

Why you should consult with your GP or Pharmacist rather than AI or Chat GPT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and chatbots like GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) are rapidly evolving and shaping the way we access information. Although these advancements have demonstrated benefits in various areas around health, it is essential to be cautious, particularly when seeking medical advice.

This often draws people seeking information on taboo health topics, where societal stigmas or personal discomfort may restrict people from speaking to professionals. According to a survey by [Plan International UK](#), 700,000 people between the ages of 16-25 rely on AI chatbots for advice on sexual health.

It becomes appealing as it is discreet and non-judgmental for sensitive health issues. However, taboo health topics often require complex understanding of people's experiences and emotions, which AI can struggle to comprehend.

Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence published a paper on 'Chat GPT in Medicine', stating that "Chatbots can struggle to identify important information and differentiate between reliable and unreliable sources, similar to the biases that humans face."¹ This emphasised the inaccuracies, biases and transparency issues of the platform.

Dr Babak Ashrafi, a general practitioner at Superdrug Online Doctor comments, "Medical professionals undergo years of thorough training to diagnose and treat various conditions. While AI can be valuable for supporting healthcare providers, it should not replace the expertise and judgement of qualified medical professionals."

Superdrug's Online Doctor service helps you order treatments online from UK-registered doctors with free, discreet, to-your-door deliveries. This service is as confidential and non-judgemental as AI is perceived to be. However there are real humans behind it, who can provide many aspects that AI cannot.

Dr Ashrafi highlights the key reasons why those seeking medical advice should opt for Superdrug's Online Doctor service GP advice, or a Superdrug Pharmacist, over AI.

1. Personalised Human Interaction

Dr Ashrafi comments, "Seeing your GP or pharmacist provides patients with the opportunity for personalised interactions with a qualified professional. AI lacks the ability to tailor advice based on an individual's unique medical history or specific health conditions. Medical decisions require an exact understanding of personal health circumstances that AI may not be able to capture."

¹ Dave T, Athaluri SA, Singh S. ChatGPT in medicine: an overview of its applications, advantages, limitations, future prospects, and ethical considerations. Front Artif Intell. 2023 May

2. Empathy and Emotional Support

The Superdrug Pharmacy and Online Doctor service offers empathy and emotional support that AI cannot replicate. Patients often appreciate the compassion and trust that comes from human conversations, especially when it comes to taboo or sensitive health topics. Online doctors at Superdrug can navigate these discussions with sensitivity, understanding the cultural, social and emotional aspects that AI may overlook.

3. Clinical Judgement and Experience

Human doctors have extensive clinical judgement and experience, allowing them to interpret complex medical information and make informed decisions and treatment plans. Chat GPT may struggle to comprehend the full context of a medical situation. AI models operate based on data fed during their training. In a medical context, this could lead to misinterpretations or inaccuracies.

4. Coordination with In-Person Healthcare

Superdrug's Pharmacy and the Online Doctor service can seamlessly coordinate with in-person healthcare services. Human doctors can guide patients on when to seek in-person consultations, tests or emergency care. This is essential for coordinating follow-up care and monitoring healthcare conditions effectively.

Dr Babak Ashrafi states "While AI has undoubtedly enhanced the efficiency of medical diagnoses, the human touch remains irreplaceable in healthcare."

Superdrug urges individuals to consult with qualified healthcare professionals who can provide personalised, accurate and contextually relevant advice. Superdrug's Online Doctor service covers a range of topics including erectile dysfunction, contraceptive methods, weight loss treatment, STI's and more.

Superdrug is committed to encouraging an environment that is open and understanding around health. Superdrug Online Doctor provides doctor care whenever you need it, anywhere in the UK. For more information please visit: <https://onlinedoctor.superdrug.com/> or head to a Superdrug store to speak with a pharmacist.

ENDS