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Kirabo Nanyanzi MPH

Advisor(s): Rose Calixte Ph.D.

Co-author(s):

Smartphone Ownership and Health-Related Internet Use Among Internet Users: An Analysis of the Health Information National Trends Survey 6 (HINTS 6).

This study explores the relationship between smartphone ownership and internet-based health information-seeking behaviors among adults who use the internet in the United States. With internet usage increasingly becoming a primary means of accessing health-related information, understanding the factors that influence online health information-seeking behaviors is crucial. Using data from the Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS) 2022 cycle, this study examines the association between smartphone ownership and using the internet for health or medical needs, while considering demographic and socioeconomic factors as potential confounders. Logistic regression models were employed to analyze the data, revealing significant associations between smartphone ownership and internet health information-seeking behaviors, after adjusting for covariates such as age, race/ethnicity, birth gender, and language (OR: 2.6, 95% CI: 1.3-5.2). Additionally, females, those with higher incomes, and individuals with greater confidence in using the internet for health purposes are more likely to engage in online health information seeking. Further research using longitudinal approaches and qualitative methods could offer deeper insights into the dynamics of digital health behavior and literacy over time.