International Conference on Gerontechnology 2026

(Abstract No.: 5115)

Explore cybersecurity awareness of older adults when using internet and online social activities - A pilot study

Irene Yuen-fung Wong, Tyrone Tai-on Kwok, Yvonne Hon-ling Lam, Shirley Suet-yee Hui, Kwok-fai Lam
School of Nursing and Health Sciences, Hong Kong Metropolitan University, Hong Kong, China

Background: Digital technology has transformed communication, commerce and daily life but it has also increased the risk of cybersecurity threats including data breaches, online fraud, and identity theft. Older adults are consistently the primary targets of scammers.

Objectives: This pilot single-group survey aims to collect preliminary data on older adults' perceived cybersecurity awareness, digital device use, and preferred learning approaches to prevent scam encounters (HE-SF2025/73).

Methods: Administering self-designed questionnaire to collect data to investigate the experiences and perspectives on cybersecurity among older adults from November 2025 to January 2026. Descriptive quantitative analysis was used for data analysis.

Results: Thirty local older adults (90% aged 60–70; 60% male; with 57% secondary education; 100% Chinese ethnicity) took part in the survey. The results demonstrated that nearly half of them (n=12, 40%) reported having encountered fake online scams previously. Thirteen participants (43%) expressed concern, and 57% (n=17) indicated interest in participating in the innovative instructional approach (i.e., AI or VR-based activities) to enhance their cybersecurity awareness. Overall the data collected improved our understanding of older adults' use of digital technology.

Conclusion: By identifying the results of this pilot survey on cybersecurity threats targeting older adults, this study provides healthcare workers with information on how to support older adults' learning (e.g., using technology-based methods) and reduce their risk of falling victim to cyber deception.

Findings:

40%

Encountered Scams

12 of 30 participants reported prior fake online scam encounters

43%

Worried About Fraud

13 participants expressed concern about falling into online fraud traps

57%

Open to AI/VR Learning

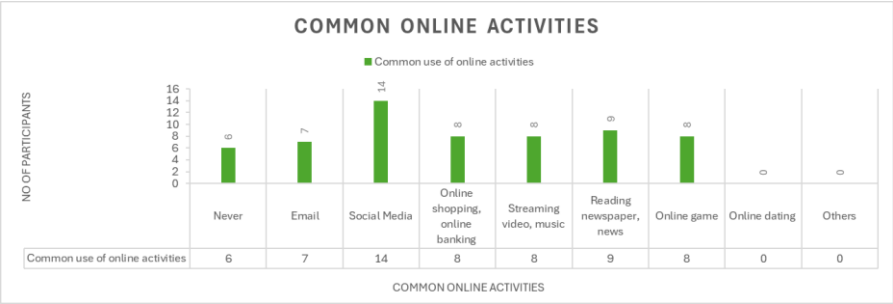
17 participants interested in innovative instructional approaches (AI or VR-based)

63%

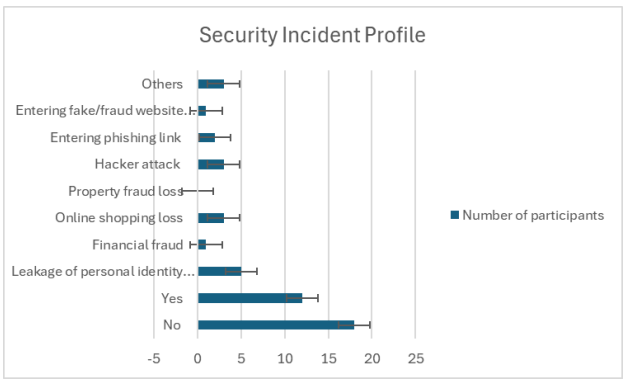
Self-Confident

19 participants confident they can identify and avoid online fraud

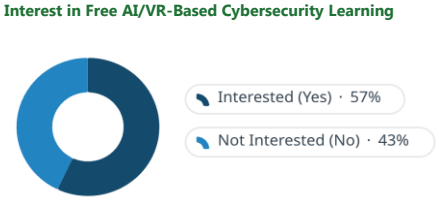
Common Online Activities



Communication Methods & Security Incident Profile



Learning Preferences & Interest in Innovative Methods



Contact: yfwong@hkmu.edu.hk | ttokwok@hkmu.edu.hk | ylam@hkmu.edu.hk | syshui@hkmu.edu.hk | kflam@@hkmu.edu.hk