

Conditions of Internet Usage in Nursing Universities / Schools in Japan

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【Abstract】

The flow of English information in today's society is of utmost importance. This seems to be particularly true in certain international fields, including nursing. In Japan, information on nursing is rarely published in English. Moreover, few four-year nursing university/college courses have homepages in English for non-Japanese speaking nurses to access.

Questionnaires were sent to 76 four-year Japanese nursing universities/colleges via return postage postcards asking five questions related to information available in English about their institutions in regards to access to the Internet. Of the 76 contacted, 50, or 65.9%, replied. The supplied information from the 50 respondent nursing universities/colleges was compiled and results tabulated. Conclusions were drawn on the basis of questionnaire results.

Discussions on how to set up English homepages for nursing universities in Japan as well as the pitfalls and how to go about publishing in overseas international journals concerning nursing will be looked at.

【Key Words】 Access, Home page, Internet, Japanese nursing universities/colleges, Questionnaire

I INTRODUCTION

Nursing is an international field that is becoming more important in all societies throughout the world. Primary reasons for this are aging populations¹⁾ and the emphasis on preventative medicine. Therefore, the sharing of information in the field of nursing is of paramount importance.

When thinking about accessing information in today's world, there is no better place to begin looking than on the Internet. Information in all areas, topics, and specialties can be found. And because of the nature of the Internet, strict rules and guidelines, for the most part, do not exist.

Many non-English speaking countries share nursing information rather openly through publications in nursing journals within their countries as well as international journals, presentations at international conferences, and through their homepages on the internet. Japan, however, lags behind in the area of sharing knowledge and information on nursing.

One frequently asked question by non-Japanese nursing professionals is why Japanese nurses don't publish and share their information freely with their colleagues outside of Japan?²⁾ One reason is quite obvious. In general, Japanese lack the writing skills necessary for publishing in international journals outside of Japan, as well as conversational skills for oral presentations in English. Also, the lack of informal venues to get nursing ideas and information out in Japan, in English, are practically nonexistent.

This research topic came about by checking the Internet to find out if Japanese nursing universities/colleges were listed in English. Several extensive lists of Japanese nursing universities/colleges appeared in Japanese,³⁾ but none could be found in English. Next, a prepaid questionnaire was sent to 76 four year nursing universities/departments open at this period of time to see what kind of information in English existed on their web sites.

If a list of Japanese nursing universities/schools did exist in English, as well as English homepages, informal

dialogs could begin. Areas on the homepages could be set aside for literature reviews, pilot studies, field research, personal interests, etc. without the rigors of trying to publish internationally, yet accessible to non-Japanese readers.

This isn't to say that the author approves of shoddy research, plagiarism, or any other number of condonable offenses that deal with publishing, but rather to encourage Japanese nursing universities/departments to have an English web site on the Internet. Somewhere in their English web site, an English portal could exist where people who may not have the capabilities of publishing internationally can put their ideas down for others to read, learn, and possibly improve the profession of nursing. This would benefit the international nursing community as a whole, and would be a vast improvement over what currently exists in Japan.

II METHOD AND PROCEDURE

A. INTERNET CHECK FOR A LISTING OF NURSING UNIVERSITIES/DEPARTMENTS IN ENGLISH IN JAPAN

An extensive check of the internet in Japanese as well as English was conducted to see if any list of nursing universities/departments existed in English.⁴⁾ From these findings, a questionnaire was devised and carried out.

B. PREPAID POSTCARD QUESTIONNAIRE

Population:

All of Japan's current 76 four-year nursing universities/colleges in Japan were included in the population.

Design:

The design consisted of a survey asking for their assistance in gathering information on their respective nursing university/college's usage of their homepages. The issue of privacy was discussed and granted by all participating respondents.

Instrument:

A questionnaire consisting of five questions was sent to

all 76 four year nursing universities/colleges currently open in Japan when the questionnaire was sent out.

Data Collection:

Data was sent in the form of a prepaid postage postcard that included an explanation of the study and the five questions. Answers were sent back to the examiner via the Japan Postal Service. The results were tabulated and examined.

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of the 76 questionnaires sent out to all of the then operating four year nursing universities/colleges, 50 sent back the prepaid postcard, or roughly 65.9%. The following is a breakdown of the five questions asked and how they were answered.

1. Do you have a homepage for your nursing university?
38 (76%) have homepages, 3 (6%) have none, 2 (4%) were under construction, and the remaining 7 (14%) have a homepage, but didn't give any information about it.
2. If you have a homepage, what is the homepage address?
3. Is your homepage in Japanese, English or both Japanese & English?
36 (72%) were in Japanese only, 2 (4%) were in English only, 7 (14%) were in both Japanese and English, and the remaining 5 (10%) were unknown.
4. Would you like to get information on European exchange programs?
13 (26%) said yes, 36 (72%) said no, and 1 (2%) gave no response to the question.
5. May we have your permission to list your nursing school's name and homepage on a listing of Japanese Nursing Universities/Colleges in English?
44 (88%) said yes, and 6 (12%) said no.

First, a return rate of just under 66% filled out and returned the prepaid questionnaire postcard. Questions were kept to a minimum, written in Japanese, and prepaid

postage was affixed to the questionnaire postcards in hopes for a high return rate.

Next, concerning homepages for nursing universities/colleges, only 76% had them. More surprising was that only 18% of those who had homepages had them in English, or accessible to non-Japanese readers.

When asked if they would like information concerning exchange programs in Europe, 72% said they would not like to have the knowledge of such information.

One encouraging statistic was the final question. 88% of the respondents would like to have their nursing university /college's name and homepage listed in English on the Internet. (See the Table for results)

IV CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Questionnaires traditionally do not have a great return rate⁵⁾ but it was thought that because the study was in a highly specialized area along with it's population, the turnout would have been over 75%. Therefore, the return rate of just under 66% was of major concern to the data collected.

Perhaps the most troublesome results showed an apparent unwillingness of Japanese nursing universities/colleges to have educational contacts with their European counterparts. Reasons were neither asked for nor given why only 28% of the respondents answered "YES" to having information sent to them concerning contacts with their European counterparts.

The confirmation of the hypothesis of access to the internet by Japanese nursing universities/colleges and

access by them from abroad appears to be one stumbling block to Japan's nursing professionals to communicate and interaction with their counterparts throughout the world. Access to the Internet as well as access by foreigners to information in Japan is essential to modern nursing.

More effort by Japanese nursing universities/colleges is needed in the area of accessing their homepages through the Internet. They need to let the rest of the nursing world know who they are and what they are doing by having information about themselves on the Internet.

One quick way of fixing this problem would be to delegate someone in the nursing departments to do this work, preferably an English teacher. Other possible avenues for this work to be done could be by assignments by computer teachers and English teachers for their students. Even if the English homepage isn't professionally done, something is infinitely better than nothing.

Space on the English homepage could also be set aside for editorials, thoughts and ideas, or even study/research information on an informal basis. Once again, the whole idea is to try to get information written in English so that others may see what is happening in Japan.

One recommendation to help alleviate the problem of the lack of English information in nursing in Japan would be to start up a formal, or informal, organization that can address the issue of improving English materials and information on homepages. The information available in Japanese can be translate into English so non-Japanese can get a better understanding of what is happening with nursing in Japan. Because the rigors of publishing would be easier, informal study reports and research could also be

Table

Does your university have a homepage?	Yes 38 (76%)	No 3 (6%)	Under construction 2 (4%)	N/A 7 (14%)	Total 50 (100%)
Is your homepage in English, Japanese, or both?	English 2 (4%)	Japanese 36 (72%)	Both 7 (14%)	N/A 5 (10%)	Total 50 (100%)
Would you like to receive information on European Exchange programs?	Yes 13 (26%)	No 36 (72%)	No response 1 (2%)		Total 50 (100%)
Permission to list their school's name and homepage on the internet	Yes 44 (88%)	No 6 (12%)			Total 50 (100%)

posted on such sites.

Another area that can be looked at could be collaborative research. Japanese participants would be responsible for the gathering of information in Japan while their fellow colleagues in other countries could do the actual writing.

Many creative solutions exist to stem the problem of the lack of written information about nursing in Japan. Any improvement in this area would be greatly appreciated by the rest of their sisters and brothers out there in the international field of nursing.

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資 料

看護大学における英語のホームページの開設状況

エリック ラーソン

【抄 録】

英語で書かれた情報を、継続的に入手できることは、現代社会においては非常に重要なことである。看護のように、国家間の隔たりのない分野においては、なおさらである。日本で、看護に関する情報が英語で発表されることはめったにない。また、日本語を話さない看護婦（士）が入手できるように、英語で作られたホームページを開設している4年制の看護大学は、きわめて少ない。

往復はがきを用い、日本にある看護大学76校にアンケートを行った。質問事項は5つ。インターネットにアクセスしたら、自分の大学についての情報が英語で入手できるかどうかに関するものである。76校のうち50校、つまり65%から返答があった。その50校からの情報をまとめ、結果をグラフで表した。結論は、アンケートの結果をもとに出されたものである。

日本の看護大学が英語でホームページを開設するには、また看護に関して海外の雑誌に発表するにはどう取り組めばよいかについて論じていく。

【キーワード】 アクセス、アンケート、インターネット、日本の看護大学、ホームページアンケート