

Researchers find clear difference in quality, type of lung cancer info available in US and Japan

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A study published in the July 2009 issue of the *Journal of Thoracic Oncology* revealed that internet-based lung cancer information was of a higher quality in the United States (US) than in Japan. Dr. Yasushi Goto of the National Cancer Center Hospital in Tokyo and his team of researchers from both the US and Japan evaluated 150 Web sites and determined noticeable differences in the quality and type of information on lung cancer available over the internet in the two countries.

Dr. Goto and his team conducted the online review by searching the term "[lung cancer](#)" on Google United States, Google Japan and Yahoo! Japan. The first 50 Web sites returned by each search engine were analyzed for validity, ethical perspective and the reliability of the site's administrator. Most remarkably, the team found distinct differences in the validity of the information on treatment methods and options for lung cancer. Eighty percent of US-Google sites discussed the most common treatment methods and standard treatment protocol, compared to only 50% of the sites from the Japanese Google and Yahoo! search engines. Additionally, more than 10% of the Japanese sites advertised alternative therapies.

Other differences between the two countries include the visibility of ethical policies, which were more noticeable in the US, and the affiliation of site administrators. Nonprofit organizations and public institutions were frequently the primary administrators in the United

States, whereas commercial or personal Web sites were more common in Japan.

"The internet can be a valuable source of health information, but with the expanding global online community it has become a challenge to discern the quality of the [information](#) available," says Dr. Goto. "By stressing the importance of performing critical Web searches, we provide users with one of many skills to effectively evaluate sites for themselves."

Despite the several cultural differences between the [United States](#) and [Japan](#), lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in both countries.

Source: International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer

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