

The rise of AI, voice & image search among healthcare professionals



"Varn Health has partnered with Beacon, an AI led healthcare and pharma research organisation, to explore how healthcare professionals around the world are adopting new ways to search.

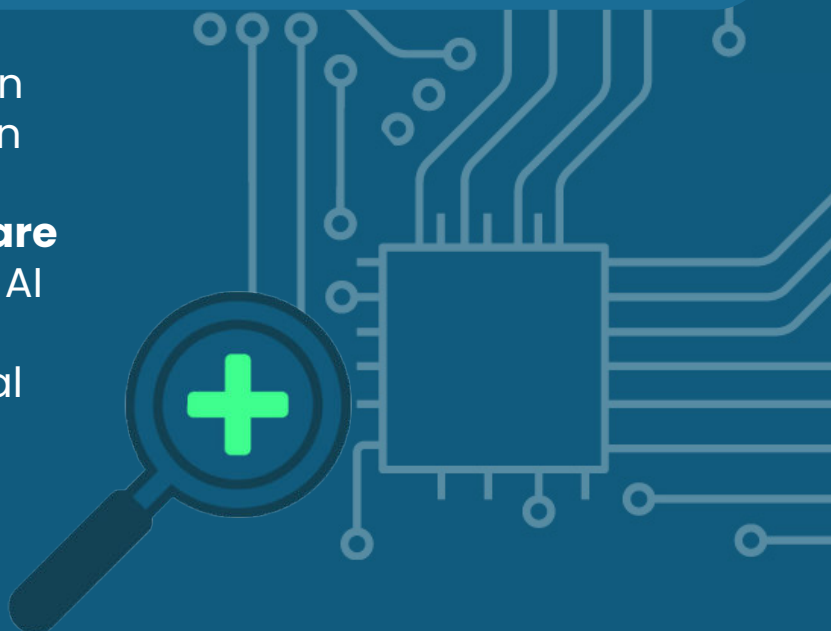
We reveal how a new generation of HCPs are transforming how they find clinical information."



Tom Vaughton
CEO of Varn Health

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The findings from Varn Health, in this research, were developed in collaboration with Beacon AI, **surveying 126 verified healthcare professionals**, uncovering how AI search, voice and image tools are shaping the future of clinical decision making and digital visibility for pharma brands.



BEACON

Beacon AI specialises in gathering insights directly from healthcare professionals with a global network of over 1.1 million verified HCPs. As the medical market research industry's first AI agent product, it is transforming how healthcare and life sciences companies access critical insights. Beacon's AI-powered platform removes the traditional trade-off between speed and depth, enabling teams to run thousands of conversations simultaneously with HCPs and uncover high-quality market insights in hours rather than weeks.

"Built with healthcare-grade compliance and designed specifically for medical research and insights, Beacon AI empowers healthcare innovators to make smarter decisions and stay ahead of the competition by delivering real-time, human-quality insights at unprecedented scale."



Frank Seo
CEO of Beacon

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HCPs are adopting AI search, voice and image tools to assist in their professional work

In this latest research from Varn Health and Beacon, we explored with **126 verified healthcare professionals** how much they are using the new search methods and tools available to them, in order to help improve their clinical efficiency and knowledge retrieval.

We asked:

1. **Have you ever used AI-powered search tools** such as ChatGPT/SearchGPT, Google Bard or Perplexity AI, to assist with your professional work?
2. **Have you ever used voice search** to find information or answers related to your professional work?
3. **Have you ever conducted an image search** using a tool like Google Lens within your professional work?

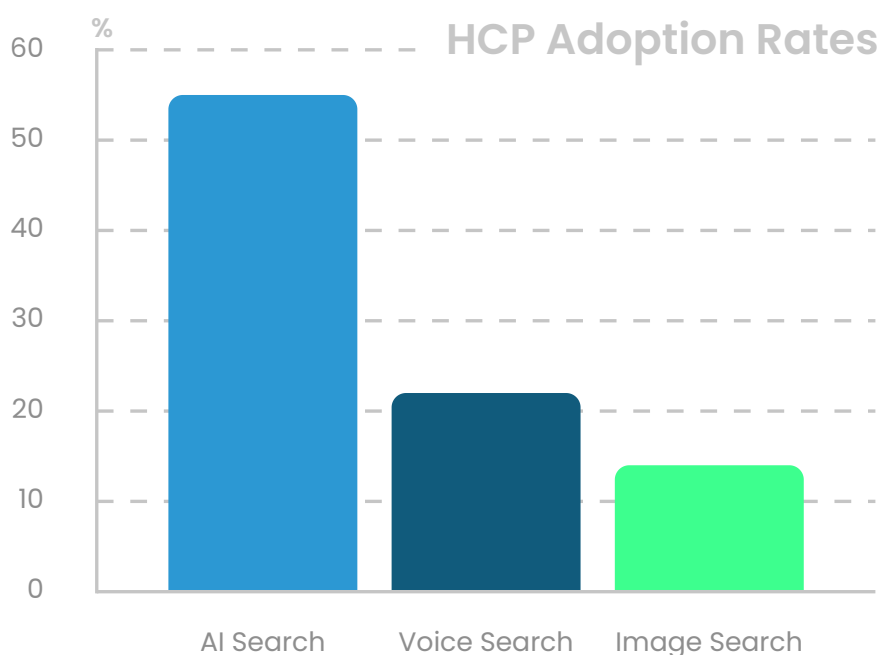


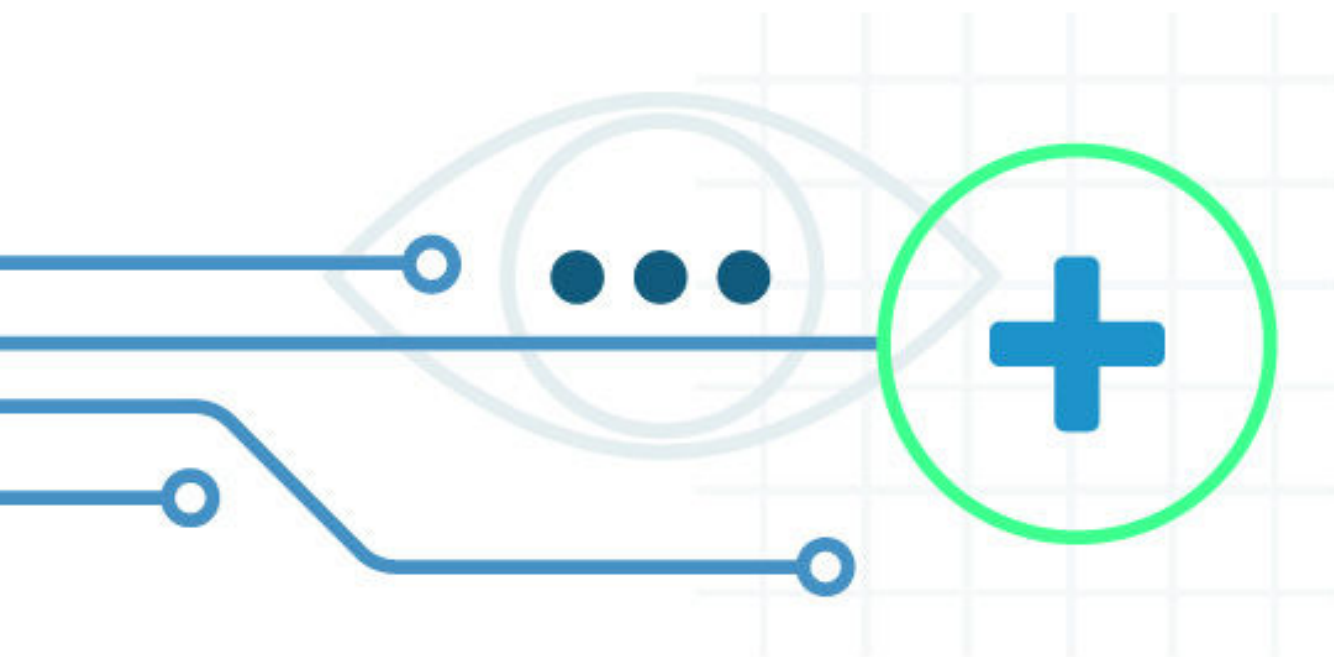
What we found:

52% HCPs use AI search

22% HCPs use voice search

14% HCPs use image search





These behaviours signal a clear shift

The way HCPs access and interact with information is diversifying. Search is no longer confined to a single platform or format; it's becoming faster, more conversational and increasingly visual.

For pharma and healthcare brands, this marks the beginning of a new era of discoverability.

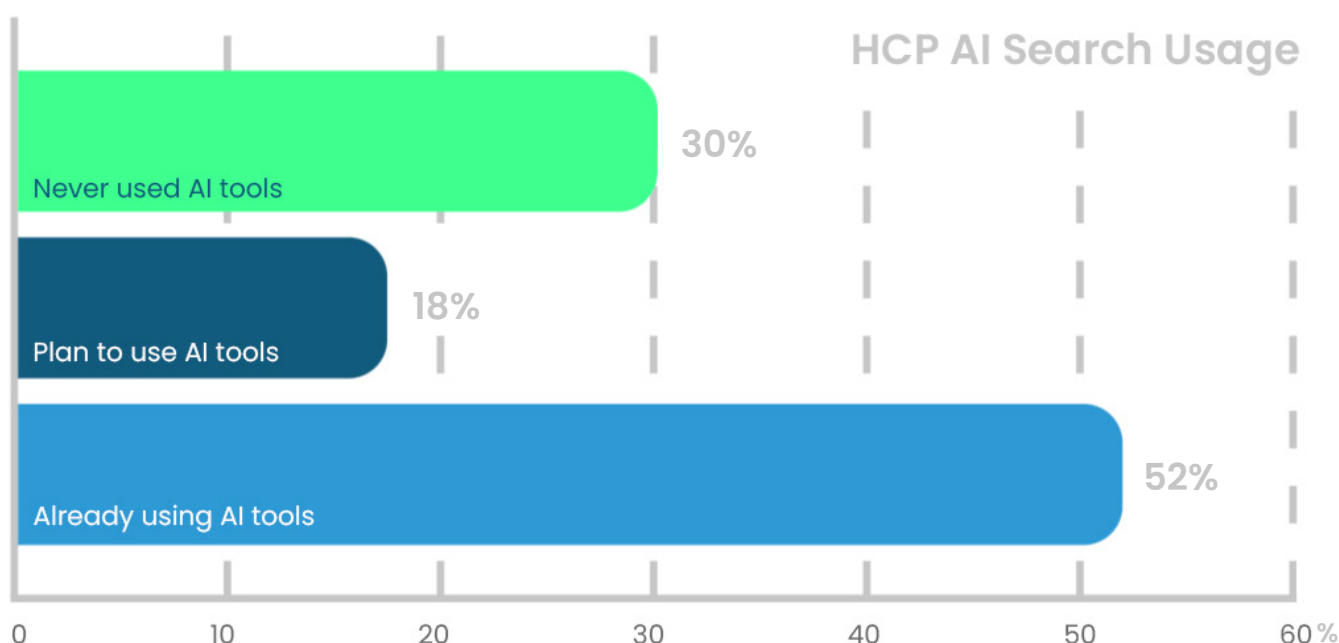
"Our research highlights that healthcare professionals are already exploring new ways to find trusted information. **More than half now use AI powered search tools to support their clinical work, while a growing number are experimenting with voice and image search to speed up everyday tasks"**



Tom Vaughton
CEO of Varn Health

The AI powered search tipping point isn't coming... it's already here

We asked: **Have you ever used AI-powered search tools** such as ChatGPT/SearchGPT, Google Bard or Perplexity AI, to assist with your professional work?



AI adoption among surveyed healthcare professionals has crossed a critical threshold.

52% HCPs already use AI search tools professionally

18% HCPs plan to adopt AI search tools professionally

30% HCPs have never used AI search tools professionally

This data paints a picture of a profession in transition.

The “next wave” of users are not sceptics; they are simply waiting for the right combination of **trust, accuracy and compliance** before integrating AI fully into their clinical workflow. For pharma, that means the window to establish brand visibility within AI driven search platforms is open now, but not for long.

The next decision makers in healthcare are already using AI search

“The next wave of AI adoption is heavily driven by the 25–34 age group. Adoption is not coming from the top down, but from the younger ranks up.”

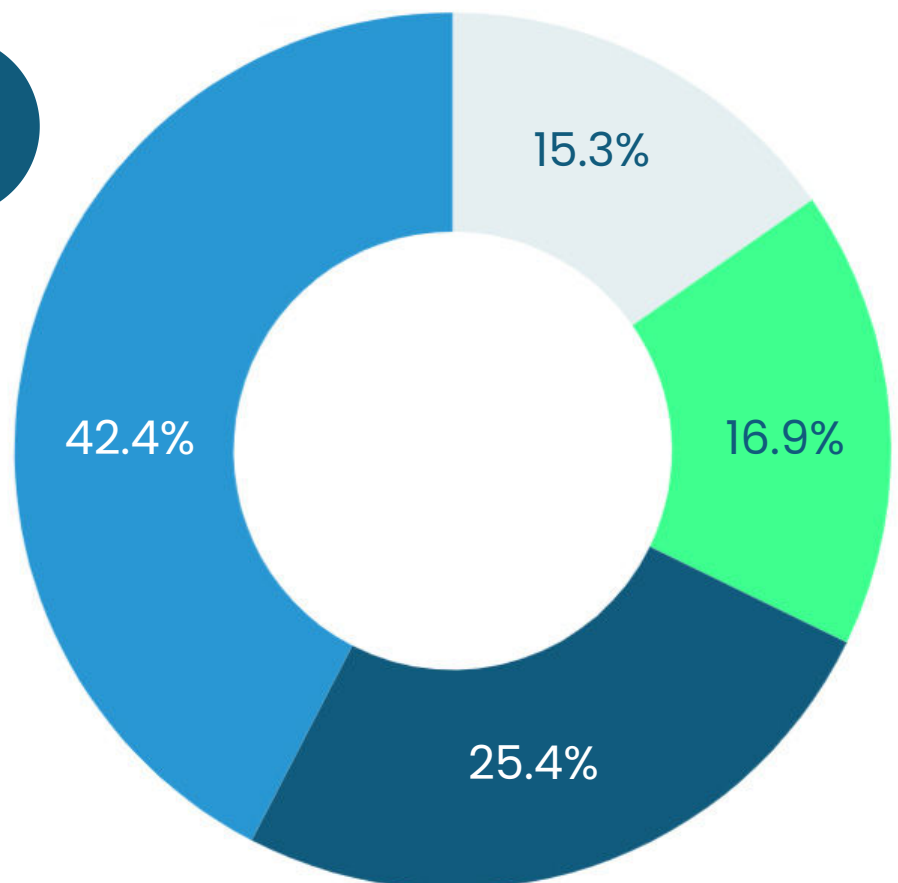
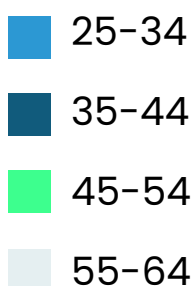


Tom Vaughton
CEO of Varn Health

Percentage of total HCPs adopting AI search

68% surveyed HCPs using AI search are under 45

42% AI search adopters are under 35



Is your content optimised and visible for the next 30 years of practice?

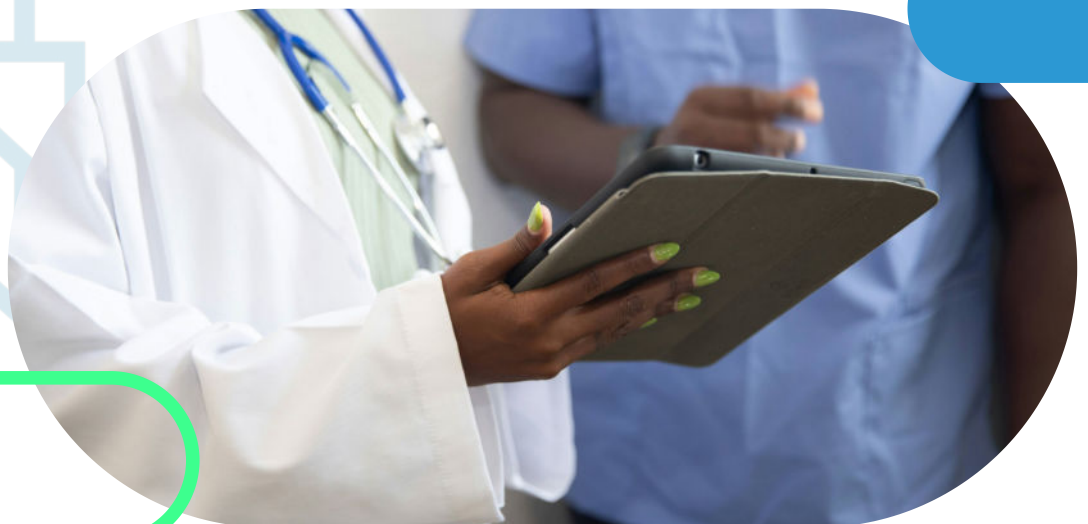
AI search is no longer a niche tool for innovators; it's being embedded into the daily workflow of the core healthcare workforce. Younger HCPs (under 45) are leading this adoption from the bottom up, normalising AI search use as part of clinical research and patient care.

Pharma content must now evolve to be AI-readable, source-citable and visible in generative search results. **AI search demands a new approach to optimise your content and stay visible to the 68% of HCPs already relying on it.**

“The next generation of HCPs you need to get visible to are just waiting for the 'right' solution. They are tech ready and simply waiting for the right moment, tool and training. They are the most crucial audience for pharma to target with 'how-to' and trust building content.”



Dan Buckland
Director, Broadcast Health



The challenge is not *if* HCPs use AI, but *how* AI surfaces your content



Traditional SEO focuses on Google's blue links. AI search (like Gemini or ChatGPT), focuses on summarisation and citation. If your content isn't architected for this new layer of visibility (Generative Engine Optimisation – GEO), it is effectively not visible to the HCPs already using AI tools.

Varn Health ensure your compliant data is sourced and cited by AI tools, making your content discoverable and trustworthy to the rising majority of HCPs.

What area of specialism in healthcare are the HCPs that are using AI search?

Adoption is not limited to a single niche; it spans from General Practice, (highest volume of use), to specialties like Oncology and Dermatology.

Our research found that **GPs are the single biggest adopter group, comprising 25%**, but many still use these AI tools "occasionally", reflecting ongoing trust and accuracy concerns.

GPs see a wide variety of conditions, drugs, and patient profiles every day so are likely use AI search tools for breadth and speed: to quickly check a rare differential diagnosis, look up a simple guideline from an unfamiliar area, or draft a patient education summary. GPs may switch back to traditional, validated sources (journals, trusted databases), for their frequent, critical clinical decisions.



Search is fragmenting and pharma visibility must follow

Voice Search

We asked: Have you ever used voice search to find information or answers related to your professional work?

22.2% HCPs have used voice search professionally

56.4% HCPs have never used voice search

21.4% HCPs plan to use voice search in the future

Voice adoption is roughly half that of AI text search but shows strong intent to grow. As accuracy and compliance improve, clinicians are likely to shift more routine information searches to voice.

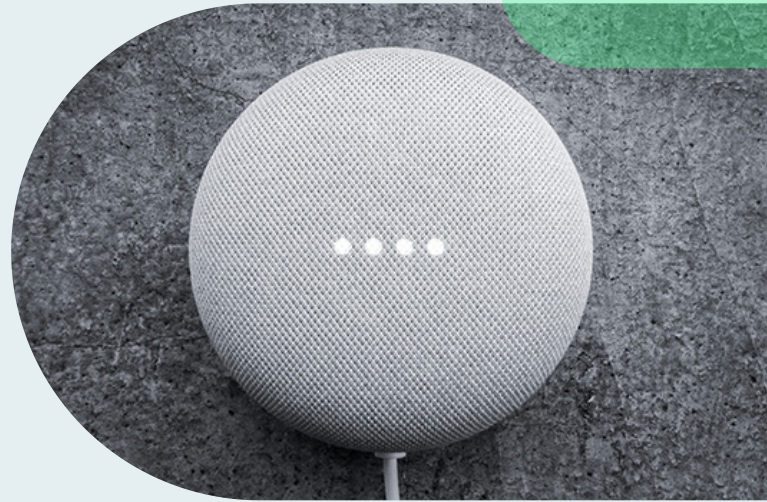


Image Search

We asked: Have you ever conducted an image search using a tool like Google Lens within your professional work?

14% HCPs have used image search professionally

68% HCPs have never used image search

18% HCPs plan to use image search in the future

From rashes to radiology, clinicians are beginning to 'see' search differently. Image search is still emerging but signals a future where visual tools play a greater role in clinical information retrieval.



Search is no longer a single behaviour in HCPs; it's multimodal

Pharma brands that want to **stay discoverable** must ensure their data is **readable and trusted by AI**, voice and visual search tools alike. The visibility gap is moving from Google's blue links to AI-generated summaries and multimodal discovery.

This research shows a clear inflection point in digital behaviour across the healthcare sector. **Search is evolving into a complex, AI-powered ecosystem** and the professionals who will shape the next 30 years of clinical practice are already adapting to it.

For pharma and healthcare brands, this means visibility strategies must **evolve beyond traditional SEO to meet HCPs where they are searching**: in AI chat interfaces, in voice enabled assistants, and increasingly through visual identification tools.

For more information on how AI search is impacting pharma and healthcare brands download Varn Health's whitepaper >>

AI Search: An essential guide for healthcare and pharma brands to stay visible in the age of AI.

DOWNLOAD



Who are Varn Health?

Varn Health is the SEO agency where **healthcare and pharma** industry expertise meets exceptional **SEO, GEO, data and search capability.**

Our expert team helps healthcare brands and businesses grow through smarter search, keeping you visible & trusted where patients & HCPs seek answers.



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Beacon AI is redefining the Pharma Market Research lifecycle, transforming how HCPs engage and share insights through medically trained AI agents. Beacon AI work with research, medical, digital and commercial teams at Pharma, BioTech, & MedTech companies, who need to move faster while gaining deeper, richer insights without breaking the bank.

