

# OPINIONS OF ANKARA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS RELATED TO BENEFIT FROM HEALTH COUNSELING SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE UNIVERSITY THROUGH

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## SUMMARY

*This study has been conducted to determine if Ankara University's students are for or against the idea of being supported by health counseling services through internet by the University at 2001-2002 academic year. The methodology consisted of a questionnaire conducted on 1500 randomly selected students studying at Ankara University among a universe of 43216 undergraduates and alumni. 1472 questionnaires were evaluated to come to a final conclusion. The results suggest that among the study-participants 78.4% has access to internet where 76.7% is for and 10.2% were against installation of health counseling services via internet. The reasons why 10.2% were against were the facts that 65.1% thought such services were unnecessary, 21.5% had difficulty to access internet, 6.7% found the media insecure and 6.7% devoted other reasons. As a conclusion; we believe installation and provision of health services via internet at Ankara University will be beneficial.*

**Key Words:** Health Counseling, University Students, Internet

## ÖZET

**Ankara Üniversitesi Öğrencilerinin, Üniversite Tarafından İnternet Üzerinden Verilebilecek Olan Sağlık Danışmanlığı Hizmetlerinden Yararlanmalarına İlişkin Görüşleri**

*Bu araştırma, Ankara Üniversitesi öğrencilerinin, üniversite tarafından internet üzerinden verilebilecek olan sağlık danışmanlığı hizmetlerinden yararlanmalarına ilişkin görüşlerini belirlemek amacıyla 2001-2002 eğitim-öğretim yılında yapılmıştır. Araştırmada literatür bilgileri yanında, anket uygulaması yoluyla elde edilen veriler değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin, Ankara Üniversitesi'nin fakülte, konservatuvar, meslek yüksekokulu ve yüksekokullarında öğrenim görmekte olan 43216 öğrencisi ve lisans ve lisans öğrencisi olmaktadır; bu evrenden 1500 öğrenci örneklemine girilmiştir; anket uygulaması sonucunda uygun bulunan 1472 anket değerlendirilmiştir; veriler analiz edilip sonuçlara ulaşılmıştır. Araştırma grubunun %78.4 interneti kullanmaktadır. Buna göre %76.7 si üniversite (Mediko) tarafından sağlık danışmanlığı hizmetinin internet üzerinden verilmesini; %10.2 si verilmemesini istemekte olup; geriye kalan grubun ise bu konuya ilişkin fikri yoktur. Bu hizmetin verilmemesini isteyenlerin %65.1 i hizmetin gereksiz olduğunu, %21.5 i internete ulaşma zorluğu ya da kârlı değil, %6.7 si güvenli bulmadıklarını belirtmişler, %6.7 si ise bunu diğer nedenlere bağlamışlardır. Bu sonuçlardan hareketle, Ankara Üniversitesi öğrencilerinin sağlık danışmanlığı hizmetlerini internet üzerinden verilemesine ihtiyaç duydukları söylenebilir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sağlık Danışmanlığı, Üniversite öğrencileri, İnternet

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“Student’s Personality Services” is another developing function of the education as well as teaching and administration function. The purpose of the student’s personality services is to take measures to make sure that students benefit from the teaching-understanding process and to prevent the existing obstacles. (1)

“Student Personality Services” includes some activities like entrance, registration and admission services; psychological information and guidance services; accommodation and food services; finding jobs and supplying employment services; financial aid, scholarship and credits; and special programs. “Health Services” that take place within these activities includes preventive health services as well as health control and evaluation; protection of the mental health; immunization and vaccination; medical treatment for the outpatients; rehabilitation aid; health education; prevention and development of the environmental health; and to make research. (2)

In Turkey, according to Article 47 of Higher Education Law numbered 2547, all universities have to establish a health center or a government health institution in it for its student’s health problems. These centers provide preventive health care. Preventive health care is very important for the early diagnosis and treatment. (3)

In Ankara University, the unit for the health problems of student is “Health, Culture, and Sport Department”. The Department of Health, Culture, and Sports has been established as an institution with revolving fund in 1996 with the name of “ Medico Social Center” and has been changed as the “Department of Health, Culture and Sport” in line with the Article 32 of “Decree on Administrative Organization of Higher Education” dated 1983 and numbered 124. Among its functions there is providing services to students for their health problems. The purpose of this Department is “to prevent physical and mental health of the students, to treat or have them treated when they are sick...” ([www.ankara.edu.tr/rektorate/sksdb-15.03.2002](http://www.ankara.edu.tr/rektorate/sksdb-15.03.2002))

Students have to show their student’s card and health report card when they go to this Department for the use of the services. Unfortunately there is no facility to give them health counseling services through internet.

Scientific and technological developments, have brought the utilization of internet in provision of medical health services to the agenda. “Virtual” environment is of great importance in accessing the services provided by Students Health Center; in providing these services more productive; in reducing the limitation of time and space to minimum. In this regard, scientific opinions have been put forward to emphasize that provision of health services will be an appropriate option. (4)

This research has been carried out to have and determine the opinions of Ankara University Students on health consultancy services to be provided through internet.

## **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

This research has been designated as a field study in terms of descriptive surveillance model. Literature information and data provided through survey implementation have been evaluated in this research. This research includes 43216 pre undergraduate/undergraduate students having education in the faculties, conservatoire, vocational schools, high schools of fall semester of 2001-2002. 1500 students have been selected through controlled/quoted sampling method; as a consequence of the implementation of survey prepared in line with the purpose of the research, 1472 survey that has been considered as appropriately filled have been selected for evaluation.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Research Group**

When the socio-demographic characteristics of the research group have been taken into account, 51.7 %is male, 33.4 %is with his family, 29.6 %is in dormitory, 25 %is in house with his friends, others are in house alone and with his relatives. Moreover, 10.3 %of this research group is working and 21.2 %of the group has no social

security source. Among the group having the social security, 36.4 %belongs to Government Employees Retirement Fund; 28.8 %belongs to

Social Insurance Organization, 10.5 %belongs to Social Insurance Organization for Self Employees and 0.7 %has Green Card.

**Table-1.** Distribution of the Research Group According to Socio-Demographic Characteristics.

CHARACTERISTICS	NUMBER	%
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	761	51.7
Male	711	48.3
<b>Accommodation Places</b>		
With his family	491	33.4
In house –Alone	89	6
In house – together With friends	368	25
With his relatives	69	4.7
At the dormitory	436	29.6
Others	19	1.3
<b>Working Situation</b>		
Working	151	10.3
Not working	1321	89.7
<b>Social Security sources</b>		
Not covered by Social security	312	21.2
Having social security due to working	78	5.3
Having social security due to his/her family	1060	72
Others	22	1.5
<b>Distribution of people having social security according to institutions.</b>		
Social Insurance Org.	424	28.8
Government Employees Retirement Fund	535	36.4
Social Insurance Organization for Self Employees	155	10.5
Green Cards	11	0.7
Others	347	23.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1472</b>	<b>100</b>

## 2. Places and Frequency of Counseling about Health Problems of the Research Group

**Table-2.** Distribution of Research Group According to Places Where the Research Group Consults and Frequencies

PLACES USED AT THE LEVEL OF CONSULTING	VERY MUCH		OCCASIONALLY		NEVER		PRIORITY	TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%		NUMBER	%
Official Health Inst.	1001	68	289	19.6	182	12.4	1	1472	100
From the Family Members	337	22.9	552	37.5	583	39.6	2	1472	100
Private Health Inst.	185	12.6	684	46.4	603	41	3	1472	100
Friends	99	6.7	538	36.6	835	56.7	4	1472	100
Mass Communication Tools	72	4.9	357	24.2	1043	70.9	5	1472	100
Internet Health Sites	42	2.9	228	15.4	1202	81.7	6	1472	100
Traditional Applications	18	1.2	184	12.5	1270	86.3	7	1472	100
Health Consultation Telephone Lines	20	1.4	102	6.9	1350	91.7	8	1472	100

When the places where the research group consult for health problems and the frequencies have been considered, according to the priorities of research group, 87.6 %apply Official Health Institutions (77.6 %"very much"); 60.4 %apply family members (62.1 %"occasionally"); 59 %apply Private Health Institutions (78.7 %"occasionally"); 43.3 %apply friends (84.5 %"occasionally"); others apply Mass Communication Tools (29.1 %), health web sites (1.83 %); traditional applications (13.7 %) and telephone lines giving health consultancy services (8.3 %).

Official Health Institutions rank in the beginning of the order for consultation because most of the students have social security. It has been considered interesting that some members of research group apply mass communication tools, internet health sites and telephone lines.

This situation has been perceived the necessity for consultation services in this respect.

### 3. Degree of Utilization of the Research Group of the Health Services Provided By Health, Culture and Sport Department.

As it has been seen from the Degree of Utilization of the Research Group of the Health Services Provided By Health, Culture and Sport Department, 66.5%of the research group have not benefited from while the 33.5%have benefited from the services. 52.1%of the people benefit from the services are male.

Health, Culture and Sport Department of the Ankara University is open to all students that require a help. Degree of utilization is low, because, it serves to a young generation and young generation is more healthier than the older generation.

**Table-3.** Distribution of Degree of Utilization of the Research Group of the Health Services Provided By Health, Culture and Sport Department (HCSD) According to Sex

DEGREE OF UTILIZATION OF THE HEALTH SERVICES OF HCSD	SEX	NUMBER	%	TOTAL	
				NUMBER	%
People benefit from	Male	257	52.1	493	33.5
	Female	236	47.9		
People do not benefit from	Male	504	51.5	979	66.5
	Female	475	48.5		
TOTAL COVERAGE				1472	100

#### 4. Utilization Degree of the Research Group from Internet

78.4% of the research group have benefited from the internet. 53.8% of them who have benefited from the internet are male. Generally, in the research group, 90.5% of the male population has benefited from the internet while the percentage of the females is 87.9.

In 1970, internet was planned for the use of "net of the networks" in the USA Defense Ministry. After then protocol agreements had been made in order to send information from one point to the other as a package program. Nowadays, with the increasing usage of the personal purposes, internet usage is expanded widely. (5)

Major part of the research group has benefited from the internet. This situation can be explained by the augmentation of the computer facility at the home, schools and internet cafes as well as the increasing interest in computers and internet.

#### 5. Demand of the Research Group on Health Consultancy Services Provided by the University Through Internet

Health counseling is a general concept that aim to response of the people who are health professionals, people that have health problems and people who want to have some information about health topics. There are a lot of ways to give health counseling services. One of them is trough internet. It is also called "virtual hospital". It is used to get information through web sides or

**Table-4.** Distribution of the Utilization Degree of the Research Group from Internet According to Sex

UTILIZATION DEGREE FROM INTERNET	SEX				TOTAL	
	MALE		FEMALE			
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
People benefit from	621	90.5	533	87.9	1154	78.4
People do not benefit from	140	9.5	178	12.1	318	21.6
TOTAL	761	100	711	100	1472	100

**Table-5.** Demand of the Research Group on Health Consultancy Services Provided Through Internet

HEALTH CONSULTANCY SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGH INTERNET	NUMBER	%
People demand	1130	76.8
People do not demand	250	10.2
No comment	192	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1472</b>	<b>100</b>

by e-mail. Both of them can be used at the same time or separately. It can be gone through by titles and all titles can have their own e-mail addresses. This kind of web sites' information are based on the information from medical books or medical articles. Information can be obtained by e-mail during all day or only working time (4).

76.8 %of the research group demand to benefit from health consultancy services

provided by the university through the internet, 10.2 %do not demand and 13%stated no comment. This situation reflects the need for the health consultancy services provided through the internet. As it can be understood from Table 4, 78.4 %of the students have ability to use the internet. All of the students demanding health consultation through internet are the ones that have the opportunity to use the internet. Both values are similar to each other.

**Table-6.** Demand of the Research Group on Types of Health Consultancy Services Provided Through Internet

KINDS OF HEALTH CONSULTANCY SERVICES	NUMBER	%	TOTAL NUMBER	PRIORITY
Psychological consultancy	916	62.2	1472	1
General Health Information	898	61	1472	2
Guidance	730	49.6	1472	3
Sexual Problems	669	45.4	1472	4
Information on Alternative Medicine	618	42	1472	5
Policlinic Appointment	606	41.2	1472	6
Internal Diseases	555	37.7	1472	7
Women Diseases	462	31.4	1472	8
Family Planning Methods	443	30.1	1472	9

Demands regarding the health consultancy services provided through internet are given in Table 6. According to the priority order of the research group, 62.2% requests to get information on psychological consultancy, 61% general health, 49.6 % guidance services, 45.4 % sexual problems, 42 % alternative medicine, 41.2 % polyclinic appointment, 37.7 % internal diseases, 31.4 % women diseases and 30.1 % family planning methods.

The research group has given the priority to "psychological consultancy", "general health information" and "guidance services" in their demand for health consultancy services provided through internet. This situation can be considered as the reflection that the problems mostly disturbing their mind and affecting their academic achievements negatively are these. At the same time, the mentioned situation can be considered as a reflection of the demand for solving the problems in this area in a fast and easy way. Therefore, results of the researches on student's problems support the above mentioned opinions (6, 7, 8). The other health consultancy types ranking in lower lines have been found convenient since they reflect the requirements of the research group and their intention to access this requirements through internet.

### **RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This research is a field study with descriptive feature in surveillance model and includes the statistical evaluation of the 1472 survey applied to students chosen by controlled quota sampling method to determine their opinion on utilizing of health consultancy services provided by the Ankara University through internet.

Results of the research is given below:

- Major of the research group lives in house with his/her family or friends or lives in dormitories, 51.7% of them are male and 89.7 % do not have a job. 77.3 % of them have the social security, mainly Government Employees Retirement Fund, Social Insurance Organization and Social Insurance Organization for Self Employees.
- Research group firstly apply to state health institutions, family members and private health institutions; means of mass communication, web sites on health and telephone lines providing services on health are also included in their application sources.
- 33.5% of the research group have been benefited from the Health Unit of the Department of Health, Culture of Ankara University that students could apply in their solution seeking.
- 78 % of the research group stated that they are using internet and 76.8% stated their intention to benefit health consultancy given through the internet.
- Priority order of the demands regarding the health consultation through internet are psychological consultation services, general health information, guidance, information on sexual problem, alternative medicine, polyclinic appointment, information on internal diseases and family planning methods.

Necessary infrastructure studies and organization should be carried out to provide health consultancy services to Ankara University students through internet.

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