

## Online consultation empowers women about their health, finds Practo's healthcare map

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### Practo releases India's most comprehensive healthcare map on women

Practo, India's largest healthcare platform has released India's most comprehensive healthcare map on women. This first of a kind report aims to highlight the disease trends facing Indian women.

Some of the key findings of the report are:

- Dermatology issues, stomach pain, kidney stone, chest pain and breast cancer are the most commonly searched terms by women >50 years
- Women increasingly prefer consulting online: growth of 176% amongst women users using online consult, while 31% growth of women users for physical appointments
- Gynecologist and dermatologist are the top most searched specialties among all Indian women, both for physical and online appointments

Some of the key insights are:

- Growth in online consultation primarily reflects two trends:
  - a. Women find online consultation an easily accessible, private and trustworthy option, especially during working hours and late in the night.

- While women residing in smaller towns and cities find online consult really helpful as it provides them access to top doctors otherwise inaccessible for them
- b. Online consultation is becoming a great replacement for self-diagnosis and medication as it is more reliable and takes much less time (60 seconds to chat with a doctor, instead of hours online searching)
  - Increased focus on mental health and wellbeing:
    - a. Psychiatrist emerges as one of the top specialties in online consult. Experts point that women prefer discussing stigma-related or private matters with doctors online
    - b. Depression emerges as one of the top areas in online consult for women in the age group of 21-30. Experts suggest that this often has symptoms such as loss of interest and enjoyment in practically every aspect of life, in addition to various physical symptoms such as heavy headache, backache, insomnia, restlessness, blurred vision, amongst other such symptoms. It also indicates a growing trend of people seeking help
    - c. Relationship counselling is one of the two fastest growing issues amongst women booking for physical appointments with 257% growth
  - Women use online consultation to discuss issues concerning their children as well. Pediatrics registers a 144% growth in searches. Experts suggest women reach out to Pediatricians esp. at odd hours when there's an emergency and for second opinions, mostly for their peace of mind
  - PCOD/PCOS is on a rise too, with a 135% year on year growth in searches for physical appointments
  - Diet and Nutrition has emerged as the fastest growing healthcare concerns for online consultation, with a 321% growth year on year. It shows awareness and efforts taken by Indian women to maintain a healthy lifestyle
  - Experts see the next phase of online consult growth, esp. among women, coming from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, where getting a trusted doctor and specialist may be a challenge. Jaipur has registered the highest growth in this regard with 666% growth, closely followed by Visakhapatnam at 569% and Guwahati at 375%
  - Indian women find Monday 6pm-8pm & Saturday 10am-12pm as the best suited time to see doctors physically, while Monday - Friday - 10am-12pm & 6pm-8pm as the best time to consult doctors online.

Overall, Practo helps over 2 crore patients each month.

Access to healthcare for women is not limited to that one individual's health, but has a wider impact on the community's health and wellbeing. It's important for women in all strata of the society, across urban, rural or remote villages to get access to doctors in a timely manner; not just for themselves but for their family which includes the elderly and children. Telehealth is the answer to this, where at the click of a button, women can connect with doctors anytime and for any issues - a routine or minor ailment or in emergency situations. Technology has contributed to reducing infant mortality, maternal mortality, ensuring timely vaccinations for mothers to be and infants significantly. It's heartening to see this technology reaching out to elderly, esp. women, who have taken very little initiative in the past to take care of their health proactively. It truly has empowered all sections of our society by simplifying the process significantly." -**Dr. Sanjay Sharma, Jt. Secretary cum Treasurer, Telemedicine Society of India**