

## **TITLE: COMPUTER SELF-EFFICACY OF PATIENTS IN URBAN HEALTH CENTERS FOR HEALTH EDUCATION**

**BACKGROUND**—Internet-based health information and communication is increasingly popular, yet there is a lack of studies reporting on Internet use of patients in public urban health centers. It is not clear if these patients are having adequate computer skills, interest, and utilization of the health information online for their health.

**OBJECTIVE**—My research study examined the associations between surveyed patients' attributes, computer self-efficacy, and their use of Internet-based health information. Guided by Social Cognitive theory, this quantitative cross-sectional study adopted a 30 question self-administered survey (in English, Spanish, or Chinese) in Northern California (2013).

**METHODS**—My research team distributed the survey in 3 public health outpatient centers during a 3 month period, from August to October, 2013. Both verbal and written consent was obtained for each respondent. Patients who participated were from 18 years old to 86 years old, and were able to do the survey on their own, while waiting for their doctors in the waiting room area.

**RESULTS**—455 patients participated in the study. Their median age was 46.5 years old. A significant difference was detected between computer self-efficacy scores of the two groups: those who have or have not accessed the Internet for health information ( $U = 6122.0, Z = 4.831, p < .001, r = .27$ ). Education level is positively related to having accessed the Internet  $\chi^2 = (4, N = 275) = 42.838, p < .001$ , but not with gender or economic level. Having perceived benefits of Internet-based health information was significantly related to having accessed the Internet for health information  $r(241) = .150, p < .05$ . Increasing age was negatively correlated with computer self-efficacy score ( $-.344, p < .01$ ).

**Conclusion**—There is a large percentage of patients in public health centers who are not yet capable to access health information online, nor do they perceive the benefits of Internet-based health information. Implications for social change include considerations needed for health planners to consider the diverse needs and potentials of patients in these health centers.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Describe individual and community needs for health education
- Develop an awareness of the computer self-efficacy skills for Internet-based health information and their perceived benefits.
- Determine systemic modalities to increase adaptations of Internet-based health education and disease support relevant to patients of public health centers

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