

# Do Consumers in Taiwan Need Physician Information?

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## Abstract

**BACKGROUND:** This article was written to determine the extent of consumers' needs for physician information and what information consumers use in decision making when selecting a physician. **METHODS:** To collect data, a self-administered questionnaire was hand-delivered to 700 patients who visited the general surgery outpatient departments of seven hospitals during June 2003. A multiple logistic regression was conducted to identify the statistically significant factors related to patients' needs to use physician information. **RESULTS:** Of the respondents (N = 687), 74.7% felt they "greatly needed" or "needed" physician information. About 90% of respondents would "certainly" or "possibly" change physicians if the performances of their physicians shown by physician profiling were not as good as others. Respondents ranked the three most needed physician information as specialties, malpractice history, and overall patient satisfaction level. The multiple logistic regression showed that respondent's age, hospital level, personal monthly income, and whether they had compared medical care quality provided by neighborhood physicians had significant relationships with the respondent's needs for physician information after adjusting for other factors. **CONCLUSIONS:** This study found that 88.1% of respondents were in need of some amount of physician information. This is in light of calls for physician profiling from consumer-oriented organizations to assist consumers in selecting suitable physicians. It is recommended that the healthcare industry in Taiwan make a significant investment in a physician profiling system. The performance measures of this physician profiling system should be developed based on inputs from consumers, physicians, insurance companies, and researchers in this field.