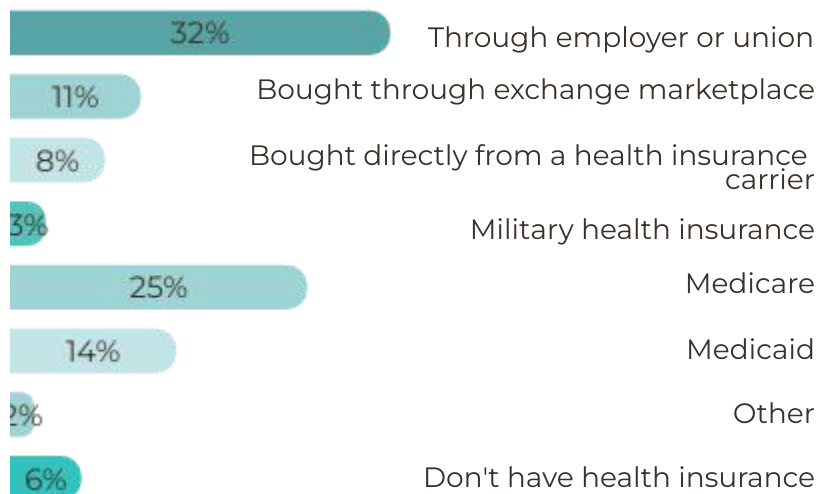
Income

Less than \$50k	33%
\$50k to \$99,999	28%
\$100,000 to \$249,999	32%
\$250k or more	7%

Area of Residence

- Urban: **36%**
- Suburban: **44%**
- Rural: **20%**

Health Insurance Coverage



Health Conditions

72% Have at least one chronic condition

Caregiver Status

30% Provide care or support to an adult living with a chronic condition

Interested in conducting **your own research?**



Getting started is simple!

Contact your 4media group account representative or **contact us** to learn more about surveys and other communications strategy-focused services from Atomik Research.

