Crowdsourcing Medical Advice

Skeptical Scalpel

A website called "CrowdMed [1]" offers "crowdsourcing" of medical diagnoses. You enter a narrative about your illness and the crowd, which may not necessarily all be MDs, comes up with a diagnosis for you. Patients are supposed to discuss the most likely diagnoses with their own physicians. Via a somewhat complex system, the medical detectives can win money if patients offer cash rewards, which are not mandatory.

CrowdMed takes 10 percent of any money put up by patients as its commission. They claim they and anyone who offers an opinion are not legally liable since all medical opinions are anonymous, patients are told that only their real doctors can provide a definitive diagnosis, and all diagnoses are based on the pooled input of many contributors.

I have a friend who has knowledge of medical crowdsourcing that antedates CrowdMed.

He knows someone who is into self-abuse like marathons, triathlons, etc. She always has some ache or pain and goes to a massage therapist or a chiropractor, who offers a diagnosis. Then it’s off to the natural food market for some organic potion. The person behind the counter does the prescribing and maybe a bit of fine-tuning of the diagnosis. Friends and acquaintances are also free to lend their expertise. The most highly prized diagnosticians are wives of doctors, especially those who belong to the garden club. The patient would never consider a recommendation to see an actual doctor.

He has no data on the accuracy of the diagnosticians or the outcomes of the patients.

Continue reading... [2]

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