

STUDENT PAGE

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Program PhD in Family Medicine
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Thesis title and abstract **Exploring the Outcomes of Social Support on Online Consumer Health Information Behavior**

High quality online consumer health information (OCHI) and literacy-related interventions can reduce unnecessary calls and visits to health professionals, increase knowledge and self-efficacy, and improve health. Social support is an important factor as one of the ways people use OCHI is to support their relatives or friends with health conditions: 61-66% of OCHI seekers search on behalf of someone else. However, little is known on how social support influences OCHI seeking and outcomes.

This project has 4 main objectives:

O1. To develop a theory on the role of social support in the context of OCHI outcomes by conducting a mixed studies review with theory development.

O2a. To uncover the OCHI outcomes for members of the entourage who consult an online parenting information website by conducting a convergent mixed methods study

O2b. To revise and explore the OCHI outcomes and characteristics of people who search for information on OCHI websites for members of their social circle by conducting a qualitative interpretive study, and

O3. To design a tool to help entourage members search for and use OCHI for others as a part of the knowledge translation plan.

There are two main anticipated results: a better understanding of how people share health information with others in their social circle and what outcomes they experience, and the characteristics of social support most associated with positive outcomes or negative outcomes.

Health care practitioners can use these results to encourage patients to turn to their entourage for social support using OCHI, especially members of their entourage with characteristics associated with positive outcomes, e.g., similar health conditions. Moreover, entourage members with higher health literacy can be leveraged to provide informational support to others. Finally, this project will uncover gaps for future research and inform future intervention studies.

Expected date of graduation June 2022

Short biography

I am an international medical graduate (MBChB from the University of Cairo), and I have also completed an MSc in Family Medicine at McGill. I worked on several projects during my Masters, most notably a CIHR funded mixed studies systematic review on the outcomes of online consumer health information in primary care, and a qualitative interpretive study focusing on the negative outcomes of OCHI. Currently, in addition to working on my PhD, I am also a research coordinator with the Method Development platform of the Quebec-SPOR SUPPORT Unit. I provide methodological consultations and guidance on mixed methods research, systematic reviews, qualitative comparative analysis, and the ecological validation and transcultural adaptation of questionnaires.