

Zocdoc

The AI-Informed Patient



Hidden searches, better questions,



and the emerging triangle of care

Foreword



The patient-provider relationship is at the heart of healthcare. It's the foundation everything else depends on. But that relationship is starting to shift.

There's a new presence in the exam room. One that lives on patients' phones, shows up before the visit begins, and too often stays hidden.

It's AI.

More patients are turning to AI for answers and guidance. They're asking more questions about their health, and that's a good thing. But many aren't telling their doctors, often for fear of judgment.

At the same time, providers know patients are using AI. And many are more supportive than their patients might expect. They see the potential for patients to come in more informed and engaged. But the gap between use and disclosure is where things can get complicated.

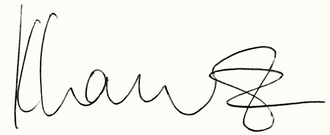
AI can create misinformation or overconfidence, and increasingly, it comes with a "time tax"—as providers spend valuable visit time correcting or contextualizing what's been presented to patients as definitive.

In these early days of AI, we are at a fork in the road.

Handled openly, AI can strengthen the patient-provider relationship, helping patients feel more prepared and making visits more productive. Handled secretly, it can create friction and confusion, and erode trust.

I took note of the fact that even as AI use rises, the vast majority of patients say they still prefer to speak to a doctor versus AI. But a growing population wants to consult both. I believe this is the path forward.

AI delivers information. Doctors deliver care. The work now is to connect the two.



Oliver Kharraz, MD
Founder & CEO, Zocdoc

Patients Are Turning to Dr. AI

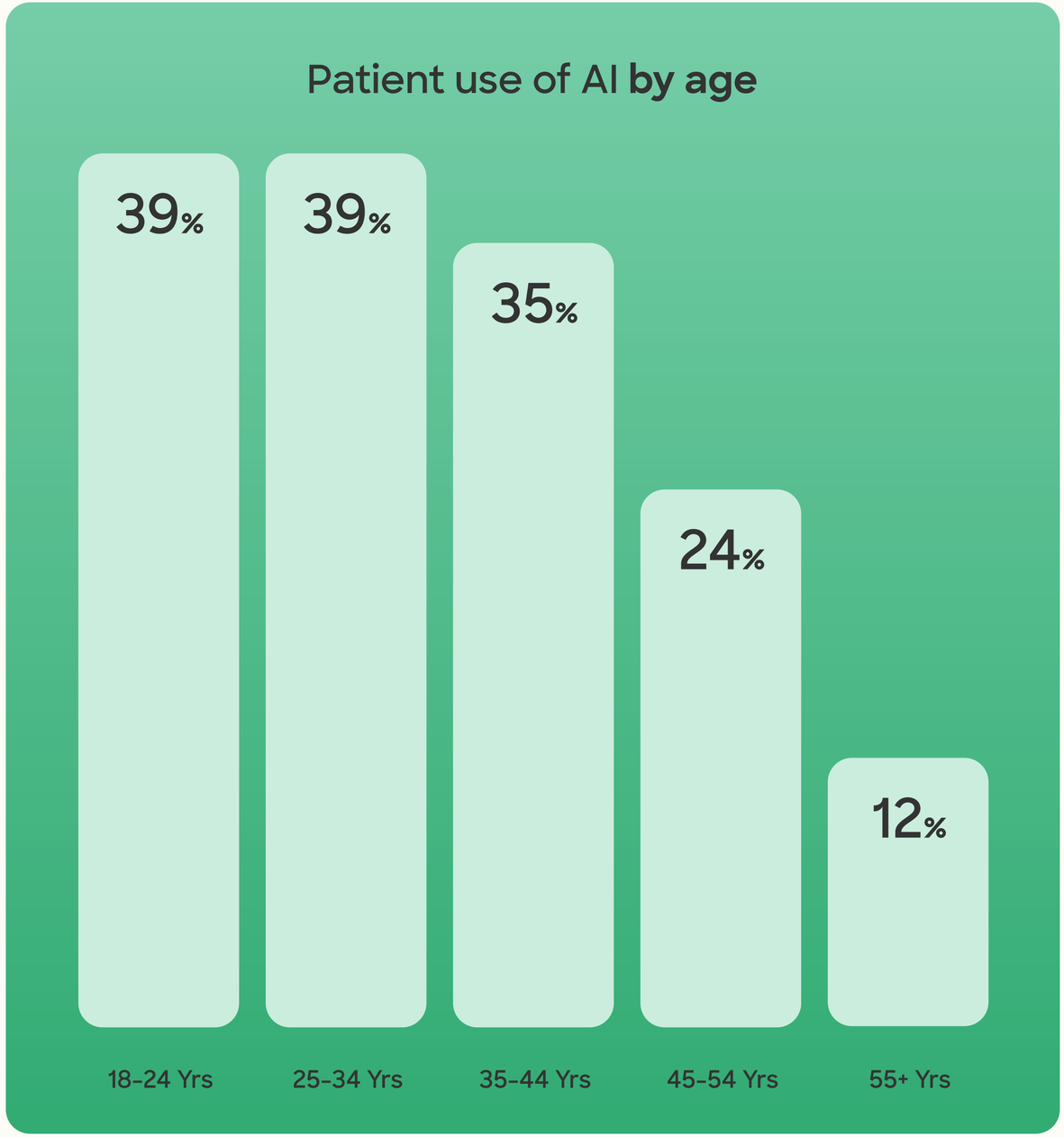
AI is becoming a first stop for medical questions, and providers are taking note

26%

of patients say they have asked AI a health-related question

85%

of providers report seeing more AI-informed patients over the past year



The Elephant in the Exam Room

Fear of judgement leads patients to conceal that they consulted AI

More than

1 in 5

say they've hidden AI use from their doctor

Nearly

1 in 4

say they haven't yet, but would

Top reasons patients hide their AI use

Worried my doctor **would judge me** — **39%**

Worried my doctor **wouldn't like it** — **38%**

Worried my doctor **would dismiss me** — **31%**

Gen Z patients are the most likely to conceal their use

77%

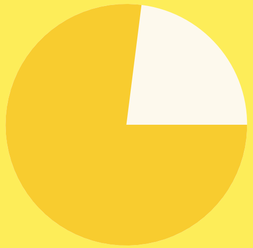
say they have or would

2x

as likely, compared to other generations

Doctors Are Surprisingly Supportive of Patient AI Use

Despite patient fears, most providers see AI as a helpful tool—not a threat



77%

of providers say they feel positively about patients using AI for medical concerns

78%

of providers say they want patients to disclose when they've consulted AI

72%

of providers say they can tell when a patient has used AI

Many providers say AI-informed patients show up more prepared

77% say they ask more thoughtful questions

76% say they are more engaged in their care

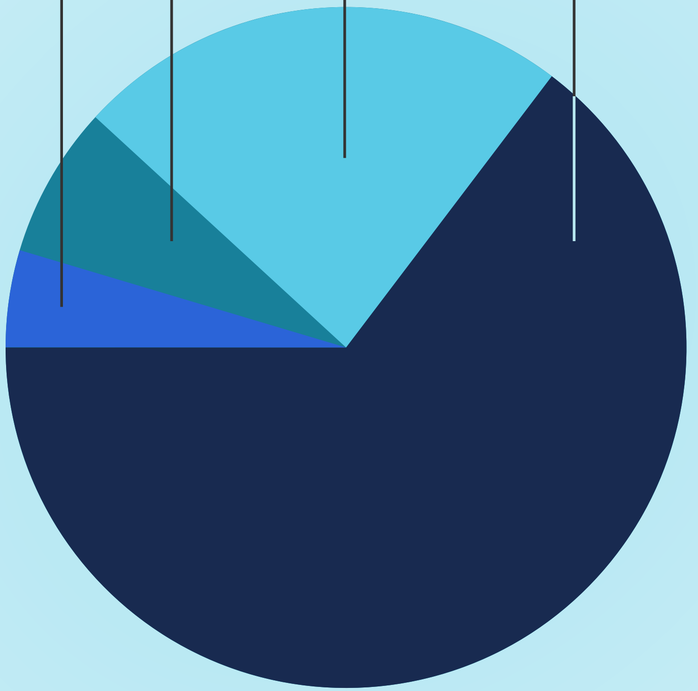
60% of providers would rather patients use AI vs Google search

Patients Prefer Doctors, but AI Is Always Available

AI isn't replacing doctors—it's filling the gap when care is hard to access

Would patients rather ask their medical questions to AI or a doctor?

- 65% would rather ask a doctor
- 23% would rather ask a doctor & AI
- 7% would rather ask AI
- 5% no preference/other



70%

of patients say they would prefer to receive medical guidance from a doctor vs. AI

With U.S. wait times to see a doctor exceeding **31 days*** on average, it's no surprise that 65% of patients say they've consulted AI because it's easier than seeing a doctor

65%

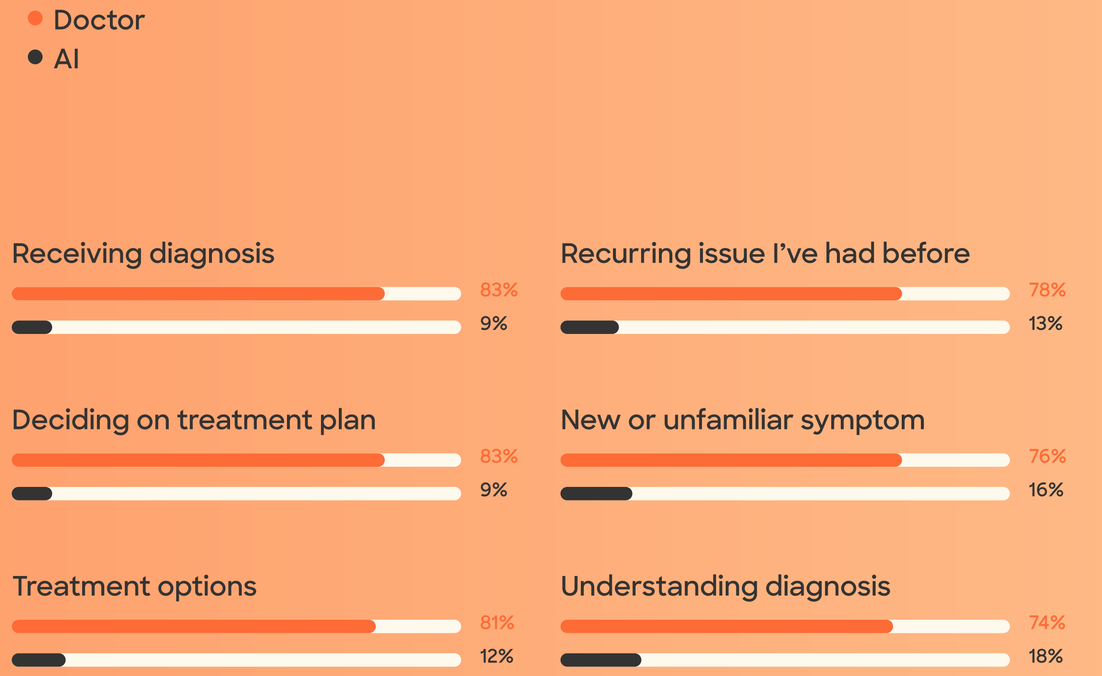
AI Delivers Information, Providers Deliver Care

Providers and AI play different roles in the patient journey

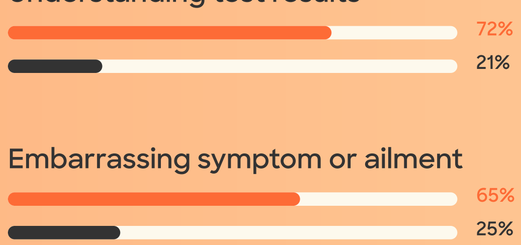
52%

of patients say AI can be helpful for medical issues—their most common use: helping understand what doctors tell them

When do patients want to ask a doctor versus AI?



1 in 4
patients prefer to ask AI about embarrassing symptoms—suggesting privacy and comfort play a role in how patients decide where to seek help



Doctors Are Ready for Patient AI Use

Patients are more hesitant. But both agree that AI can be good for preparation and translation

What should patients use AI for?

Top 5 reasons from **Patients**

1. Prepare questions for a doctor — 36%
2. Understand test results or diagnoses — 35%
3. Feel more informed about medical issues — 35%
4. Understand what type of doctor to see — 30%
5. Determine if symptoms are urgent — 30%

Top 5 reasons from **Providers**

1. Prepare questions for a doctor — 66%
2. Feel more informed about medical issues — 66%
3. Understand test results or diagnoses — 66%
4. Book a doctor's appointment when needed — 63%
5. Understand what type of doctor to see — 62%

Overconfidence Is a Symptom of AI Advice

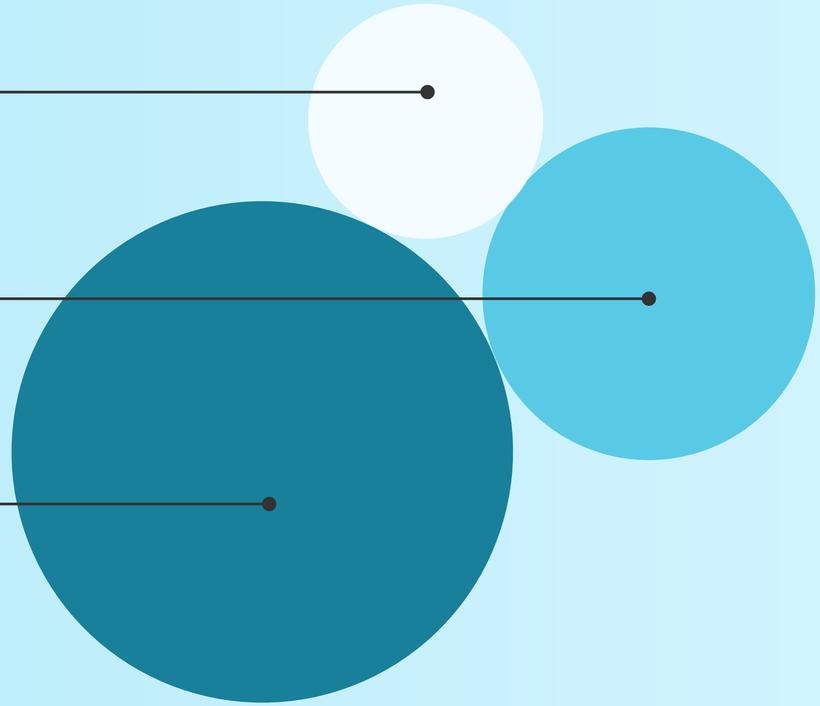
Patients are wary of AI, yet it still makes them feel like they know what to do

Patient concerns about AI

33% think it can be overly reassuring

41% are concerned it may make them overly confident

62% think it can give a false sense of security



Despite this awareness, **overconfidence emerges**

88% of patients say they feel sure about what to do next after using AI

Men are most confident– **9 in 10** feel certain about their next steps

And more than **1 in 4** patients trust AI to provide accurate medical advice

AI Questions Come With Tradeoffs

Both patients and providers see risks—from misinformation to a time tax on providers

The Exam Time Tax



83% of providers report needing to correct patients' AI information

63% say AI-informed patients require more time to correct misinformation





60% say patient use of AI can create extra work for doctors

While providers are optimistic about patient use of AI, **74%** say it can create misinformation

Top 3 patient concerns

57%	Inaccurate info
51%	Misinterpretation
44%	Replaces doctor interaction

Top 3 provider concerns

49%	Overconfidence
49%	Misinterpretation
45%	Inaccurate info

Providers and AI Are Becoming Copilots in Care

Patients want options—but the doctor-patient bond holds

The future of care is not AI **or** doctor, it's AI **and** doctors

23%

of patients say they prefer consulting both a doctor and AI

Gen Z is the mostly likely generation to consult both (27%)

Trust remains a vital part of the patient-provider relationship, and can help patients navigate AI information

Patients who have a doctor they can trust are:

14% ↓ Less likely to become more worried after consulting AI

40% ↑ More likely to book an appointment after consulting AI

17% ↓ Less likely to hide AI use

Methodology

Zocdoc commissioned Censuswide to conduct a survey of 1,186 U.S. adults and 1,000 U.S. providers (patient-facing doctors, physicians assistants, and nurses) in February 2026.

About Zocdoc

Zocdoc is the healthcare access infrastructure that connects patients to great care. By powering seamless scheduling wherever patients are seeking care, Zocdoc helps them move from being stuck to being seen. Each month, millions of patients find and book appointments with providers, powered by Zocdoc—on the company's website and app, and across online search, insurance directories, providers' websites, practice phone lines, AI platforms, and more—with the typical appointment happening within 24 to 72 hours from booking.

With nearly two decades of experience unifying healthcare's fragmentation, Zocdoc is uniquely positioned to power access across insurance plans, EHRs and PMS systems, specialties, visit types, and provider organizations of every size. By fixing healthcare at the start, Zocdoc empowers patients to get the care they need, when they need it, while delivering scaled patient growth providers can count on.



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