

# Information sources and changes in health behaviour in Japan: a cross-sectional online survey

Hironobu Nonomura, Kyoko Imamura

## Abstract

**Background:** Although health-related information has been assumed to promote consumers' health behaviour, there is insufficient evidence to define effective methods of health promotion in Japan. In order to change consumers' health behaviour, it is important to identify potential promoters. This study aims to explore various sources of information from the viewpoint of promoting health behaviour in Japan based on the association between consumers' health information seeking behaviour and the changes in health behaviour.

**Methods:** We conducted a cross-sectional web-based questionnaire survey using the platform "Seikatsu-Kojo web" from 5 February 2018 to 6 March 2018. We examined health information seeking behaviour, changes in health behaviour in the preceding year, health-related factors (under medical treatment, level of health consciousness), and socio-demographic factors (age and sex). Multivariable logistic regression analysis was conducted to determine the association between health information seeking behaviour and the change in health behaviour. Further analysis was conducted using multivariable logistic regression to find the association between online health information seeking behaviour and the change in health behaviour.

**Results:** We obtained responses from a total of 2388 respondents, 2366 of which were analysed. Consulting pharmacists was found to be associated with using health products (OR: 2.01,  $p = 0.002$ ), along with reducing alcohol consumption (OR: 2.27,  $p < 0.001$ ) and tobacco cessation (OR: 2.91,  $p < 0.001$ ). Consulting doctors, on the other hand, was associated with health screening only (OR: 1.58,  $p = 0.001$ ). The choice of the internet was associated with increased odds of improving sleep habits (OR: 1.37,  $p = 0.001$ ), improving dietary habits (OR: 1.47,  $p < 0.001$ ), using health products (OR: 2.90,  $p < 0.001$ ) and reducing alcohol consumption (OR: 1.63,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Conclusions:** This study showed that health information seeking behaviour was associated with various health behaviours. Although seeking via the internet is common, healthcare providers such as pharmacists are expected to play a role in health promotion. Further studies are required to explore the role played by information sources with respect to health care promotion in Japan.

**[Keywords]** 健康行動、ヘルスコミュニケーション、医療従事者、インターネット、web調査  
health behaviour, health communication, healthcare provider, online sources, a web-based survey