DO MALAYSIAN FEMALE HEALTH CONSUMERS OF THE CHINESE ETHNIC ACTIVELY SEEK OUT CANCER RELATED INFORMATION?

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DO MALAYSIAN FEMALE HEALTH CONSUMERS OF THE CHINESE ETHNIC ACTIVELY SEEK OUT CANCER RELATED INFORMATION?

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

The work described in this thesis, entitled

“Do Malaysian Female Health Consumers of the Chinese Ethnic Actively Seek Out Cancer Related Information?”

is to best if the author’s knowledge that of the author, except

where due reference is made.

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Date Submitted

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'ABSTRACT

(Cancer is a significant public health issues worldwide. In Malaysia, the cancer cases expand proportionately and breast cancer is the most common one. The Chinese women were found recorded the highest breast cancer incidences compared to other ethnics. In the literature, there has been a growing research about capitalizing the power of knowledge and information about cancer to educate the public to reduce cancer threat. Many studies suggested motivating individuals to seek cancer information actively is a pivotal component in cancer prevention efforts.)

Little attention has been focused on the cancer information seeking behavior among the Malaysian health consumers. Realizing this deficiency, this study investigated the active cancer information seeking behavior in the context of Chinese female health consumers as well as to determine the relationship between intrapersonal factors and the adoption of the studied behavior. Six intrapersonal factors adopted from Comprehensive Model of Information Seeking (CMIS) were proposed to have positive relationship with the adoption of active cancer information seeking behavior among the Chinese females, these factors were perceived susceptibility to cancer (SUS), perceived severity of cancer (SEV), perceived salience of cancer information (SAL), perceived self-efficacy (SE), perceived response efficacy (RE) and cancer worry (CW). 268 of Chinese females from Kuching urban areas were participated in the study. The survey method of questionnaire was used to collect data. Descriptive analysis, factor analysis and point-biserial correlation analysis were used to analyze data.

Overall, the outcomes of the study revealed about half of the total respondents have ever sought for cancer information actively (51%). The study findings revealed younger
people, higher educated and higher household income respondents were more likely to be active seekers. Further, respondents who had ever heard of cancer, involved cancer-related medical checkup or cancer screening programme, having personal history of cancer or their close one suffered cancer were more likely to be active seekers. The statistical analysis shown that SE ($r_{pb} = 0.328$) was having strongest positive relationship with the adoption of active cancer information seeking behavior among the respondents. SUS ($r_{pb} = 0.105$), SAL ($r_{pb} = 0.246$), and RE ($r_{pb} = 0.140$) were found to have weak to moderate positive relationship, whereas, SEV and CW were found to have no relationship ($r_{pb} = 0$) with the adoption of active cancer information seeking behavior among the respondents.

Moreover, the study identified printed media (newspapers and magazines) and interpersonal networks (friends, coworkers, family members, and healthcare providers) were the major sources for respondents to obtain cancer information, whereas television and radio were the useful sources to broadcast cancer information to the public. The study also revealed the major barriers inhibit respondents from seeking cancer information were mainly due to cancer information is hard to understand, feel worry and stress to know about cancer, and lack of interest in cancer issues. At sum, the outcomes of this research can benefit the health campaigners, relevant healthcare agencies, as well as government to formulate best strategies to motivate the adoption of active cancer information seeking behavior among Chinese female health consumers as well as facilitate the dissemination of cancer information effectively.
ABSTRAK

Penyakit kanser merupakan salah satu isu kesihatan awam yang umum di seluruh dunia. Kes kanser telah meningkat secara berterusan di Malaysia dan penyakit kanser payudara merupakan penyakit yang paling umum antara pelbagai jenis kanser yang lain. Wanita berbangsa Cina yang menghidapi kanser payudara telah mencatatkan rekod tertinggi di Malaysia antara golongan etnik yang lain. Dalam kesusasteraan, penyelidikan tentang memanfaatkan kuasa ilmu dan maklumat kanser untuk mendidikan orang awam dalam mengurangkan ancaman kanser semakin meningkat. Menurut kajian lain, memotivaskan individu untuk mencari maklumat kanser dengan aktif merupakan komponen yang paling penting dalam usaha pencegahan penyakit kanser.

Maklumat kanser merupakan tumpuan yang paling kurang dalam kalangan pengguna Malaysia. Menyadari kekurangan ini, kajian telah dijalankan untuk menyiasat keaktifan wanita Cina dalam usaha mencari maklumat kanser serta mengaji the hubungan antara faktor-faktor intrapersona dengan tingkah laku yang dikaji. Enam factor intrapersona dari model komprehensif pencarian maklumat (CMIS) dicadangkan mempunyai hubungan positif dalam mempengaruhi keaktifan golongan wanita Cina dalam usaha pencarian maklumat kanser telah dicadangkan iaitu: tanggapan kecenderungan menghidapi kanser (SUS), tanggapan keterukan kanser (SEV), tanggapan kepentingan maklumat kanser (SAL), tanggapan keberkesanan diri (SE), tanggapan keberkesanan sambutan (RE), dan kerisauan kanser (CW). Seramai 268 orang wanita cina di bandaraya Kuching telah menyertai kajian ini. Borang soal selidik digunakan sebagai kaedah untuk mengumpul data. Analisis deskriptif, analisis faktor, dan analisis titik-biserial korelasi telah digunakan untuk menganalisis data.
Secara keseluruhannya, kajian ini telah menunjukkan bahawa melebihi separuh (51%) daripada jumlah responden pernah mencari maklumat kanser secara aktif. Penemuan hasil kajian telah menunjukkan bahawa golongan muda, golongan berpendidikan tinggi, dan golongan berpendapatan tinggi merupakan golongan pencari maklumat kanser yang aktif. Tambahan pula, responden yang mencari maklumat kanser secara aktif merupakan mereka yang pernah mendengari tentang kanser, pernah menjalani pemeriksaan kesihatan dan program saringan kanser, dan juga yang mempunyai pengalaman penghidapan kanser diri sendiri atau saudara terdekat. Analisis statistik juga menunjukkan bahawa SE \( (r_{pb}=0.328) \) merupakan faktor yang mempunyai hubungan positif yang terkuat. SUS \( (r_{pb}=0.105) \), SAL \( (r_{pb}=0.246) \), dan RE \( (r_{pb}=0.140) \) menunjukkan pengaruh positif, manakala SEV dan CW telah didapati tidak mempunyai hubungan \( (r_{pb}=0) \) dengan keaktifan dalam usaha mencari maklumat kanser di kalangan responden.

Kajian ini juga mengenalpasti bahawa media cetak seperti suratkhabar dan majalah, kawan, rakan sekerja, ahli keluarga, dan pembekal kesihatan merupakan sumber utama untuk responden mendapatkan maklumat kanser, manakala televisyen dan radio berguna dalam penyiaran maklumat kanser kepada orang awam. Kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa maklumat kanser susah difahami, berasa risau dan tertekan jika mengetahui kanser, dan kurang minat dalam isu kanser telah menghalang responden daripada mencari maklumat kanser. Hasil daripada kajian tersebut amat memanfaatkan pekempen kesihatan, agensi kesihatan dan juga kerajaan untuk merumuskan strategi yang terbaik untuk memotivasi golongan wanita cina dalam usaha mencari maklumat secara aktif dan memudahkan penyebaran maklumat mengenai kesan-kesan kanser.
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<td>Acquired immune deficiency syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASR</td>
<td>Age standardized rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMIS</td>
<td>Comprehensive Model of Information Seeking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Crude incidence rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW</td>
<td>Cancer worry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRO</td>
<td>Department of Radiotherapy, Oncology and Palliative care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPPM</td>
<td>Extended parallel process model</td>
</tr>
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<td>HBM</td>
<td>Health belief model</td>
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<tr>
<td>HINTS</td>
<td>Health Information National Trends Survey</td>
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<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human immunodeficiency virus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IARC</td>
<td>International Agency for Research on Cancer</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-governmental organizations</td>
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<td>NPC</td>
<td>Nasopharyngeal cancer</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMT</td>
<td>Protection motivation theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>Perceived response efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAL</td>
<td>Perceived salience of cancer information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Perceived self-efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEV</td>
<td>Perceived severity of cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STDs</td>
<td>Sexually transmitted diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUS</td>
<td>Perceived susceptibility to cancer</td>
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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTORY

1.1 Introduction

Cancer has become a global epidemic for decades. It can spread rapidly and causes death if not detected at early stage. One in eight deaths is due to cancer (American Cancer Society, 2011). It was reported that cancer causes more deaths than AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria (American Cancer Society, 2011).

In Malaysia, there have been a growing number of cancer cases. According to the report by National Cancer Registry (NCR) published in 2011, 18,219 new cancer incidences were diagnosed in 2007 (Omar & Tamin, 2011). The cancer sufferers comprised of 8,123 males (44.6%) and 10,096 females (55.4%). The report stated that the crude incidence rate\(^1\) (CR) for males is 63.6 cases per 100,000 population, and 80.9 cases per 100,000 for females. According to Malaysia Cancer Statistic 2007, the most common cancer incidences are breast cancer (18.1%), colorectal cancer (12.3%), and lung cancer (10.2%). The remaining types of cancers are nasopharynx cancer (5.2%), cervix uteri cancer (4.6%), ovary cancer (3.6%), and others (Omar & Tamin, 2011). In the context of Malaysian female, breast cancer among others (such as cervix uteri cancer and ovary cancer) is the biggest threat. The alarming figure of Malaysian women who have been diagnosed with cancer has elevated serious concerns at the national level.

\(^1\) Crude incidence rate (CR) is the number of new cancer cases (incidence cases) observed in the population during a defined period divided by the number of population at risk in the same period. It is usually expressed per 100,000.
In the literature, there has been a growing research about capitalizing the power of knowledge and information about cancer to educate the public. More explicitly, effective dissemination of cancer related information could help health consumers to have awareness about the importance of undergoing cancer-screening program and practicing healthy lifestyle. The earlier cancer diagnosis is very vital, as treatment is typically more effective in the early stages, which also improve the likelihood of survival. In addition, through information and knowledge about cancer, health consumers can make an informed decision about choices and best possible treatment for cancer.

Further, in the context of cancer prevention, many studies suggest that motivating individuals to seek cancer information actively should be an important component in any cancer prevention efforts or campaigns (Sullivan & Finney, 2009). Evidences from the large scale of public health campaigns have shown that information seeking is an important element in health decision making and can lead to long-term positive health outcomes (Johnson, 1997). In addition, since health consumerism movement has placed the responsibility of decision making in the hands of individuals, the role of information seeking concerning cancer issues is even more important and must be taken seriously.

In the Malaysian context, serious research about cancer information seeking behavior among the Malaysian health consumers is still lacking. This study attempts to respond to this gap. It investigates the cancer information seeking behavior in the context of Chinese female health consumers. In year 2003 to 2005, the highest breast cancer sufferer in Malaysia is from Chinese female ethnics (Dahlui et al., 2011).
1.2 Problem Statement

The public and private institutions including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been carrying out many cancer awareness and prevention campaigns and programs to raise public awareness about cancer. In general, health campaigns aim to educate public about cancer, promote health behaviors adoption such as vaccination for prevention, cancer screening for early cancer diagnosis, as well as information seeking behavior for better understanding of diseases (National Cancer Institute, 2002).

Encouraging health consumers to seek cancer information is very important, as it will help them to understand, detect as well as to prevent the development of cancer disease at the early stage. According to Moldovan (2009), despite numerous efforts have been implemented to enhance cancer knowledge and awareness, yet, the cancer incidence is still rather high and people continue to have limited cancer knowledge, hold inaccurate risk perception and engage in unhealthy behavior.

In Malaysia, the situation is just the same. The cancer incidence is on the rise and nearly 60,000 of new cancer cases were reported over a two-year period in 2006 to 2007, with breast cancer remains as biggest threat (Omar, Ali, & Tamin, 2006; Omar & Tamin, 2011). The increasing number of Malaysian women who diagnosed with cancer has afflicted the field of cancer study (Dahlui et al., 2011). Despite various campaigns have been carried out (Dahlui et al., 2011; Chandra, 2012), the cancer awareness among women is still low (LPPKN, 2012). Further, low knowledge of cancer and take it easy attitude has been identified as the causes of increased cancer deaths among women (LPPKN, 2012). In spite of increasing efforts have been
committed to make cancer information widely available to the public, the problem of low cancer knowledge implied not all health consumers are always motivated to seek cancer information on their own. There also have evidence showing that even people who diagnosed with cancer do not always actively seek information about their disease and for those who do not have cancer, the rate of seeking cancer related information is even lower (Turner et al., 2006).

In Malaysia, little attention has been focused on the cancer information seeking behavior among the Malaysian health consumers. Since cancer information seeking behavior is essential in cancer prevention efforts (Sullivan & Finney, 2009), current study attempts to explore the active cancer information seeking pattern in the context of urban Chinese female health consumers. This study particularly interested in urban Chinese female population as they have recorded highest cancer cases compared to other ethnics of women in Malaysia (Dahlui et al., 2011).

Further, some people actively seek for cancer information to protect themselves against cancer threat, while some people avoid the cancer information, as it is a distressing health topic (Turner et al., 2006). According to Case (2005), individuals actively seek information underlies much of the psychological aspect or internal state. Thus, this study also aims to determine the relationship between the intrapersonal factors and the adoption of active cancer information seeking behavior of the urban Chinese female health consumers.
1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to examine the active information seeking behavior of urban Chinese female health consumers with regard to cancer information. The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify cancer information seeking patterns of the urban Chinese female health consumers by profiling them with regard to their active cancer information seeking behavior.
2. To identify and determine relationship between intrapersonal factors and the active cancer information seeking behavior of the urban Chinese female health consumers.
3. To identify the sources which urban Chinese female health consumers encounter and obtain cancer information.
4. To identify the barriers that inhibit the urban Chinese female health consumers from seeking cancer information.
5. To propose recommendations for future needs and practices in order to facilitate health promotion campaigns.

1.4 Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1) What are the characteristics of the active cancer information seeker among the urban Chinese female health consumers?
2) What is the relationship between intrapersonal factors and the active cancer information seeking behavior of the urban Chinese female health consumers?
a. Salience variables: What is the relationship between perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, and perceived salience of cancer information, and the active cancer information seeking behavior of the urban Chinese female health consumers?

b. Belief variables: What is the relationship between perceived self-efficacy and perceived response efficacy, and the active cancer information seeking behavior of the urban Chinese female health consumers?

c. Emotion variable: What is the relationship between cancer worry and the active cancer information seeking behavior of the urban Chinese female health consumers?

3) What are the sources do urban Chinese female health consumers encounter and obtain cancer information?

What are the barriers that inhibit the urban Chinese female health consumers from seeking cancer information?

5) What is the recommendation for stimulating the urban Chinese female health consumers to engage in active cancer information seeking?

1.5 Importance of Study

The importance of this study can be framed in four areas as follows:

Firstly, this study will identify the cancer information seeking patterns of the Malaysian Chinese female health consumers. Women play an important social role in the community and most of them serve as dual roles of being information seekers as well as information givers. Through understanding their information seeking patterns,