

AGEING GENERATION: ONLINE HEALTH SEEKING BEHAVIOUR IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

Internet is one of the available sources for health information seeking and important medium for patient empowerment. In Malaysia, there are limited studies on Internet use among elderly. The aim of this study was to identify health information seeking behaviour through Internet use amongst elderly in Malaysia. A cross-sectional study was conducted at 23 Pusat Aktiviti Warga Emas (PAWE) throughout Malaysia. An adapted questionnaire from previous studies (Maab 2011; Allen 2013; Loipha 2014;) measuring health information seeking behaviour was disseminated to 258 elderly aged 60 years and above. Two-staged cluster sampling was used for this study and mean age of respondents was 64 years old. Findings revealed 89.4% (95% CI: 82.8, 93.6) elderly used Internet to seek health information and 72.3% (95% CI: 54.2, 85.2) accessed information related to personal health problems. 47.9% (95% CI: 38.5, 57.4) elderly reported seeking diseased based information compared to other information. Apart from Internet, respondents also reported other reliable sources to health information such as WhatsApp (42%, 95% CI: 28.9, 56.4) and television (38.2%, 95% CI: 29.6, 47.6). Increase of internet based dependency, use and literacy can be concluded for elderly in Malaysia as they are becoming more tech-savvy. This change is an advantage as it can be used to address and manage health issues and geriatric care for elderly through strategic dissemination of health information as well as to motivate positive health behaviour through use of technology.

Key words: Elderly; Health Seeking Behaviour; Online Health Seeking Behaviour; Elderly and Online Health Seeking Behaviour; Elderly in Malaysia