

Improving Health & Wellbeing Websites: Views of Asian Adolescents

Websites for health & wellbeing

Quality health and wellbeing websites can increase access to health information, 24/7, at no costs to users. Globally, there are over 70,000 health related Google searches every minute.¹ In the Youth19 Rangatahi Smart Survey ('Youth19') of secondary school students,² **98% of Asian participants said that they had access to a device they could use in their own time³ and 65% had looked up health information online.**

Many websites are designed for cultural majority users and/or by adults,⁴ therefore they might not meet the needs of specific groups. In Youth19, following other questions about online resources, we asked **"How could websites or online tools be more useful for you if you were having a hard time?"** Participants could answer in their own words. This brief summarises key themes based on the responses of Asian participants.

In total, 221 Asian young people (approx. 13% of Asian participants in Youth19) made a comment or suggestion on this question other than "I don't know" or equivalent. Of these, 92 participants identified as female; 132 were aged under 16 and 89 were aged 16 or over. We used a general inductive analysis approach⁵ to analyse this data.

Key themes

Asian youth indicated that health and wellbeing websites can be helpful.

They had important comments regarding how these websites could be improved in terms of:

- supporting access by having youth specific sites
- design being clear and privacy being emphasised
- content being practical and connecting users to human support.

These themes are illustrated in Figure 1 and detailed in the following pages.

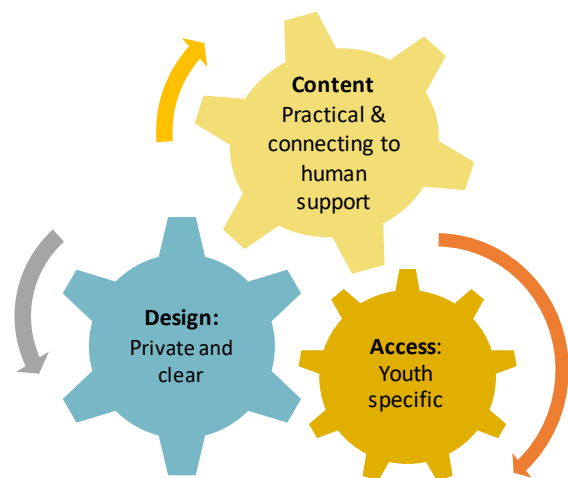


Figure 1: Improving health and wellbeing websites: Asian youth perspectives

Findings

Websites can be helpful

Responses from Asian youth indicated that health and wellbeing websites can be helpful.

“Online tools can be really useful at hard times if you look at stuff that encourages us”

(Asian male, aged 16 or over, Decile 1-3)

“I think they’re fine as is. I find them very useful.”

(Asian female, aged under 16, Decile 4-7)

Improving health and wellbeing websites: Key themes

1. Accessibility

a) Youth specific

Asian youth highlighted the importance of youth focused websites, with youth friendly information, language and design, as well content from young people. Responsive and ‘relatable’ content addressing young people’s needs and experiences was seen as important.

“Relatable content by the youth or from people who are going through or have been through it”

(Asian Female, aged 16 or over, Decile 8-10)

2. Design

a) Private

Anonymity and privacy were strongly emphasised by Asian students. Many commented on how the online environment can be a good place for individuals to seek trustworthy and professional advice while remaining private.

“Have you able to talk to someone without a trace”

(Asian Female, aged under 16, Decile 1- 3)

“Have a trusted website wherein everything people would need (such as information and advice) would be visible”

(Asian Male, aged 16 or over, Decile 1-3)

b) Clear

Complex language and wordy explanations were considered unhelpful. Asian youth emphasised the need for health and wellbeing websites to have clear, to-the-point information and a simple interface.

“Something websites can work on is the use of their words. To make it more simple and something young teens can understand easily without having to ask an adult. And the layout of websites can often confuse people and it drives them away and it doesn’t help answering the question they were looking for.”

(Asian Female, aged under 16, Decile 8-10)

“Making things more simple to understand”

(Asian Female, aged 16 or over, Decile 1-3)

3. Content

a) *Include practical advice and tips*

Several participants commented on the need for websites not just to tell you about mental health but provide practical advice, tips and help.

“HOW to do more positive thoughts”

(Asian Female, aged under 16, Decile 8-10)

*“If the website says you are depressed
THEN HELP US”*

(Asian Male, aged under 16, Decile 8- 10)



b) *Facilitate pathways to human support and connection*

Responses highlighted the importance of websites providing pathways to human support, this included access to trained professionals and connecting online with youth going through similar experiences.

“Have an interactive website where we can talk to actual people privately”

(Asian Female, aged 16 or over, Decile 4-7)

“Feel close to being face to face but remain anonymous”

(Asian Female, aged under 16, Decile 4-7)

“Have some website where you could talk to someone for free (just messaging) or have a private chat to someone online to ask questions.”

(Asian Female, aged under 16, Decile 1-3)

“That I will be able to talk to a trained consultant”

(Asian Female, aged under 16, Decile 1-3)

“Make like chat rooms with youth care people so it could get more personal”

(Asian Female, aged under 16, Decile 1-3)

Method

A general inductive analysis approach⁵ was used to analyse the open-text responses presented in this brief. We first reviewed the responses, grouped like with like to identify different types of responses, then coded and identified the themes presented here.



Youth19

In 2019, researchers from four Universities collaborated to survey over 7700 New Zealand adolescents in 52 Auckland, Northland and Waikato secondary schools. This is Youth19, the latest survey in the Youth2000 series.²

The survey was a representative, high-quality study about the wellbeing of rangatahi/youth. Schools were randomly selected from the region and then Year 9-13 students were randomly selected from each school roll. A diverse sample of students completed the anonymous survey in English or te reo Māori on handheld internet tablets with optional voiceover.

See the full questionnaire and more at www.youth19.ac.nz.

References

¹ ECH Alliance. (2020). Mental health apps are seeing a surge of downloads — but choosing the right one matters. ECH Alliance. Retrieved from: <https://echalliance.com/mental-health-apps-are-seeing-a-surge-of-downloads- but-choosing-the-right-one-matters/>

² Fleming, T., Peiris-John, R., Crengle, S., Archer, D., Sutcliffe, K., Lewycka, S., & Clark, T. (2020). *Youth19 Rangatahi Smart Survey, Initial Findings: Introduction and Methods*. The Youth19 Research Group, The University of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

³ King-Finau, T., Kuresa, B., Archer, D., & Fleming, T. (2021). Youth19 Digital Access Brief. Youth19 and The Adolescent Health Research Group, Auckland and Wellington.

⁴ Fleming, T., Dewhirst, M., Andreae, H., Kafatolu, D., Haase, A., Ormerod, F., Pine, R., Chinn, V., Haenga-O'Brien, A., Da Rocha, M., Sutcliffe, K., O'Brien, K., Szabo, A., Whelan-Turnbull, N., Lucassen, M., & Aspin, C. (2021). *Digital Tools for Mental Health and Wellbeing: Opportunities & Impact. Findings from the Research*. Wellington: The Digital Mental Health Lab, Te Herenga Waka | Victoria University of Wellington.

⁵Thomas D.R. (2006). A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data. *American Journal of Evaluation*. 27(2):237-246. doi:[10.1177/1098214005283748](https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214005283748)

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For more see www.youth19.ac.nz