

## Library In A Medical College: Need To Change With Time

Bhavana Ganesh Bhirud\*, Shubhada Gade\*\*, Mohan Manohar Sagdeo\*\*\*

\* Assistant Lecturer, \*\* Associate Professor, \*\*\* Head of Department, \* NKPSIMS & RC, Hingna, Digdoh Hills, Nagpur.

**Abstract:** Context: As medical science is a continuously advancing discipline, the use of medical library by teachers is an important means for enhancing knowledge & skills. Aim: To assess the changing needs of teachers and availability of library services. Settings and Design: Descriptive observational study, Cross sectional in design. Method: Data collection was done among 100 randomly selected teachers, by pretested, predesigned, self responding questionnaire. Response rate was 70%. Statistical Analysis: Statistical analysis was done by using Likert scale. Result: As departmental libraries and users were more updated, use of college library by medical teachers is limited as a place to sit (36%) and for reading newspapers (61%). 30% of staff used e-library due to lack of internet speed. 50% of the staff used e-resources daily for retrieving information by using departmental computers, personal laptops, smart phones and tablets. 34% of staff felt that book collection is good while 36% of the staff was not satisfied about journal collection and rated it as poor. Conclusion: Though E-resources were the most preferred way for information access, it was least used due to lack of awareness and speed of internet. Library need to improve e-resources, journal collection and infrastructural facilities effectively by overcoming issues and challenges. [Bhavana B NJIRM 2017; 8(1): 104-108]

**Key words:** Needs assessment, Teachers, Medical college, e-library.

**Author for correspondence:** Bhavana Ganesh Bhirud, 71, Kannamwar nagar, Wardha road, Nagpur - 440015, maharashtra. E-Mail: bhavanawarade@gmail.com M: 8983327895 Phone: 07122288607

**Introduction:** The medical professionals require pinpointed, accurate, and speedy information for updating their knowledge.<sup>1</sup> In the era of information technology; internet is becoming widely used by them to enhance their academic excellence by providing latest information. It also helps the students, teachers and institutions to disseminate information to more viewers worldwide through websites.<sup>2</sup> This changing technology, explosion of information and the transition of libraries from print to electronic have influenced the user behavior.<sup>3</sup> As libraries are established and maintained for users, its collection and services should be based on users' needs. Needs assessment is a critical component of the Standards for Library and Information Services.<sup>4</sup> While developing library services very little emphasis has been given upon the understanding of user's needs and services given.<sup>5</sup> In order to bridge this gap, the present survey has been conducted in a private medical college to assess the needs of medical teachers.

### Aims & Objectives:

- To identify the adequacy of library services.
- To assess the library needs of the teachers.
- To assess the pattern of use of library by teachers.
- To know the faculty awareness and attitude about different services and facilities provided by library.
- To suggest means and ways for optimum utilization of library.

**Methodology:** A cross sectional study was designed and permission from institutional ethical committee was obtained prior to study. Total 100 teachers were randomly selected from various preclinical and clinical departments. Tool used for data collection was a self responding questionnaire.

Questionnaire: Questionnaire was designed and got validated from MET unit faculty of the institute. Questionnaire was based on frequency of library visit, reasons for visit, material consulted, use of e-library, problems faced while using e-library, benefits of e-resources over traditional ones, opinions about infrastructural facilities of the library. It contains total 18 questions, out of that 16 are completion type of questions requiring factual type of answers, out of which 7 were on use of library, 8 on use of e library, 1 on infrastructure of the library and 1 open ended question.

Teachers were explained about the purpose of the study. Informed verbal consent was taken prior to study. Questionnaire was administered to them in their free time i.e. lunch break from 1 to 2pm. Teachers were interviewed for open ended questions. Compilation of collected data was done in table and graphical form.

**Result:** Statistical analysis was done by using Likert scale. Response rate was 70% out of 100 teachers. Among total faculty members, 33% were lecturers, 31% were senior residents, 20% were professors while

16% were Associate Professor. The observations were as follows:

**Use of college Library in last one year:** From table no. 1, it was observed that 27% faculty used library once in a week and once in a month, mainly senior residents and lecturers. 13% used library daily, 24% visited library once in a year, while 9% of the teachers have never visited library in the last one year.

**Purpose of visiting library:** When the faculty was enquired about the purpose for visiting library, (Fig no. 1) it was found that majority (36%) of staff used it as a place to sit for their work like preparation for lectures, seminars and projects and for reading newspapers. 30% of the staff used library for updating their knowledge. 23% used it for retrieving literature. Only 11% of the staff used journal section of the library.

**Objectives fulfilled after visiting library:** Fulfillment of objectives depends upon the fact that with which objectives faculty are coming to library. As the faculty used library mainly for reading newspapers and for completion of their own work, 37.5% of the faculty said that their objectives were fully fulfilled after visiting library. While 26% of the staff, mainly associate professors said that their objectives were partially fulfilled.

**Time spent in library:** 65% of the teachers spent less than 1 hour in a library. 35% teachers spent 2 to 3 hours in the library.

**Use of e-Library:** From table no.2, it was found that, majority of staff (69%) staff was not using e-library, 14% used it for e-books and e-journals and while 3% used it for preparation of lectures and seminars. 45% of the staff said that slow speed was the problem, while 20% of the staff said that lack of IT knowledge was a problem for them. 35% of the staff was unaware of the e-resources provided by the library.

When asked about benefits of using e-resources, it was found that majority (42%) of the staff said that, updated information is available. 27% said that, it is preferred method for searching references for research purpose as many journals are published in electronic form only. 31% of the staff said that, it is more easy and speedy way to access the information.

Almost 73% of the staff felt that e-resources can replace conventional resources partially provided access speed is fast.

Almost 50% of the staff used e-resources daily for retrieving information. 47% of the staff used departmental computers for accessing information. 23% used personal laptops while 30% used smart phones and tablets.

**Material consulted in library:** From table no. 3, it was found that, 61% of the staff visited library for reading newspapers and majority of them were professors and lecturers. 16% of the staff used textbook facility and 19% used journal section of the library, mainly senior residents. 3% of the staff, mainly lecturers and associate professors used reference book facility of the library.

**Faculty opinion about total collection of library:** Faculty opinion was taken about total collection of library. Fig no. 2 shows, 34.3% of faculty felt that book collection was good while 51% felt that, it is average. Majority (36%) of the staff was not satisfied about journal collection and rated it as poor. 39% of the staff felt that it is average. Due to lack of awareness and speed of internet, e-journals and e-books subscribed by the library were not easily accessible. About current affairs like newspapers, magazines, 36% of teachers felt that, it is average.

**Means of locating material in library:** 65% of the faculty preferred to seek assistance from library staff for locating the material. Remaining 34% of the faculty browsed themselves through shelves. Nobody used OPAC system due to lack of awareness about it.

**Opinion about the Library Services like cleanliness, cooling system, adequacy of space and help offered by library staff:** From Fig no.3 it was found that, majority (80 to 90%) of staff was satisfied about the help offered by library staff, cleanliness and adequate space in the library. But regarding cooling system and drinking water facility majority of the staff was very unhappy.

**Opinion about library timings:** Almost all the staff was satisfied about library timing. When suggestions were invited for improvement of library facility, majority (56%) of staff suggested that there was a need to improve on journal collection and e- library.

**Discussion:** Well equipped medical libraries are essential in order to meet the needs of medical teachers and students which may vary from time to time.<sup>5</sup> Many library studies have found that, little emphasis has been placed upon ability of library to provide needed information.<sup>4</sup> So this survey was done to assess library needs of teachers and availability of resources.

In the present survey, it was found that, 13% of the staff visited library daily, 27% visited once in a week and once in a month. 24% visited only once in a year while 9% have never visited library in last one year. Due to the nature of work in medical profession, faculty is involved in teaching, research, and in clinical practice. So there should be easy access to medical information at any time.<sup>6</sup> Keeping in view of this need, college library helped for updating departmental library regularly with respect to book collection as well as e-resources. The e-library section of college library was poor due to lack of speed of internet. Thus departmental libraries were more updated than college library with respect to printed as well as e-resources. And this could be the reason that, almost 30% of the staff did not use college library.

On asking purpose for visiting library, it was found that, 30% of the staff visited library for updating their knowledge. Majority of the staff used library as a place to sit and for reading current affairs like newspaper, magazines. Journal collection and e-library was the least used sections of the library. This doesn't justify the use of library resources. There were many studies showing similar results.<sup>7,8</sup>

On asking reason for this, staff has suggested to improve e-library as it is the most preferred and easy method to access information. This finding was corroborative with other studies.<sup>9,10</sup>

Medical professionals need various kinds of audio-visual material and e-resources for effective teaching, research and clinical practice<sup>11</sup>. For this, the right information must be available for the right person at the right time in its appropriate format and it is the responsibility of library to provide required information<sup>11</sup>

When asked about fulfillment of objectives, 26% of the staff, mainly associate professors said that their

objectives were partially fulfilled due to lack of updated information in the library.

As most of the teachers used library for reading newspapers and completion of their work, they spent less than 1 hour in the library.

About use of e-library, it was found that majority of the staff did not use e-library. Though the college library had provided Elsevier and MUHS digital library subscription through which online journals and books could be accessible, it was not being used by the staff due to lack of speed of internet .

On enquiring with librarian regarding this problem, it was found that, there was a problem in budget allocating, finance and IT facility provided to the library. IT infrastructure of the institute had supplied Reliance net connection of 1mbps which was shared by 40 computers. This was inadequate speed for downloading e- material. Also non availability of static IP address, had affected the utility of e-journal facility. To solve this problem, library had provided user ID and password of clinical key Elsevier subscription to all users so that, users' need not come to the library but can access digital library facility through their respective departments.

About the problem faced while using e-library, 42% of the staff said that, lack of computer knowledge and speed was the problem. 35% staff said that they were unaware about availability of e-resources in the library. Some of the staff members commented that, information available on internet was not organized most of the times they were unable to get pinpointed information.

Studies also observed that information availability does not mean accessibility and use<sup>14</sup> Ability to use e-resources efficiently depends on basic computer skills and knowledge of what is available and how to use it. As the library plays a leading role in faculty-library relationship, there is a need to identify the areas of training needed by faculty to utilize e-resources efficiently and effectively and should organize orientation programs and hands on training workshops for faculty.<sup>6</sup>

About benefits of e-resources, majority of the staff (69%) said that it is the most preferred method for updating knowledge and searching references for

research purposes. Majority of the teachers said that, they use power point presentation for teaching and require e-resources. 20% of the staff found that, it was more easy and speedy method to access and save information. We got similar results in other studies also.<sup>1,2,6</sup>

Studies have shown that, teachers and students used internet daily and majority of them used it at college. E-resources, audio-visual methods have immense role in teaching-learning process.<sup>14</sup> Teaching faculty construct web pages to help students to gather data and to provide access to other resources. Students also prefer to email their teachers rather than face to face meetings.<sup>15</sup>

Regarding frequency and mode of use of e-library, it was found that, almost 50% of the staff used e-resources daily for retrieving information. 47% used departmental computers for this purpose. 23% used personal laptops while 30% used smart phones and tablets. This showed that increased use of smart phones, tablets had changed the way of learning and its time for college library, to update its e-resources for effective utilization.

College library is partially automated in which all in house procedures like accessioning, cataloging, circulation, user information and serial processing are included. It is a need of time to make it fully automated. There are many studies showed that medical college libraries are lacking basic automation and database services.<sup>12</sup> Libraries are no longer just dealing with digital textual resources but wide range of different types of data.<sup>16</sup> And it is a need of time that, library should become a fully functional repository where the data about staff research publications and annual events organized by all departments is kept and updated regularly Majority (73%) of the staff felt that e-resources can replace conventional resources to some extent, provided access speed is fast. There are studies supporting this finding, in which 100% of the staff said that e resources can replace conventional resources.<sup>17</sup> Teaching staff has also suggested that, there is a need to provide printout facility in the library for users.

E library also saves the space and shelving cost of the library.

Though OPAC system is available in the library for locating the library resources, due to lack of awareness nobody used it. Majority of the staff seek assistance from library staff, while 34% browse through shelves. We got similar findings in a study done by Susan Powelson at the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region.

Infrastructural facilities of the library are very important, as it provides comfort for the readers and affects the utility of library. Majority of staff is satisfied about cleanliness and adequacy of space. But regarding cooling system and drinking water facility majority of staff said that it needs to improve.

**Conclusion:** E-resources were the most preferred method for accessing and storing information by the users. But due to many technical issues e-library was the most underutilized section of the library. And this has affected overall utility of library.

Proposed suggestions are 1) Internet speed needs to be improved. 2) Print out facility should be provided to users 3) Library should organize orientation programs and hands on training workshops for faculty.4) There should be separate web page of library, which will show availability of library resources. 5) Infrastructural facilities like cooling system, drinking water facility needs to be improved. From this survey, the feedback which we got from teachers helped us in assessing the current needs of teachers and in formulating new policies for improving library services.

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