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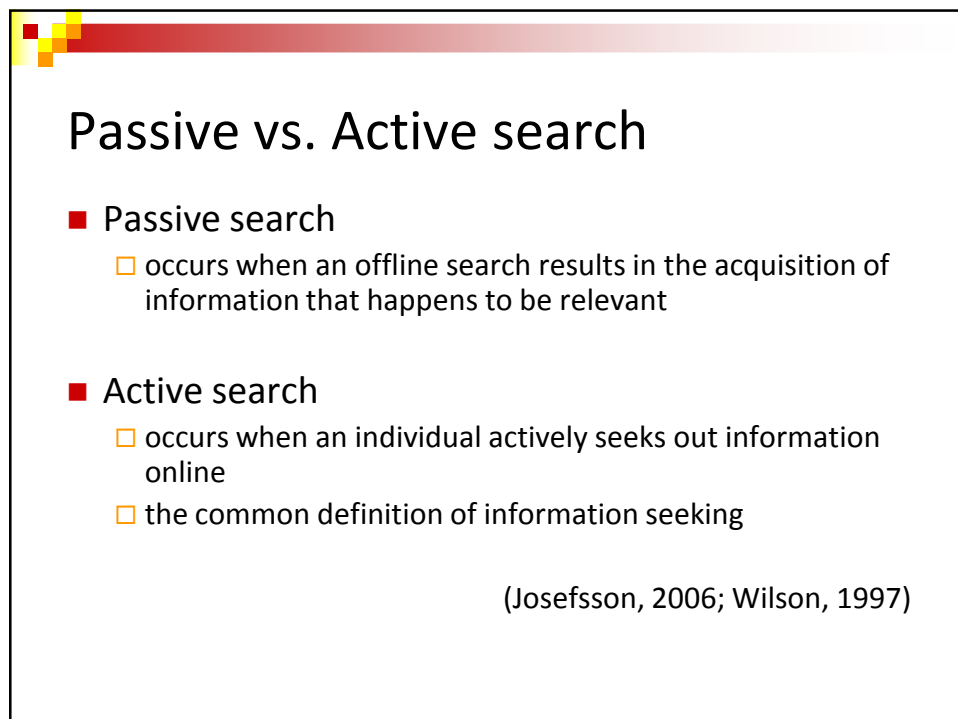
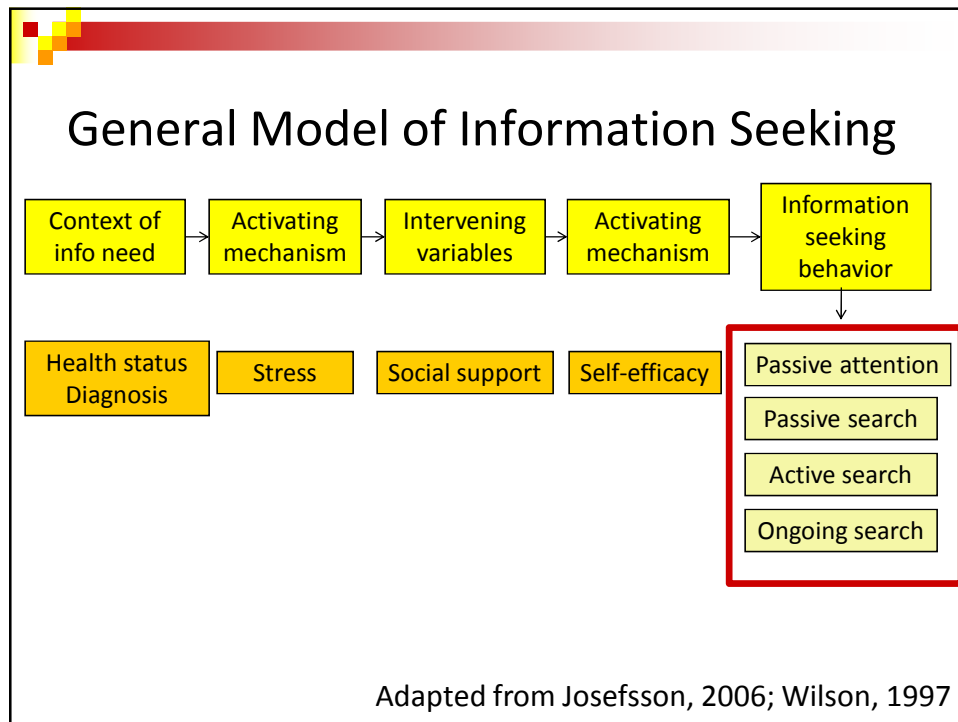
## Modes of Online Health Information Acquisition

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## Introduction

- The Internet is becoming a critical channel for information dissemination and retrieval
- 80% of all US adults have sought health info online (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2006)





## Health status

- Perceived condition severity needs to be sufficiently high in order for patients to pay attention to health information related to condition (Rosenstock, 1974; Prentice-Dunn & Rogers, 1986)



## Stress

- Perceived severity of one's medical condition can lead to higher levels of perceived stress.
- Stress caused by perceived severity of medical condition can motivate online health information search in order to reduce uncertainty (Kuhlthau, 1991).



## Social support

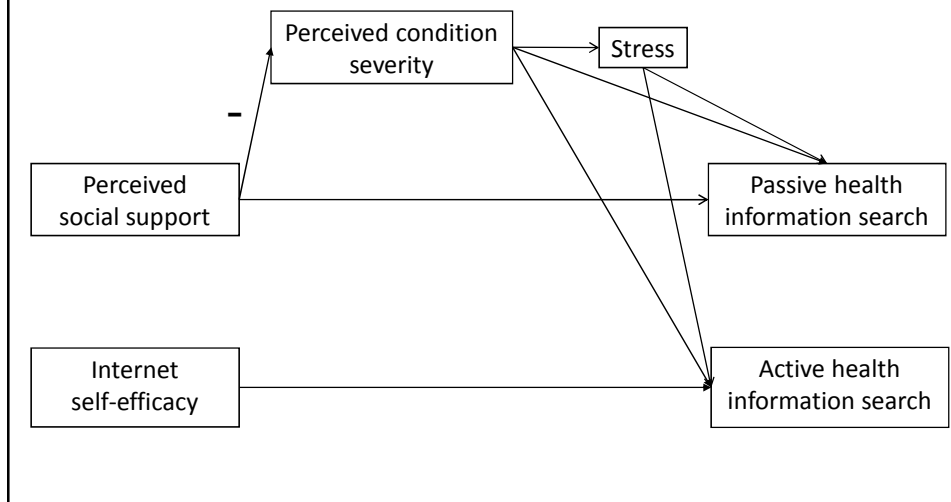
- Patients with higher levels of emotional support perceived their conditions less severe (Cheng, Hui & Man, 2004)
- Family and close friends can aid patients under stress; help find relevant information online (Loiselle, Lambert & Cooke, 2006)



## Internet self-efficacy

- The belief that one can successfully accomplish general Internet-related behaviors (Eastin & LaRose, 2000)

## Hypothesized Model



## Methods

- A survey module was attached to the Annenberg National Health Communication Survey
- Data was collected online between May and June, 2008 by Knowledge Networks
- Inclusion criteria:
  - Diagnosed with a serious health condition involving continuing treatment by a health care provider
  - Have gone online for information related to the health issue

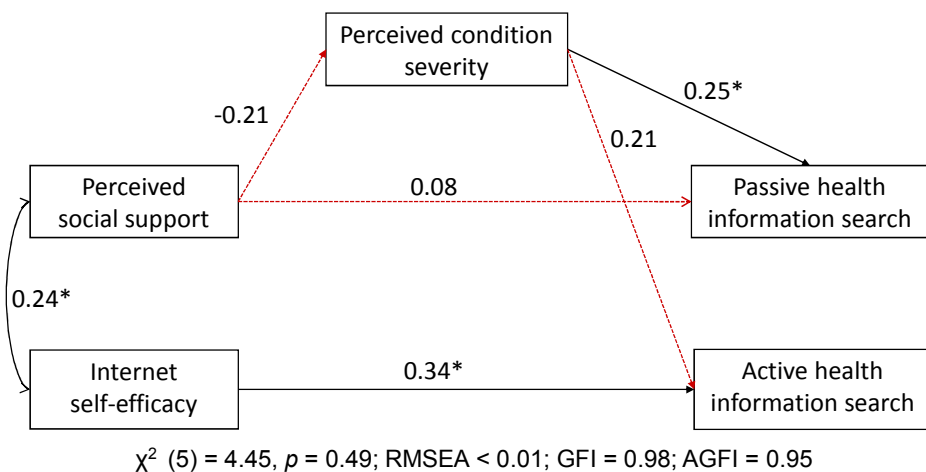
## Measures

- Perceived Condition Severity
- Perceived Stress
- Perceived Social Support
- Internet Self-Efficacy
- Search Behavior:
  - Passive search
  - Active search

## Results

Information Acquisition Methods Used (N = 101)	% Yes
I was talking about my health issues with my friends or family, and they recommended the site or sites.	35.6
I was reading some material from my doctor's office, and it recommended the site or sites.	32.7
I was reading an article or book about my health issue, and the site or sites were mentioned.	50.5
I used a search engine (such as Google or Yahoo) to find information about my health issue on the Internet.	85.1
I visited a medical site or sites (eg. WebMD or Mayo Clinic) to find information on my health issue.	73.3
I found online communities devoted to my health issue.	27.7
I have visited a site or sites designed for professionals such as online medical journals.	39.6
I clicked on some links to find more sites about my health issue.	69.3

## Final Model (N = 101)



## Implications

- Internet self-efficacy is a particularly strong predictor of active searching for health information.
- Condition severity is related to passive searching.