ASSESSING USE OF MOBILE PHONES IN IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTH MESSAGES

Dissertation Project

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Organization

ORG Centre for Social Research

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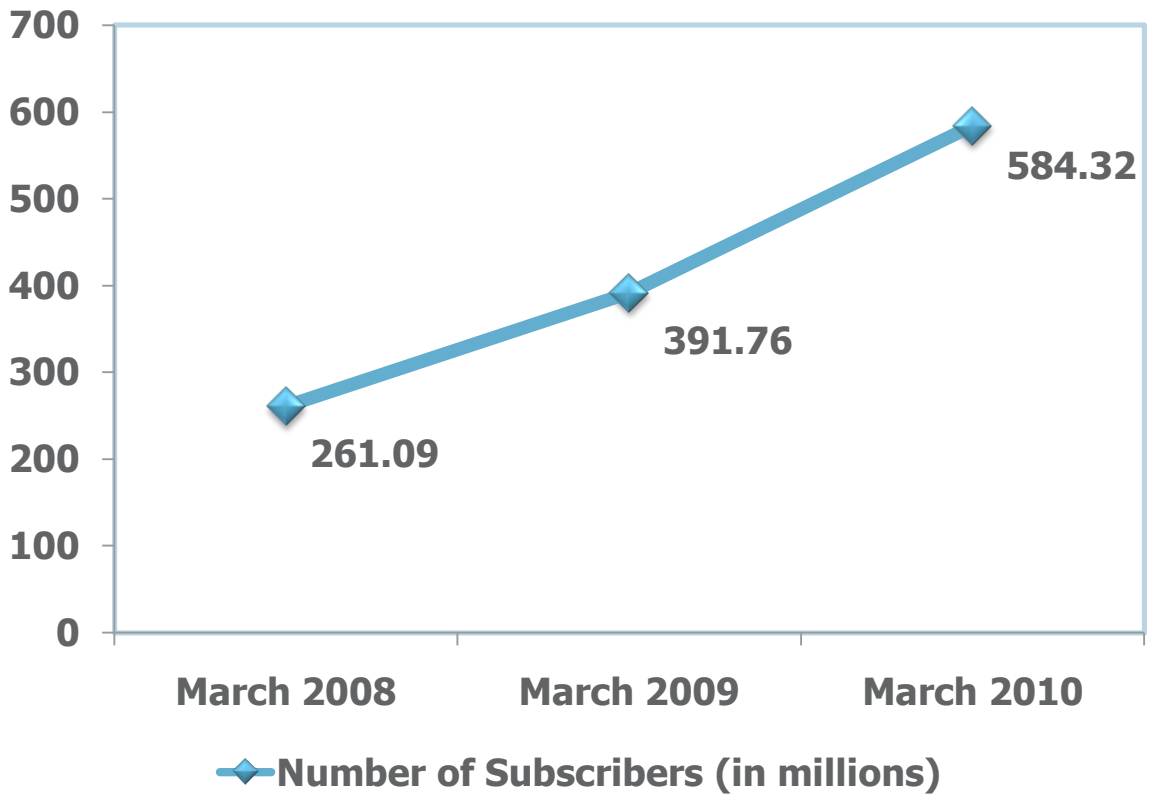
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BACKGROUND

- mHealth is the use of mobile communication technologies as an integral part of healthcare delivery
- Mobile phones and other information and communication technologies offer new interactive opportunities for health communication, and they cost little per person reached.
- New technologies such as cell phones and websites are being investigated for the new opportunities.

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Number of wireless subscribers



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Need for the study

- This underlines the importance of using the mobile phone as an innovative tool in reaching targeted communities

- Phones can be used for much more than making calls and sending text messages; they can be powerful tools to help people improve their health

- The study focused on developing potential of using health messages through SMS among the mobile users as technology integration within the health sector has great potential to promote healthy lifestyles, improve decisions and enhance healthcare quality

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Study Objectives

The study set out to accomplish the following specific objectives:

1. To estimate the availability and user-ship of mobile phones among the college going students

2. To determine the extent of exposure and attitude towards Health Messages

3. Assess the potential of using mobile phones for delivery of Health messages

4. Provide current scenario of mHealth and Propose future recommendations for improving the communication strategy to the target respondents

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Methodology

- **Survey Population -** College going Male and Female students in Delhi
- **Survey Location -** The study was conducted at 8 bookstores in Delhi state
- **Research Techniques -** A Cross-sectional, questionnaire-based research tool was developed and used for this survey and
  - In-depth discussions were also held with some of the respondents

✓ **Quantitative Research Technique:** structured questionnaires

✓ **Qualitative Research Technique:** In-depth interviews

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Sampling Design

Sample Size: 100 eligible respondents

- The students of Health Sciences were not included as they may know the various health messages

Research tools

Quantitative survey tool: A structured Questionnaire
Qualitative survey tools: In-depth discussion

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Fieldwork

The role and responsibilities during the fieldwork:

- Locating the bookstore and identifying the eligible respondents
- Seeking informed consent from the respondents conducting the interviews
- Interviewing the respondent using the questionnaire
- Checking completed interviews to be sure that all questions were asked and the responses are neatly and legibly recorded

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Findings and Results

1) Profile of Respondents

2) Availability and User ship of mobile phones

3) Availability and User ship of mobile phones

4) Potential of mobile phones

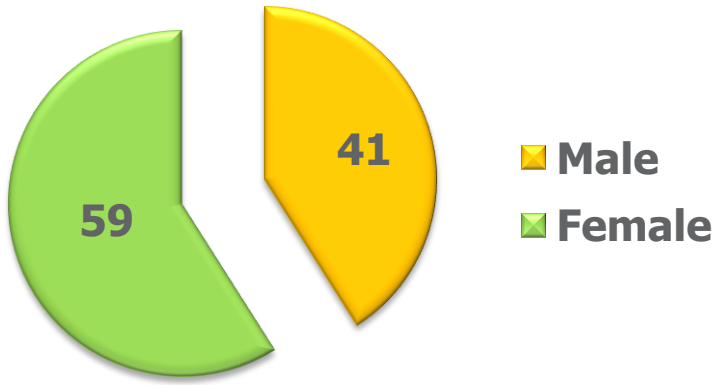
5) Health messages

6) Exposure to media

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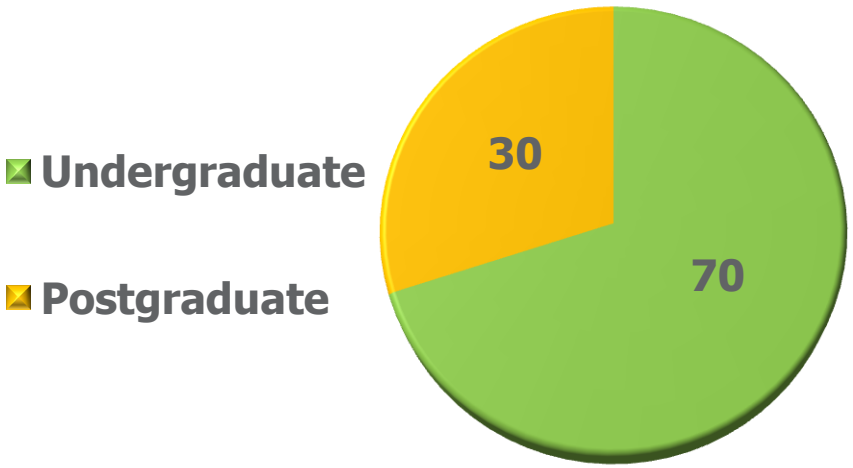
Profile of Respondents

1) Gender: Proportion of males and females

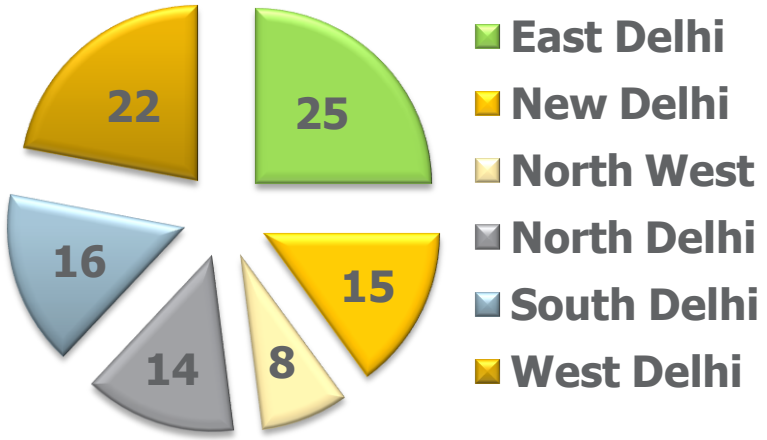


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2) Educational status



3) District wise location



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Availability and User ship of mobile phones

1) Ownership of Mobile phones

% of respondents owning cell phone:

Male - 92.68 (N = 41)

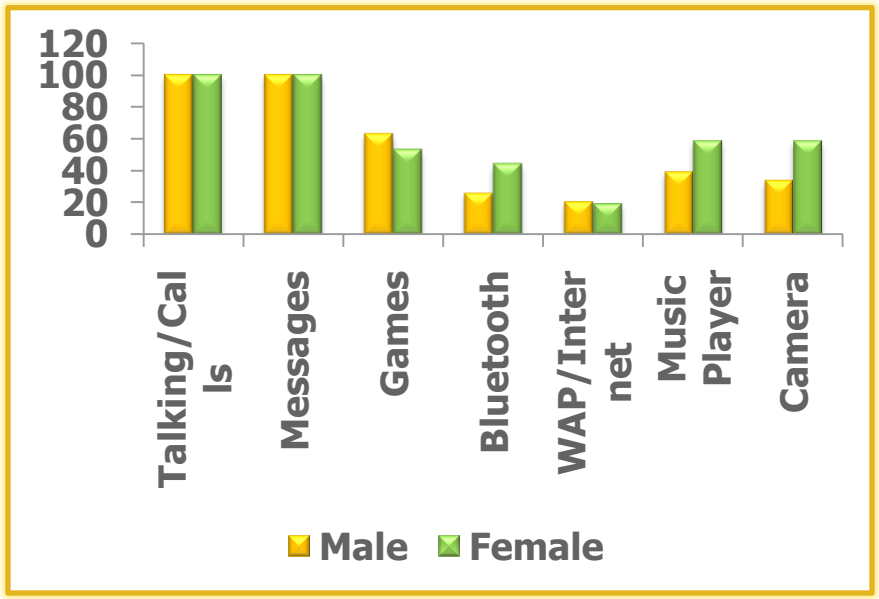
Female - 94.92 (N = 59)

2) User ship of mobile phones

Base

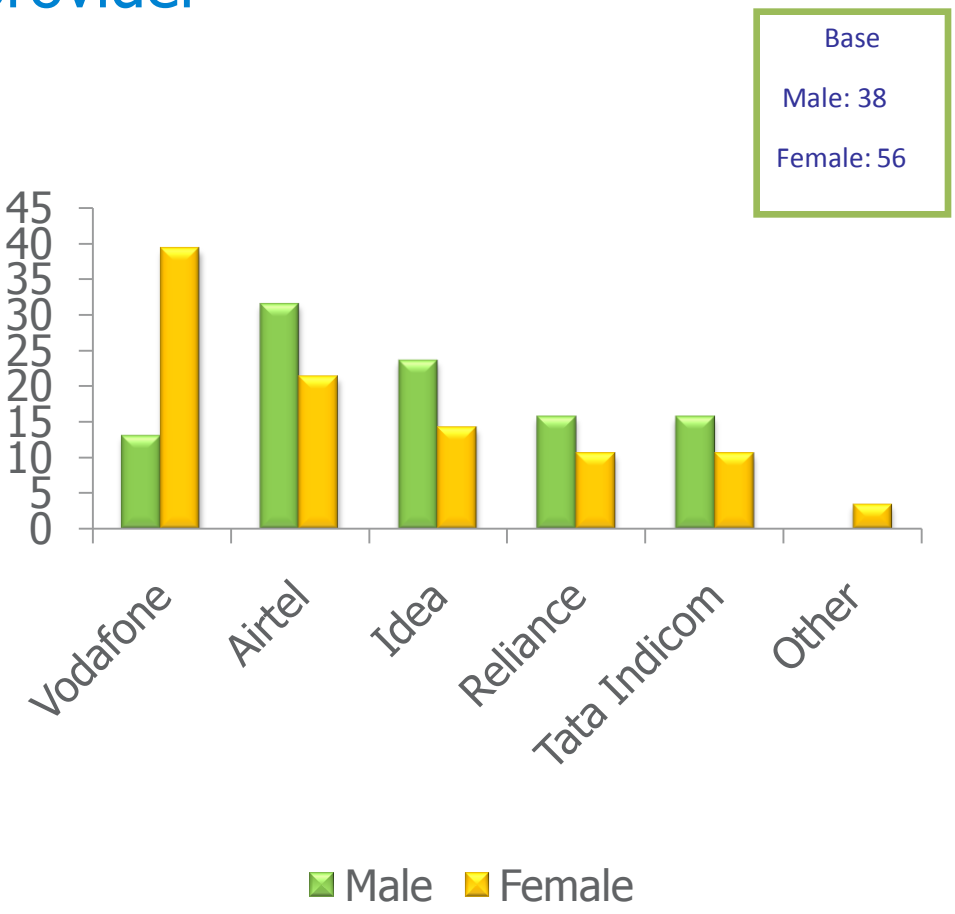
Male: 38

Female: 56



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3) Service provider



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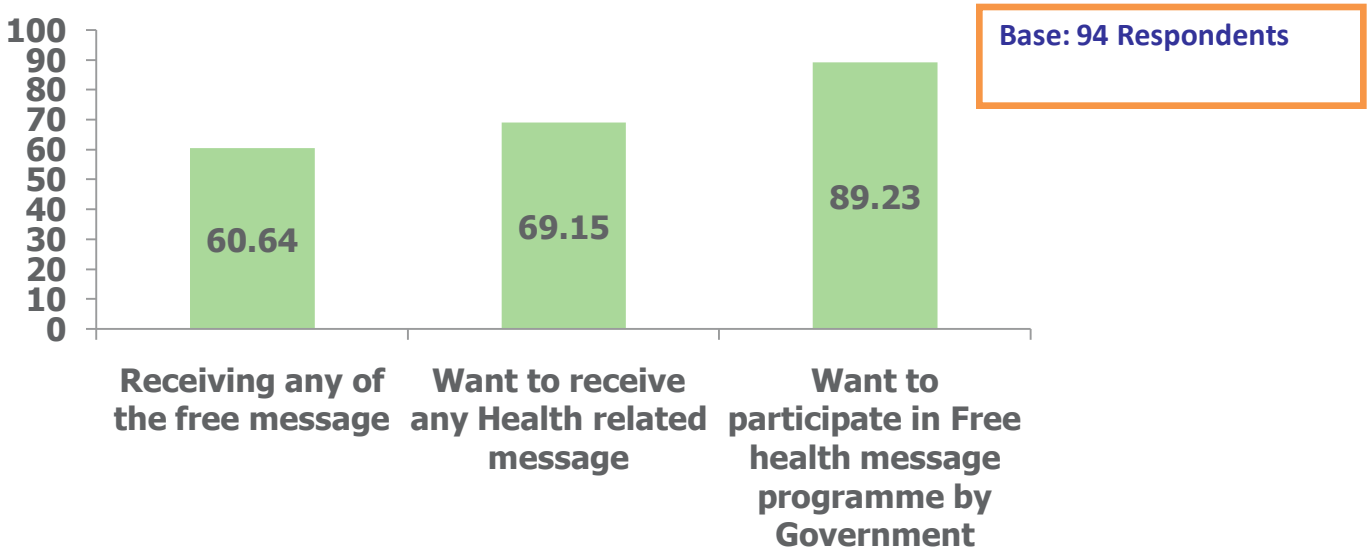
Potential of mobile phones

- Improvements in telecommunications technology infrastructure, reduced costs of mobile handsets, and a general increase in non-food expenditure have influenced this trend
- Basic SMS functions and real-time voice communication serve as the backbone and the current most common use of mobile phone technology
- The broad range of potential benefits to the health sector that the simple functions of mobile phones can provide should not be understated

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- The respondents who owned mobile phone were asked further questions on their interest in use of mobile phones to get free SMS/text messages so that they become aware of various health topics

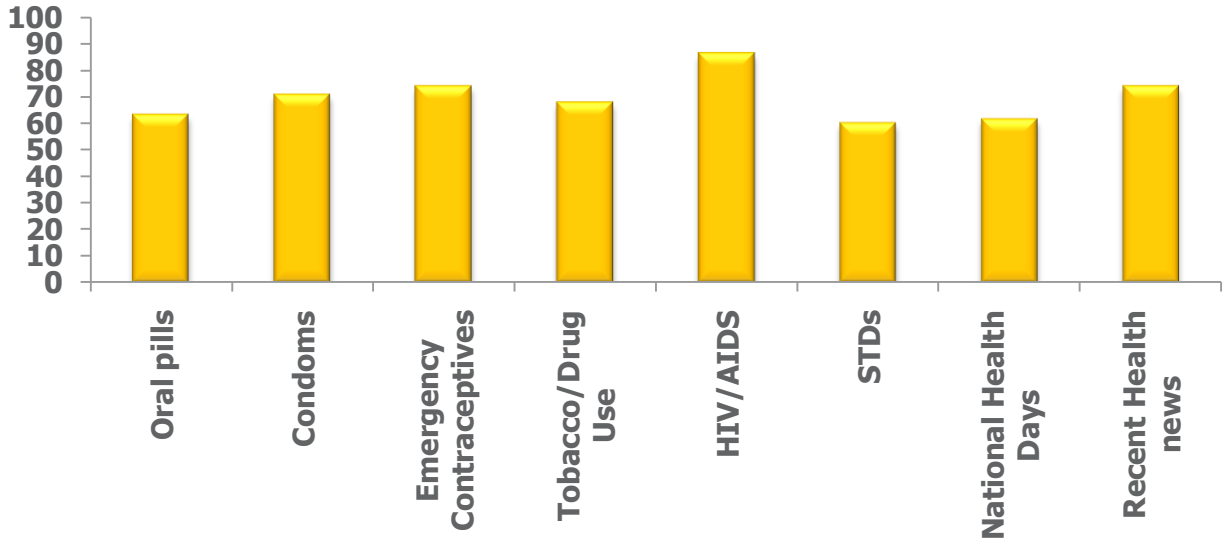
1) Willingness to receive messages



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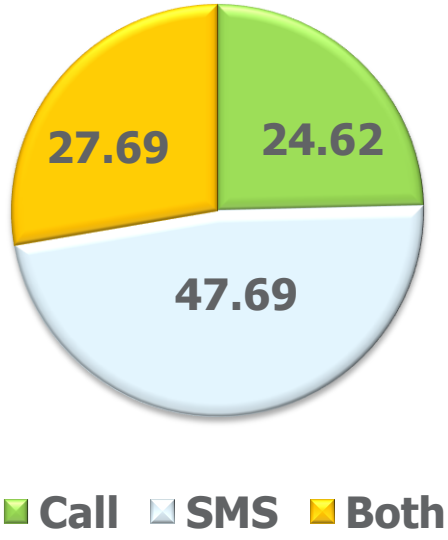
2) **Attitude towards health messages**

Base: 65 Respondents



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3) Preferred Mode for Communicating the Health Message



Base: 65 respondents

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4) **Frequency of Messages**

Frequency To Receive information	**% of respondents**
At least once a week	26.15
At least once a month	47.69
At least once in 6 months	15.38
Total (N)	**65**

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Health Messages

- For each type of health topic, respondents were asked about the messages, first spontaneously, and then by prompting. Each issue was explored in this manner one after another.

1) Message on Oral Pills

The most spontaneously received messages in this regard were "different types of oral pills" (53.85%) followed by "advantages and disadvantages of oral pills" (46.15%), "danger/side effects" (43.08%) and "effectiveness" (40%).

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2) **Messages on Condoms**

Of the total respondents who wanted to have messages on condoms, different topics were asked and analysis was done accordingly

The messages spontaneously recalled by the respondents were "different types of condoms available" (60%) followed by "use of condoms" (41.54%).

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3) **Messages on Emergency contraceptives**

Most spontaneously observed message was "different types of emergency contraceptives available" (60%) followed by "use of emergency contraceptives" (50%).

For other messages, a high proportion of students responded after prompting the message.

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4) **Messages on Tobacco use**

Across all the other categories, prompting was done in order to know their preference and interest towards tobacco use.

Most of the respondents were keen to know about "harmful products of tobacco" (56.92%) in comparison to all the other messages.

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5) Messages on HIV/AIDS

The highest proportion was reported for "modes of transmission" (80%) and lowest proportion was reported for "HIV/AIDS counseling/ICTC centers" (40%) for spontaneous responses.

This proportion was highest for "HIV/AIDS counseling/ICTC centers" (33.85%) for prompted responses

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6) **Messages on STDs**

The highest proportion reported 'modes of transmission" (50.77%) followed by "STD prevention" (49.23%) and "myths/misconceptions about STDs" (46.15%) spontaneously.

When prompted, the highest proportion was reported for "STD management" (29.23%).

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Exposure to Media

1) Exposure to radio/TV

Indicators	Male	Female
Listened to Radio at least once a month (%)	38.46	53.85
Watched TV at least once a month (%)	50.77	70.77
Total	**65**	

2) Participation in radio contests

Indicators	Male	Female
Listened to any contest on radio (%)	76.00	71.43
Took part in any contest on radio (%)	76.00	54.29
Participated in any health related contest on radio (%)	56.00	40.00
Total	**25**	**35**

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3) **Exposure to health ads on Radio**

Exposure to messages	Radio (%)
Oral pills	41.67
Condoms	56.67
Emergency Contraceptives	55.00
Tobacco/Drug Use	30.00
HIV/AIDS	56.67
STDs	13.33
National Health Days	18.33
Recent Health news	25.00
Total N	**60**

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4) Exposure to health ads on TV

Exposure to messages	Television
Oral pills	72.15
Condoms	83.54
Emergency Contraceptives	91.14
Tobacco/Drug Use	68.35
HIV/AIDS	86.08
STDs	21.52
National Health Days	31.65
Recent Health news	54.43
Total N	**79**

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Conclusion and Recommendations

Perception of respondents

- Majority of the students responded in a manner that if messages can be provided through calls, it would be beneficial for them to have a better understanding and all the queries can be solved at the same time only

- It was also understated by the students that a helpline number should be there which can be further classified into different health categories so as to attain maximum awareness and information

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- Some students were probed further in discussion and it was found that they were equally interested in having a two way system of messaging so as to have a better understanding

- Messages should be clear at a glance and should avoid 'information overload' and difficult words/jargon.

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Key Recommendations for the Communication Strategy and Next Steps

- The study provides details on the viewing habits for both TV and radio. These can form the basis for the selection of channels and programs for future campaigns
- It is recommended that an overarching theme is developed that has a common string running through and binding all campaign components together. Development/identification of the theme must be based on research
- Periodic studies related to this campaign implemented in future are also recommended to keep a track of the development of mHealth in India
- SMS alerts are useful in raising public health awareness

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- In all, the most important recommendation is to develop the strategy by keeping end user in mind

- Mobile health can add efficiency and efficacy to existing systems, advance new systems, and ultimately distribute health care benefits across society

➢mHealth presents a tremendous opportunity to create a global facilitation body, enabling maximum innovation and impact on global health. Mobile health mobilizes health care and health responsibilities by allowing the consumer more control, direct interaction, and interconnectedness with the health system

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Thank You

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