TECHNICAL REPORT

2018

HEALTH INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF ELDERLY WHO USE THE INTERNET IN MALAYSIA

INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH
MINISTRY OF HEALTH
MALAYSIA

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ct.	Count
Est.	Estimated
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MCMC	Malaysian Multimedia and Communication Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAWE	Pusat Aktiviti Warga Emas (Senior Citizen Activity Centre)
PSU	Primary Sampling Unit
SSU	Secondary Sampling Unit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Internet is viewed as an important source for health information and a medium for patient empowerment. However, little is known about how elderly use the Internet for gathering health information. The study was aimed to investigate the patterns of internet usage among elderly.

A cross-sectional study was conducted in 23 PAWE localities throughout Malaysia from August 2017 to October 2017. They are selected PAWE because there are elderly registered in this centre. It facilitates the researcher to obtain the required respondents according to the acceptance criteria and the objective of the study. A total of 1400 individuals were sampled in this study, unfortunately the elderly turned up only 799 (57.5%) which aged 60 and above. A self-administered with minimal guidance and face to face interview by trained research assistants were used in this study.

The study showed of the total 799 respondents, only 258 (33.0%) who use the internet. Those using the Internet are 89 (30.2%) male and 169 (69.8%) female, respectively. Most of them are government retirees (65.7%). The study found that the reasons of the elderly seeking health information through the internet because it was free (68.3%) as well as easy and fast (61.8%). The study also found that the type of health information sought is information on certain diseases such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension and others (47.9%).

With regards to the places of internet access, about 86.2% of the respondents having the internet access at home, followed by internet service provider 36.3% and by PAWE itself 17.0%. Only 2.5% and 3.2% of respondents access internet at Cyber Cafe and workplace respectively. The highest showed that respondents access internet everyday 24.8% followed by several times in a month 23.6% and twice or thrice in a week 21.9% .

Overall, 47.8% of elderly claimed internet can be a very helpful resource for finding health information.