

ASSESSING ELECTRONIC HEALTH LITERACY IN MUAR: SURVEY IN BANDAR MAHARANI AND PARIT JAWA

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

Health information online had been accessible since the emergence of the internet. People in Muar, Johor, Malaysia has easy and affordable access to internet resources, therefore, electronic health (eHealth) literacy is important to assess and identify health information online.

Objective

The aim of this study was to investigate eHealth literacy levels across internet users in Muar between 2 different locations (Bandar Maharani and Parit Jawa) and compare the eHEALS score between them.

Methods

A survey was used to collect data about related information. The eHealth literacy scale (eHEALS) was measured using a 5-point Likert scale. An independent-samples t-test was used to determine statistical significance between eHEALS score against locations (urban and rural). Also, frequency was tabulated for types and reasons seeking health information online along with types of social media channels for accessing online health information.

Results

As a result, it was shown that people in Bandar Maharani had higher eHEALS score (29.21) compared to those in Parit Jawa (24.26). The age group of 26-35 in both locations demonstrated the highest eHEALS frequency (n=50, n=57) compared with other age groups.

Conclusions

It was shown that people in Bandar Maharani had more confidence in their ability to access health information online compared to those in Parit Jawa. Considering this finding, the government should increase efforts to promote online health information seeking to people in rural areas such as Parit Jawa to improve their understanding towards health literacy.

Keywords: eHEALS; eHealth literacy; electronic health information; digital divide; electronic resources.