Online Consumer Reviews of Smoking Cessation Products: Implications for Public Health

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Background

- **25%** of Internet users have read online reviews of drugs or medical treatments
- **16%** of Internet users have read ranking or reviews of doctors
- **15%** of Internet users have read rankings/reviews of hospitals
- Advice from peers is becoming “a significant source of health information in the U.S.” (Fox, 2011).
- Consumer reviews are a type of electronic word of mouth (eWOM)

Method

**Independent Variables**
- Valence
- Extremity
- Appeal

**Dependent Variables**
- Attitude to quitting smoking
- Perceived behavioral control

Hypotheses/RQs

- **H1** Positive messages → positive Aqs and negative messages → negative Aqs.
- **RQ1a** How does extremity influence Aqs?
- **RQ1b** How does message appeal influence Aqs?
- **H2** Positive messages → high PBC and negative messages → low PBC.
- **RQ2a** How does extremity influence PBC toward quitting smoking?
- **RQ2b** How does appeal influence PBC toward quitting smoking?

Results

- **H1** Main effect of valence on Aqs \((F(1, 117) = 10.007, p = .002, A_{qs+} = 5.444, A_{qs-} = 5.221 (p = .002) \Rightarrow \text{supported partially})
- **H2** Main effect of valence on PBC \((F(1, 134) = 11.764, p = .001, PBC_+ = 5.601, PBC_- = 5.417 (p = .001) \Rightarrow \text{supported})

Implications

Findings show potential for the promotion of smoking cessation through eWOM, because

- health eWOM can empower smokers to quit
- eWOM has low cost of implementation
- eWOM is easy to maintain
- health eWOM is effective for wide audiences