

# Trust me, I'm a journalist

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Trust in the media promotes health. A study of people from 29 Asian countries, reported in the open access journal *BMC Medicine*, has shown that individuals with high levels of trust in the mass media tend to be healthier.

A team of researchers led by Yasuharu Tokuda from St. Luke's International Hospital and Takashi Inoguchi from Chuo University, both in Tokyo, used data from a survey of 39,000 people to investigate the relationships between trust and self-reported health. Tokuda said, "This study is the first to analyze this relationship. Our findings suggest that mass media programs can contribute towards better health, especially among those people who have trust in mass media. The media need to recognize the importance of their important social role in terms of public health".

Slightly over 50% of the Asian participants reported that they 'trust a lot' or 'trust to a degree' in mass media. The group that reported being healthiest were young, married, high-income, and highly-educated women with a high trust in interpersonal relations as well as in the healthcare system and mass media. People in Brunei reported the highest levels of health, while those in Turkmenistan had the lowest opinion of their own wellbeing. People in the Maldives reported the highest level of trust in mass media while Hong Kong residents were the most cynical.

According to Tokuda, "One potential pathway from high trust in mass media to better health is increased acceptance of health-related messages and the resultant dissemination of good behavior related to health

throughout communities".

Article: The Relationship between Trust in Mass Media and the Healthcare System and Individual Health: Evidence from the AsiaBarometer Survey, Yasuharu Tokuda, Seiji Fujii, Masamine Jimba and Takashi Inoguchi, *BMC Medicine* (in press)

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