

# **BECOMING INFORMED: A GROUNDED THEORY OF HOW OLDER GREEK AND ITALIAN MIGRANTS TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA FIND EVERYDAY INFORMATION**

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## SUMMARY

There is little research on how the ethnicity, migration, socio-economic status, education or gender of older people shapes how they find everyday information. One such group is the ageing culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) migrant population on which there is little research on how they gather information and the role which information and communication technologies (ICT) plays in this compared with traditional modes of communication. Addressing this should be a priority in Australia, and other migrant receiving countries that have an old and ageing population, including many post-war migrants from non-English speaking European countries at a time when governments and organisations are increasingly using ICT to disseminate information.

This qualitative study interviewed 54 older Greek and Italian migrants to investigate how they find information they need to function in their everyday lives. Adopting a constructivist grounded theory approach allowed the exploration of the phenomenon from the participants' perspective, accommodating issues around the (re)construction of their experiences associated with migration that occurred more than forty years ago and more recently and the need to engage interpreters to address language differences between participants and researcher. It demonstrates originality in two important aspects, the cohort selected for the study and the approach taken to understanding the experience of the participants. In addition, qualitative social network analysis (SNA) illustrated the nature and extent of participants' social and information networks in accessing everyday information. This study of information needs is one of few to engage purposively non-English speaking migrants and in so doing positions the migrant at the centre of the research aimed to understand the phenomenon from their perspectives. Further, it locates the information behaviour in the process of migration and subsequent acculturation to Anglo-Australian culture.

The thesis presents a substantive theory *Becoming Informed* representing the experiences of older CALD migrants finding the everyday information they need. Categories that inform the basic social process of *Needing to Know* include *Leaving Home and Starting from Scratch*, *Acquiring Necessities*, *Ways of Finding Out* and *Reconstructing Identity*.

Results show older migrants accessed the information they need using a variety of means from a range of sources including other people, printed material and radio and television services. However, older migrants in this study do not generally use ICT, defined as computers and Internet, to access everyday information. Literacy and the degree of acculturation, as indicated by the extent of use of English language, influenced the range of information sources accessed and the means used. Bilingual participants used English-language sources as well as sources offered in their birth language. Participants without functional English-language skills accessed sources limited to their birth language and also required bi-lingual family members, ethno specific service providers and interpreter services to gather information from English language sources. Those who were not literate in either language depend most heavily on others to access and provide information.

At present participants did not perceive any functional knowledge deficits as they access everyday information from multiple sources. This situation may change if governments and organisations continue the shift to providing information using ICT, particularly so in the case of the ‘digital by default’ option; non-digital means or the engagement of ‘information brokers’ should remain an option for older CALD migrants to receive everyday information.



## DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

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Kenneth Thomas Goodall

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