

Coping with Information Poverty: Social Adjustment and Cultural Adaptation in International Students' Health Information Seeking

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ABSTRACT

Background

Information poverty occurs due to limited access to information as well as from social, cultural, and psychological factors (Chatman, 1996; Dervin, 1994). International students face multiple information challenges when moving to a new country and adjusting to a new social and cultural environment (Hertzum & Hyldegard, 2019; Sin & Kim, 2013). In particular, they may face challenges when seeking health information (Pan & Rubenstein, 2024). Because they are in an unfamiliar setting without familiar support systems, there is the potential to experience information poverty.

Objective

Previous research has explored international students' health information behavior patterns and identified barriers in accessing and utilizing health information (Pan & Rubenstein, 2024). This study aims to examine the health information poverty they may experience and assess whether social adjustment and cultural adaptation exacerbate or mitigate this issue as well as how these factors influence international students' health information behaviors.

Methods

This study will use qualitative research methods and apply Chatman's (1996) information poverty theory. Data collection is expected to be completed by May 2025, with data analysis planned for June and July 2025. Thematic analysis will be used to identify key themes.

Anticipated Results

This study is expected to identify international students' information poverty in their health information seeking and examine how social adjustment and cultural adaptation either facilitate or hinder access to health information.

Conclusion / Implications

This study will provide valuable insights into addressing the problem of health information poverty among international students and help design targeted intervention strategies.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Information seeking; Social justice; Information needs.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

International students; Health information behavior; Information poverty.

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