

## ABSTRACT

### COLLEGE STUDENTS' USE OF THE INTERNET FOR HEALTH-RELATED PURPOSES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

This study explored college students' online activities at health Web sites, their perceptions of the quality and accuracy of Internet medical information, and their concerns about Internet privacy and security. The research took place at California State University, Fresno, during the Fall 2002 semester with 136 students. The study found that 67% of the sampled students had sought health information on the Internet; 12% had used Internet medical consultations services; 7% had bought pharmaceutical products online; 2% had joined Internet health support groups; 7% percent had used e-mail to communicate with healthcare providers; 18% had sought second opinions online; 35% expressed serious concern about the accuracy of health information posted on the Web; and 53% were concerned about the privacy and security of personal information posted on the Web. Gender and age were identified as influential in some of the issues raised in the research.

Nsele Mengi Nsuangani  
August 2003