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## **„Health consumerism in the digital age: the changing role of patients’ autonomy and empowerment”**

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#### Abstract:

During the past decades, the Internet has evolved to become a necessity in our daily lives. The selection and sorting algorithms of search engines exert tremendous influence over the global spread of information and other communication processes. In the area of healthcare, the Internet alone makes available to consumers vast amounts of information and provides the potential for the “democratization of healthcare”.

This progress, however, goes along with a couple of drawbacks in the process of health information search. The talk will demonstrate how on one side the availability of health information influences patients’ information search, and changes, more broadly, patients’ understanding of his or her autonomy and empowerment. It will discuss challenges that are entirely part of the online health information seeking process.