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PERSONALITY AND CREDIBILITY EVALUATION: ONLINE HEALTH INFORMATION FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF EXPERT USERS

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Regarding the high importance of credibility evaluation of health information online in every day and career life, the current research aimed to explore how expert users including students and faculty members evaluate health information on the web especially with regard to their personality trait of conscientiousness. By considering the extensive body of literature and research methodologies, a random sample including 148 students and faculty members located at the two faculties of Medicine Sciences and Nursing and Midwife at the Tehran University of Medical Sciences was the population of the study. Two validated questionnaires related to credibility and conscientiousness was distributed among the participants. Gathered data were then analyzed by SPSS software. Data analysis showed that there existed some problems in evaluating the credibility of online health information and quick retrieval. About half of the participants evaluate web health information as credible often and very often. Most important quality assessment criteria were objectivity, currency, and authority. There was a significant correlation between conscientiousness and credibility assessment of the students and faculty members. There appears a change in trust to information found accord with the change in conscientiousness levels. There was no significant correlation between conscientiousness and trust to information among ill people. Quality and credibility were identified as most important problems in assessing health information on the web. There is a significant and meaningful correlation between conscientiousness and trust or mistrust to health information available via the web.

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