

Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands
CSC PhD 2015 Project Description

School/Department:	Department of Media and Communication
Project Title:	New Media and Health Communication: A Cross-cultural Perspective
Abstract:	<p>The emergence of new media such as social network sites, mobile phone applications, and online discussion forums, has provided new ways for communication. By the end of 2012, China's Internet population reached 564 million, which brought China's Internet penetration rate to 42.1 percent (Kan, 2013). The prevalence of Internet holds great promises for utilizing new media for more effective health communication. Meanwhile, mobile phones also make the use of new media more accessible and convenient. By January of 2012, mobile phone subscribers in China reached 960 million, according to a report of the Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (CMIIT, 2012). About eight out of every ten people in China own mobile phones. In Western countries such as the Netherlands, the U.S., and Canada, similar trends of increasing number of new media and mobile phone users can also be observed.</p> <p>Following the popular trend of new media and mobile phone applications, health professionals, the general public, government, and NGOs increasingly use new media for health communication (e.g., Zhou, Shi, Mao, Tang, & Zeng, 2012). Based on the data collected in 2008, 61% U.S. adults had the experience of seeking health information online, and 41% of e-patients have read someone else's commentary or experience about health or medical issues on an online news group, website, or blog (Fox, 2009). Health professionals have also designed different mobile applications or internet games for health information dissemination or intervention. Research has shown the potential of games for health education and prevention (Papastergiou, 2009), as Shi and Mao (2011) found weekend television viewing and video gaming are associated with less adolescent smoking. It was also found that specific video game design contributed to preventing type 2 diabetes and obesity among youth (Thompson, Baranowski, Buday, Baranowski, Thompson, Jago, & Griffith, 2010). Our current research on games and new media's role in health communication will contribute to providing practical information for health professionals on how to effectively use different types of new media to promote health (Raessens, Jansz & Schouten, 2013). Research in health communication will also educate the general public to increase their online health literacy and better evaluate and utilize health information on new media.</p> <p>With the globalization of the world, populations become more mobile, thus many societies become more and more diverse with new comers from different cultures. Providing culturally appropriate health promotion</p>

programs and services becomes an urgent issue, and researchers have suggested applying peripheral strategies, evidential strategies, linguistic strategies, constituent-involving strategies, socio-cultural strategies, and cultural targeting and tailoring strategies (Kreuter, Lukwago, Bucholtz, Clark, & Sanders-Thompson, 2002). Meanwhile, the perception and use of new media also differ across different cultural groups, which adds another layer of complexity to health communication through new media (Mao, Qian, & Starosta, 2010). There is a strong need for research taking a cross-cultural comparative approach to understand how new media have been used and can be used for health communication in Western countries such as the Netherlands, the U.S., and Canada, as well as Eastern countries such as China. Findings on the uniqueness and commonalities of using new media for health communication in different cultures could benefit societies for making their health communication programs more culturally appropriate.

References

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	<p>PA: IGI Global.</p> <p>Papastergiou, M. (2009). Exploring the potential of computer and video games for health and physical education: A literature review. <i>Computers & Education</i>, 53(3), 603–622.</p> <p>Raessens, J., Jansz, J., & Schouten, B. (2013). Persuasive gaming. From theory-based design to validation and back. Project Description of NWO Creative Industries research. Retrieved on September 10, 2013, from: www.persuasivegaming.nl</p> <p>Shi, L., & Mao, Y. (2011). Weekend television viewing and video gaming are associated with less adolescent smoking. <i>Journal of Substance Use</i>, 16(2), 109-115. doi: 10.3109/14659891.2011.555056.</p> <p>Thompson, D., Baranowski, T., Buday, R., Baranowski, J., Thompson, V., Jago, R., & Griffith, M. J. (2010). Serious video games for health: Behavioral science guided the development of a serious video game. <i>Simulation & Gaming</i>, 41(4), 587-606. Doi:10.1177/1046878108328087</p> <p>Zhou, H., Shi, L., Mao, Y., Tang, J., & Zeng, Y. (2012). Diffusion of new technology, health services and information after a crisis: A focus group study of the Sichuan “5.12” earthquake. <i>International Journal of Health Planning and Management</i>. Published online first: DOI: 10.1002/hpm.2137.</p>
Requirements of candidate:	<p>Master degree: Yes</p> <p>Background: knowledge of communication theory and research methods, interests in understanding new media’s role in health communication, good writing and presentation skills</p> <p>IELTS Grade: 7.0 (minimal 6.0 per component) or TOEFL: 100 (minimal 20 per component)</p>
Supervisor information:	<p>Dr. Yuping Mao, Assistant Professor Email address: mao@eshcc.eur.nl Personal website: http://www.eshcc.eur.nl/mao/ Selected publication since 2010: Mao, Y., & Shi, L. (in press). Comparing Chinese immigrant women with Caucasian women on maternal health communication with healthcare providers: Findings from the Los Angeles Mommy and Baby (LAMB) survey. In A. M. Gatison (Ed.), <i>Communicating women's health: Voicing the voiceless</i>. Routledge. Menchen-Trevino, E., & Mao, Y. (2014, in press). Framing the Bo Xilai case</p>

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