

ABSTRACT

With over 185 million internet users in Indonesia, internet access has significantly influenced how health students seek health-related information. The internet has become a primary tool for accessing knowledge about medicine and diseases, including the common cold. This study aims to explore the characteristics of individuals who seek information online related to common cold and its medicine, as well as the specific types of information they look for.

A descriptive quantitative approach was employed, utilizing a cross-sectional design. The study involved 98 undergraduate and professional students of health cluster Universitas Gadjah Mada students from the Faculty of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing (FK-KMK), Dentistry, and Pharmacy at Universitas Gadjah Mada, selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed descriptively using SPSS software to evaluate the demographic characteristics and experiences on common cold, preferred platforms, frequency internet use for health, types of health information searched, and factors contributing to online searching.

The results show that most respondents were female (69.4%), aged between 21–23 years (67.4%), and from the Faculty of Pharmacy (53.1%). Regarding education level, the majority were bachelor's degree students (82.7%). Monthly spending predominantly ranged between Rp. 1,000,000 and Rp. 2,000,000 (54.1%). In terms of marital status, the vast majority of respondents were single (98%). Their health status was predominantly good (53%). Halodoc was identified as the most frequently accessed platform (63.3%), with general health topics being the most searched (mean score 3.53, SD = 0.66). For common cold-related information, most students searched for both medicine and disease information (72.4%). The top-searched category for medicine was the names of medicines (21.8%), while the most common search for disease-related information focused on the causes of the disease (22.6%). The primary drivers for using the internet to search for health information were ease of access (mean 3.78, SD = 0.42) and free availability (mean 3.78, SD = 0.49). The lowest-rated reason for online searching was a preference for consulting healthcare professionals over searching online (mean 2.08, SD = 0.97).

This study highlights the increasing reliance on internet-based health resources among students and underscores the importance of improving the credibility and accessibility of online platforms. These findings can provide valuable insights for pharmaceutical companies to optimize their marketing strategies for common cold treatments and for governments to design effective health communication strategies on preferred websites.

Keywords: Internet use, Health information, Common cold, Medicine Searched, Health Cluster, Online platforms, Health Communication