In this HINTS Brief, we highlight findings from Cancer Communication, a comprehensive U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) report on data from HINTS 2003 and HINTS 2005.
HINTS Briefs provide a snapshot of noteworthy, data-driven research findings. They introduce population-level estimates for specific questions in the survey and summarize significant research findings that are a result of analyzing how sociodemographic variables influence specific outcomes. The Briefs are intended to highlight top-level findings derived from analyses reported in other venues, and are not meant to be comprehensive reports.

Experiences with Information Seeking (2003 and 2005)

Based on the results of your search for information on cancer from all sources, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Would you say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?

Survey Year

- Information was hard to understand
- Concerned about the quality of the information
- Felt frustrated during your search
- It took a lot of effort
- Information quality during your last search for cancer information
- Cancer information took a lot of effort
- Concerned about the quality of the information during your last search for cancer information
- Felt frustrated during your last search for cancer information
- In 2005, 23.7% of respondents agreed.
- In 2003, 37.7% of respondents agreed.
- In 2005, 47.5% of respondents agreed.
- In 2003, 26.7% of respondents agreed.
- In 2005, 55.4% of females and 41.5% of males sought cancer information.
- In 2003, 53.1% of females and 36.1% of males sought cancer information.
- Females reported having ever sought cancer information more frequently than males in 2003 and 2005.
- Information seeking was reported least often by respondents aged 80 or older in 2003 (27.3%) and 2005 (29.6%).
- Information seeking was reported most frequently among Hispanic “other” respondents classified as non-Hispanic “other” sought cancer information.
- Information seeking was reported most frequently among participants classified as non-Hispanic “other” sought cancer information.
- Information seeking was reported least often by respondents aged 80 or older in 2003 (27.3%) and 2005 (29.6%).
- Information seeking was reported most frequently among Hispanic “other” respondents classified as non-Hispanic “other” sought cancer information.
- Information seeking was reported most frequently among participants classified as non-Hispanic “other” sought cancer information.

How Can This Inform Your Work?

The mounting prominence and importance of health communication, coupled with rapid changes in communication technology, underscore the importance of HINTS data. Practitioners, researchers, and policy makers in many disciplines and practice settings may use HINTS data to support their work:

- Social scientists can use the data to refine theories of health communication in the information age, and to offer data-driven recommendations to reduce the cancer burden.
- Program planners can use the data to discern barriers to health communication strategies.
- Survey researchers can use the data to understand how adults use different communication channels to obtain health and cancer information.
- Program planners can use the data to discern barriers to health information usage across populations, and to inform more effective communication strategies.

Cancer Information Seeking:

Differences by Age, Race, and Gender

Age

Cancer information seeking varied significantly by age in both 2003 and 2005. During both survey years, cancer information seeking was reported most frequently among respondents aged 50-64 (51.6% in 2003 and 55.2% in 2005). Information seeking was reported least often by respondents aged 80 or older in 2003 (27.3%) and 2005 (29.6%).

Race/Ethnicity

Significant differences in cancer information seeking by race/ethnicity were observed in 2003 and 2005. White, non-Hispanic respondents reported having ever sought cancer information more frequently than other racial/ethnic groups in 2003 (49.0%) and 2005 (54.6%). Information seeking was lowest among Hispanic respondents in 2003 (26.5%) and 2005 (25.1%). In 2003, 46.8% of Black, non-Hispanic respondents sought cancer information. In 2003, 46.6% of respondents classified as non-Hispanic “other” sought cancer information; in 2005, 49.0% of respondents classified as non-Hispanic “other” sought cancer information.

Gender

Cancer information seeking varied significantly by gender in 2003 and 2005. Females reported having ever sought cancer information more frequently than males in 2003 and 2005. In 2003, 33.1% of females and 36.1% of males sought cancer information; in 2005, 55.4% of females and 41.5% of males sought cancer information.

For More Information on Cancer

- Call the NCI Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)
- Visit http://cancer.gov
- Order NCI publications at http://www.cancer.gov/publications

References Used in This HINTS Brief


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