

# Health Information-Seeking Behavior among U.S.-born, Korean-born, and Immigrant Korean Mothers

Hanseul Stephanie Lee

Myongji University, Seoul, Republic of Korea

hslee@mju.ac.kr

## ABSTRACT

Historically, mothers have been noted as active health information seekers, reflecting their roles as health managers and caregivers for their family members. Previous studies have focused on health information behavior among mothers in native populations or mothers of children with specific diagnoses. Using Wilson's (1997) information-seeking model, this study aimed to uncover patterns in information-seeking behavior among U.S.-born, Korean-born, and immigrant Korean mothers of children without a specific diagnosis.

Mixed research methods were used to investigate health information seeking behavioral differences, which may have been affected by individual and source characteristics. Three distinctive groups of mothers were studied: (a) American mothers born in and living in the U.S., (b) Korean mothers born in and living in Korea, and (c) Korean mothers born in Korea who immigrated to the U.S. Online surveys were completed by 851 mothers, and supplementary in-depth interviews with 24 mothers were conducted and analyzed.

Results revealed that there were noticeable differences among the three groups of mothers' source preferences and frequency of using each source. For instance, although the World Wide Web was the most frequently used health information source among all three groups of mothers, the U.S.-born mothers preferred doctors and nurses the most for their information needs. Furthermore, there were many similarities between immigrant Korean mothers living in the U.S. and Korean mothers who reside in Korea concerning health information-seeking behavior. Findings have potential contributions. First, to the practice, understanding the unique health information-seeking behavior of specific ethnicities and nationalities is important for information professionals who guide them to trustworthy sources. Second, in the future research, this research may be possibly expanded to examine other ethnicities' health information-seeking behavior in the U.S. and beyond other countries with large immigrant populations.

## ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

information seeking; information use; specific populations; sociology of information; social media

## AUTHOR KEYWORDS

health information; immigrants; mixed research methods; mothers