

Recruitment of Oncology Nurses for Internet Research: Issues and Future Directions

Eun-Ok Im, PhD, MPH, RN, CNS, FAAN, Wonshik Chee, PhD,
Hyun Ju Lim, MSN, RN, Melinda Bender, MSN, RN, Hsiu-Min Tsai, PhD, RN,
Soon-Ok Yang, PhD, RN, and Hungsa Lee, PhD, RN

Purpose/Objectives: To provide future directions for Internet research based on issues raised during the recruitment process of an Internet survey of oncology nurses.

Data Sources: Throughout the research process, the research staff recorded issues as they arose and wrote memos regarding recruitment issues and possible reasons for the issues. Weekly group discussions were conducted, and written records of the discussions were kept. The written memos and records were reviewed, and the content was analyzed.

Data Synthesis: The recruitment issues included flexibility required, mutual trust, changing Internet dynamics, and potential selection bias.

Conclusions: As the issues indicated, recruiting nurses for the study only through the Internet did not work well.

Implications for Nursing: For future Internet research, the authors suggest using multiple Internet and real settings for recruitment, a variety of strategies, the quota sampling method, and creative motivation strategies.

Key Points . . .

- ▶ Internet researchers' strategies to recruit oncology nurses need to be flexible, and mutual trust is an important factor in the recruitment process.
- ▶ Internet researchers should consider the changing dynamics of the Internet.
- ▶ Potential selection bias is a critical issue that Internet researchers need to consider throughout the research process.

process of an Internet survey of oncology nurses. In this article, for the convenience of discussion, the *Internet* means the World Wide Web only, and *oncology nurses* mean RNs working with patients with cancer.

The Study

The purpose of the Internet intervention study that highlighted the recruitment issues to be discussed was to refine and evaluate a standardized decision support computer program (DSCP) by Im and Chee (2003a) that could be used by nurses as an assessment support tool for dealing effectively with gender and ethnic differences in cancer pain experiences. Fuzzy logic (Zadeh, 1965, 1990) was used as a theoretical basis to

Eun-Ok Im, PhD, MPH, RN, CNS, FAAN, is an associate professor in the School of Nursing, Wonshik Chee, PhD, is a research assistant professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Hyun Ju Lim, MSN, RN, is a doctoral student in the School of Nursing, and Melinda Bender, MSN, RN, is a doctoral student in the School of Nursing, all at the University of Texas at Austin; Hsiu-Min Tsai, PhD, RN, is an associate professor at Chang Gung University Institute of Technology in Kwei-Shan Tao-Yuan, Taiwan; and Soon-Ok Yang, PhD, RN, is an associate professor in the Division of Nursing Science at Hallym University, and Hungsa Lee, PhD, RN, is an assistant professor in the Department of Nursing at Daebul University, both in Korea. This article describes part of a larger study that was funded by an ONS Foundation/Genentech Outcome Research Grant II. (Submitted January 2005. Accepted for publication March 16, 2005.)

Digital Object Identifier: 10.1188/06.ONF.249-254

Recruiting nurses in the current healthcare environment is more challenging than ever (Kalisch, 2003; Smart & Kotzer, 2003). With nurse-recruitment problems for healthcare systems in general, difficulties recruiting nurses for research projects also have been reported (Barriball & While, 1999). Nurses have been instrumental in recruiting participants for research projects (Donovan et al., 2003; Isaacman & Reynolds, 1996), but they usually are unwilling to participate in research projects. Many factors influencing their participation in research have been postulated (Barriball & While).

Since the 1990s, with advances in Internet technologies and an increasing number of Internet users, the Internet has become an important research setting and data-collection method (Im & Chee, 2003b; Wilmoth, 1995). Wilmoth posited that the Internet can be a viable alternative for subject recruitment through the use of online bulletin boards and support groups for many health-related issues. However, much information regarding the use of computer and Internet technologies in research is anecdotal, and little research has been conducted related to nurses' use of computer networks (Ehrenberger & Murray, 1998). Therefore, very little is known about the effectiveness of recruitment of nurses for research through the Internet.

The purpose of this article is to provide future directions for Internet research based on issues raised in the recruitment