

**ORIGINAL ARTICLE**

## A STUDY ABOUT LIBRARY USAGE BY UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL STUDENTS IN A MEDICAL COLLEGE IN NORTH INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Since no study has been done regarding use of library in medical students in North India and very few studies in whole of India that is why this study was conceived.

**Objective:** To study the use of library by medical students in all the professional courses in Government Medical College, Chandigarh U.T.

**Material and Methods:** 235 students were administered pre-structured and pre-tested proforma in classroom and guided filling of proforma was done by authors.

**Results:** Maximum students (265) were in the age group of 18-25 years. 122 students felt that their objectives were partially fulfilled in the library, 71 felt their objectives were fully fulfilled in the library, while 20 felt none of their objectives were fulfilled in the library. 64.5 % students were visiting library for updating their knowledge, 31.7% for retrieving literature, 18.7% for information on a specific disease, 12.6% for research purposes, 6.7% for diagnosis, 2.6% for publications, 2.2% for patient care. Among the IT services available 57% were using computer, 54.1% were utilising internet, 47.01% were using E mail, 32.5% were using E books, 31.3% were using CD ROM, and 28.3% were using telephone. Out of benefits available of using IT services 75.7% said it lead to better access to information, 51.8% said it provided quick information, 42.9% said it lead to contact with distant personnel, 44.75% believed it lead to improvement in quality of work, 22.7% said it lead to decrease in use of postal mail, 10.8% said it lead to decrease in use of telephone, 10.1% said it lead to decrease in use of print version. 34.3 % ( 91) students opined that there was need for an orientation programme regarding the use of IT services in the library.

**Keywords:** Library usage, undergraduate, medical college

### INTRODUCTION

One of the major goals of medical education is to encourage students to maintain their knowledge of medical science by becoming life-long learners.<sup>1</sup> Adequate skills in information seeking and regular use of original scientific sources are key elements in this process. With regard to medical informatics education, both information processing and information technology have

been considered relevant for the quality of healthcare.<sup>2</sup>

Though formal education draws more attention, education in its real sense starts through informal self - learning. It has been observed that both teachers and medical students rely mostly on text and didactic lectures. As medical science is a continuously advancing discipline, the use of medical library, both by students as

well as the teachers, is an important means for enhancing knowledge and skills.<sup>3</sup>

The major purpose of the library is to provide information.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the traditional function of collecting, organizing and providing access to information in print, modern libraries include online databases.<sup>5</sup> Medical students may not be able to learn all that they have to know only from formal classroom lectures. They also must learn to collect information by their own efforts, to develop adequate professional competence.<sup>6</sup>

Though an institution may have the best stocked libraries, the utilization of the libraries by the students need not simply depend on the number of books and journals in the library. Many factors like personal preferences, the general environment in the library, inconveniences of the working hours, distance from the place of residence, etc may influence the use of the libraries in order to meet the needs of the medical students.

This study was undertaken to determine usage pattern of the information resources and library services in the Government Medical College, Chandigarh, India. The feedback which is thus collected may help in formulating new policies and improving services and will also give information about what is expected as against what is available.

### AIM

To study the use of library by medical students in all the professional courses at Government Medical College and Hospital, Chandigarh U.T.

### OBJECTIVES

- To find out the extent of use of the library.
- To identify the utilization of IT services in the library.
- To suggest ways to improve the resources in the library

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

A cross-sectional study was planned to be conducted amongst the students of various professionals at the Government medical College and Hospital, Chandigarh. A predesigned and a pretested questionnaire was used to collect data .The questionnaire consisted

of 27 questions. The questionnaire had following details –demographic data, utilisation pattern of library and IT services, fulfilment of objectives, personal opinion. The study was done from June 2005 to June 2011.

### RESULTS

Maximum students (265) were in the age group of 18-25 years.

According to the professional year in M.B.B.S, 109 students belonged to first professional, 79 were from Second professional, and 80 were from Final Professional.

122 students felt that their objectives were partially fulfilled in the library, 71 felt their objectives were fully fulfilled in the library, while 20 felt none of their objectives were fulfilled in the library.

95.52% Students were not dependant on the library staff for search on internet. 41 students were fully satisfied with the IT services in the library,93 were partially satisfied,17 were not satisfied and 107 did not respond. 34.3 %( 91) students opined that there was need for an orientation programme regarding the use of IT services in the library

**Table 1: Daily Library Use**

Time Spent Daily in the Library	Number (%)
≤ 1 Hour	150 (56.6)
2-3 Hour	63 (23.8)
>3 Hour	16 (06.0)

**Table 2: Frequency of library Usage**

Frequency of Usage	Number (%)
Daily	55 (20.5)
Once-Twice a week	117 (43.6)
Once in Fortnight-Month	26 (09.7)
Rarely	31 (11.5)
Never	39 (14.5)

Table No.3 depicts IT services usage pattern in the Library. Among the IT services available 57% were using computer, 54.1% were utilising internet, 47.01% were using E mail, 32.5% were using E books, 31.3%were using CD ROM, and 28.3% were using telephone

**Table 3: IT Services Usage Pattern in the Library**

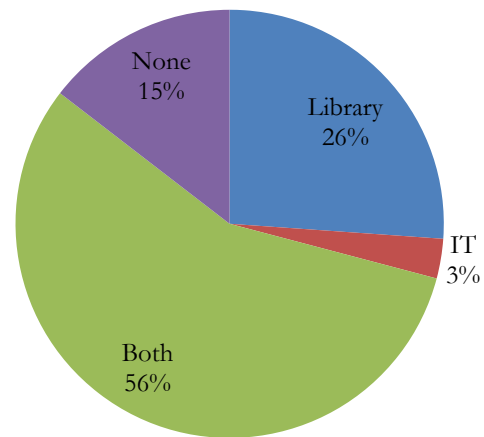
Services	Number (%)
Computer	154 (57.4)
Internet	145 (54.1)
E Mail	126 (47.0)
E Books	87 (32.5)
Cd-Rom	84 (31.3)
Telephone	76 (28.3)
Fax	26 (09.7)
Audio/Video	18 (06.7)
Any Other	20 (07.4)

said it lead to contact with distant personnel, 44.75% believed it lead to improvement in quality of work, 22.7% said it lead to decrease in use of postal mail, 10.8% said it lead to decrease in use of telephone, 10.1% said it lead to decrease in use of print version.

Figure No.1 shows the usage of library and its facilities by the students. 56.3% students were using both library and IT services, 26.1% were only using library and 2.9% were utilising IT services alone and 14.5% were not utilising any services.

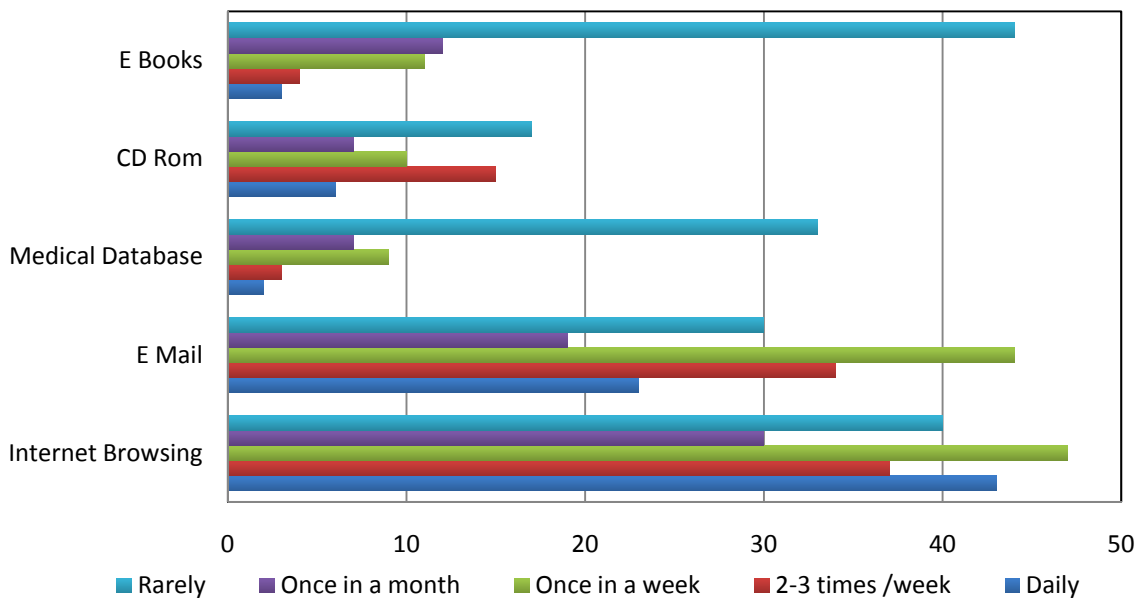
**Table Number 4: Benefits taken by the students**

	Number (%)
Better access to information	203 (75.7)
Quick information	139 (51.8)
Improvement in quality of work	120 (44.7)
Contact with distance personnel	115 (42.9)
Decrease in use of postal mail	61 (22.7)
Decrease in use of telephone	29 (10.8)
Decrease in use of print version	27 (10.1)



**Figure 1: Usage of library and its facilities**

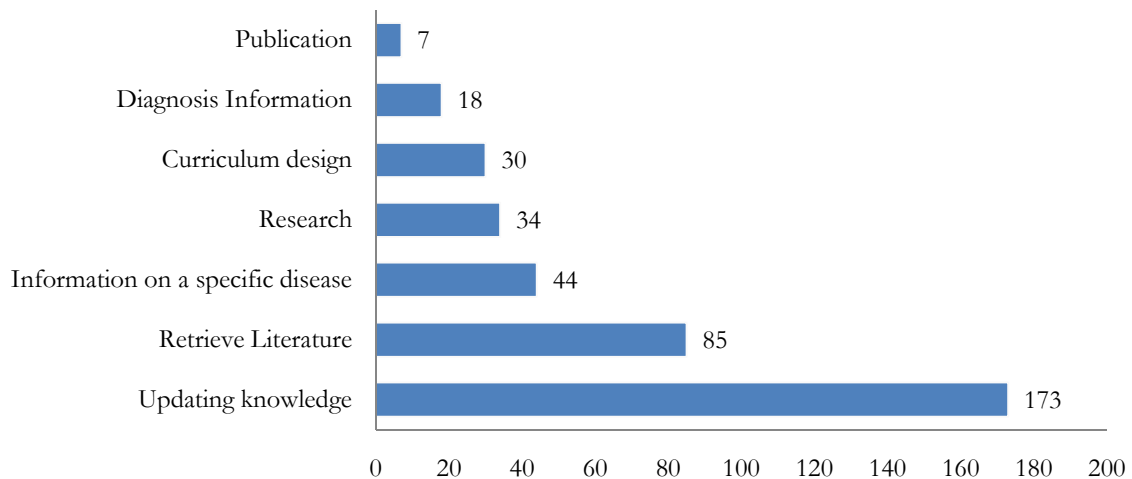
Out of benefits available of using IT services 75.7% said it lead to better access to information, 51.8% said it provided quick information, 42.9%



**Figure 2: Frequency of usage of IT services by the students**

Figure No.3 shows objectives of the students regarding the Library usage. 64.5 % students were visiting library for updating their knowledge, 31.7% for retrieving literature, 18.7%

for information on a specific disease, 12.6% for research purposes, 6.7% for diagnosis, 2.6% for publications, 2.2% for patient care.



**Figure 3: Objectives of students regarding Library usage**

## DISCUSSION

90.3% students visiting the library reported consulting textbooks according to our study. A study conducted in north India<sup>7</sup> showed that the majority of students (82%) only consulted textbooks. The authors found there was a need to train and motivate undergraduates to make better use of library resources.

A similar study conducted in Kolkata<sup>3</sup> found that the majority of interns (62%) visited the library to prepare for examination. Other reasons for coming to the library were: seminars (14%); to consult manuscripts / dissertation / project reports (12%); and lack of personal books (10%). Amongst teachers, the majority (72%) came to the library to prepare lectures or for seminars; 42% came because they did not have their own books; and 39% were preparing manuscripts / dissertation / project reports.

20.5% students were visiting library daily, 43.6% were visiting once a week, 9.7% were visiting fortnightly according to our study while study in Bhavnagar<sup>8</sup> found 42% of respondents visited the library daily, 15% went every other day 26% once a week, 3% fortnightly while in our study 20.5% visited the library daily, 43.6% went once a week and 9.7% every fortnight.

56.6% students were spending less than one hour in lib daily, 23.8% were spending two to three hours and 6% were spending more than three hours daily in library according to our study while 19% were spending less than one hour daily and 39% of the respondents were spending 2-4 hours daily in library according to study conducted at Bhavnagar. The primary

reason for visiting the library was for borrowing/reading books which are in line with findings of study carried out at Bhavnagar.

In usage of IT services 95.5% respondents in the present study did not need the help of library staff. Internet Browsing and Email were most popular IT services availed by the respondents.

46% respondents expressed partial fulfilment of objectives in library while 26.7% students expressed complete fulfilment of their objectives in the library.

## CONCLUSION

Majority of students prefer to read their own books in the library or to read text books. The role of well equipped medical library in order to meet the needs of medical students cannot be over emphasized. The effectiveness of a library as an instrument of learning is determined by the success with which it is able to provide the user the information he/she seeks. The library can fulfil its function best by pursuing a policy of constant self evaluation in order to meet be alert to the changing needs of its users.

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