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### UTILIZING CULTURALLY ACCEPTED SOCIAL MEDIA TO ENGAGE CHINESE AMERICAN PATIENTS TO STOP SMOKING

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**Abstract:**

**Significance:** Smoking prevalence remains high among Chinese American immigrants, particularly in men with limited English proficiency. We piloted the use of WeChat, a culturally accepted and widely used social media platform among Chinese Americans and Chinese globally, to engage Chinese outpatients to promote smoking cessation. **Methods:** We conducted a pilot randomized controlled trial (RCT) with Chinese current smokers identified via electronic health records of a community-based medical center in San Francisco. Eligible participants (self-identified as Chinese, reported smoking cigarettes daily in the past 7 days, ages between 18-70, smartphone users and able to read Chinese) were randomized into intervention (WeChat, n=30) or Control (assessment-only, n=30). WeChat participants received "WeChat-To-Quit" weekly messages for 6 weeks with messages tailored to users' responses on readiness to stop smoking. Assessment surveys were administered via WeChat at baseline, 1 and 3 months after intervention. Using WeChat video group chat, 3 post-RCT focus groups were conducted with 10 participants selected from participants with high and low levels of intervention engagement. **Results:** Participants included 95% male, 48% aged 65+ (range: 33 to 81 years old), 53% had < high school education, and 86% spoke poor or no English. A majority smoked 10+ cigarettes daily (72%) and had no intention to quit within 6 months (70%). Program engagement was high, 74% interacted with at least 1 weekly message, and 50% completed 3 out of 6 weeks of the program. At 3-month, 80% would recommend the program to others. Few (n=1) participants achieved 7-day abstinence, but WeChat Intervention participants reported more 24-hour quit attempts than Control participants (0.5 vs 1.8; p= 0.02). Focus group participants unanimously expressed a strong preference for using WeChat to receive health related messages due to the convenience of this messaging platform. **Conclusions:** Findings showed that the newly developed WeChat-based intervention was able to engage both motivated and unmotivated smokers. Our culturally appropriate social media intervention has high acceptance and promises in motivating smokers to make quit attempts, which may ultimately promote smoking cessation. Findings provide preliminary evidence for building a culturally appropriate and scalable health systems intervention to address tobacco-related disparities in vulnerable Chinese American immigrants.

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