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Specific Use of Internet Amongst Health Care Professionals in a Rural Tertiary Medical College of India

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Specific Use of Internet Amongst Health Care Professionals in a Rural Tertiary Medical College of India

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Abstract

INTRODUCTION : The study was conducted at Pramukhswami Medical College in Karamsad (Gujarat, India) from November-August 2007 to assess the Computer and Internet usage amongst health care professionals. **OBJECTIVE:** To identify the knowledge of Computer and Internet of health care professionals of Pramukhswami Medical College and to understand the information-seeking behavior. We have observed the search habits of Internet users at PSMC. Efforts are on to find the search requirements related to the use of the Internet information. **METHODS:** They were given a questionnaire to collect the data. **RESULTS:** Results show that all the respondents are using the Internet frequently because. They use the Internet in different ways, such as accessing to online journals, downloading text, chatting, discussion, E-mail services and for finding related references. It is revealed that the professionals of PSMC are getting quality information through the Internet. It is observed that the Google and Yahoo search engines are more widely use compared to other search engines. **CONCLUSION:** The study revealed that high computer usage among health care professionals in an institution with good computer facilities. The majority expressed their willingness to undergo further training

Keywords: Internet usage, Internet access, Search engines, Search strategy, Information searching, Browsers, Digital information, Information seeking behavior, India, Gujarat.

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Specific use of Internet amongst Health Care Professionals in a rural tertiary Medical College of India

Abstract :

INTRODUCTION : The study was conducted at Pramukhswami Medical College in Karamsad from November-August 2007 to assess the Computer and Internet usage amongst health care professionals. *OBJECTIVE:* To identify the knowledge of Computer and Internet of health care professionals of Pramukhswami Medical College and to understand the information-seeking behavior. We have observed the search habits of Internet users at PSMC. Efforts are on to find the search requirements related to the use of the Internet information. *METHODS:* They were given a questionnaire to collect the data. *RESULTS:* Results show that all the respondents are using the Internet frequently because. They use the Internet in different ways, such as accessing to online journals, downloading text, chatting, discussion, E-mail services and for finding related references. It is revealed that the professionals of PSMC are getting quality information through the Internet. It is observed that the Google and Yahoo search engines are more widely use compared to other search engines. *CONCLUSION:* The study revealed that high computer usage among health care professionals in an institution with good computer facilities. The majority expressed their willingness to undergo further training.

Key Words: Internet usage, Internet access, Search engines, Search strategy, Information searching, Browsers, Digital information, Information seeking behavior, India, Gujarat.

Introduction :

The Internet is the world's largest network of Information, Communication and Services. Although the internet is widely used in medicine and has made significant impact in research, training and patient care. Few studies have explore the extent to which only physicians use internet resources for the purpose of health information for the patient care as well as for teaching purposes. The library and information science research community has carried out a substantial body of work examining health care professionals' information needs, information -seeking behavior and use. [1]

Among Health care professionals, knowledge about telemedicine, evidence based medicine(EBM) and problem based learning(PBL), good clinical practices, open access journals, Medline, Medscape, Cochrane reviews, e-medicine, MD-consult, ProQuest Medical Library(PML) etc have to be assessed.

The health care people, why do they seek health information? The reasons are, they need to be updated for the current development in medical field all over the globe. They need to obtain answers to patient's specific questions and they need information for teaching materials for undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) and for research. Regarding evidence based medicine for all rational purposes. [2,3]

In the past the health care people tried to take help from printed materials such as books, journals, handbooks, monographs held in personal libraries and also from friends.[4,5,6] However, due to increase in the pace of health care research and the introduction of computers and internet many new electronic information resources and systems are now available. Due to the easy availability of the internet there is an increased possibility of immediate access to the most recent and reliable results of clinical research in every day medical practice in developing countries as well as developed countries. However, internet is still only available to a minority of health care professionals in developing countries like India and often it is not available when actually needed. There are number of problems regarding its connectivity and speed.

Simultaneously, it is also crucial that patients have an adequate medical information to educate, sensitize and to prepare themselves before going for any medical procedure. As we all know that the introduction and popularization of internet is changing the way health care providers and the general public searched for and retrieve medical information. The internet makes possible immediate access to and acquisition of encyclopedic information.

We therefore focus our study on the central research question that is regarding specific purpose for internet use, wherein we assessed which databases/websites are frequently used.

Material & Methods :

The Pramukhswami Medical College (PSMC) and Shree Krishna Hospital (SKH) managed by HM Patel Centre for Medical Care and education (HMPCER) were established in 1987 and is one of the oldest institutions for tertiary health care teaching in

Gujarat, one of the western states of India. The attached teaching hospital is 500 bedded hospitals with various Medical specialty, subspecialty and super specialty running various consulted clinics. Pramukhswami Medical College is running undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Our study population consisted mainly of Professors, Additional Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, Tutors and Residents.

194 Health Care Professionals at the PSMC and HMPCER, Karamsad, Gujarat, India were given an anonymous standardize questionnaire regarding information/usage of internet for various databases like PubMed, Medscape, Proquest Medical Library(PML), Directory of Open Access Journals(DOAJ), E-Medicine, Free Journals for Doctors (FJ4D), Amedeo, IndMed, Multiple(EBM, Cochrane Reviews, Telemedicine etc.) were assessed.

The questionnaire elicited Information mainly on the use of /rather specific use of internet in health care providers as mentioned above for the purpose of teaching, providing medical care, providing patient care and knowledge updating.

The study period for eliciting the above information was June-2007 to Aug-2007. During this period, 200 questionnaires were distributed to all eligible respondents. Informed consent was given by return of completed questionnaire (194), the remaining did not respond.

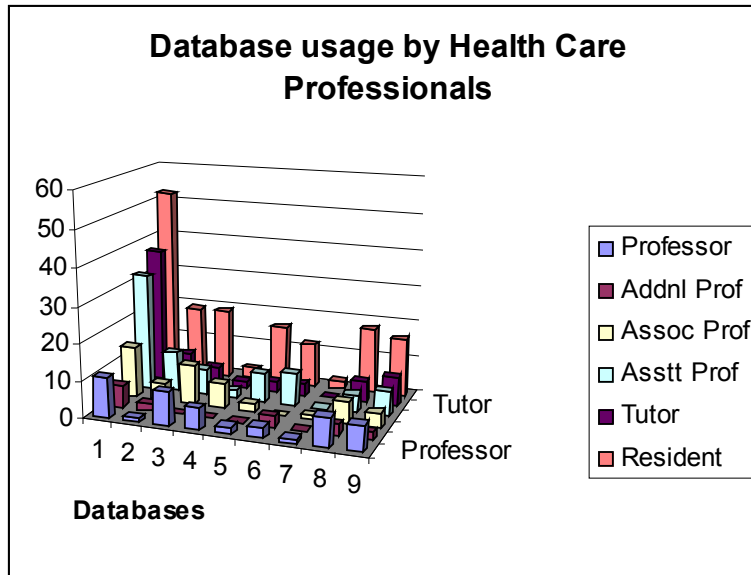
The questionnaires were reviewed for completeness and analyzed by percentage application.

Results and Discussion :

TABLE-I : Internet usage among Health care providers

Designation	Pubmed 1	Medscap 2	PML 3	DOAJ 4	eMedicine 5	FJ4D 6	Amedeo 7	IndMed 8	Multiple 9
Professor	11(5.67)	1(0.51)	9(4.60)	6(1.03)	2(1.03)	3(1.54)	1(0.51)	8(4.12)	7(3.67)
Addnl Prof	6(3.09)	2(1.03)	--	--	--	3(1.54)	--	3(1.54)	2(1.05)
Asso. Prof.	14(7.21)	5(2.57)	11(5.67)	7(3.67)	2(1.03)	--	1(0.51)	6(3.09)	4(2.06)
Asstt Prof	32(16.49)	11(5.67)	7(3.67)	2(1.03)	8(4.12)	9(4.60)	00	5(2.57)	7(3.67)
Tutor	17(8.76)	8(4.12)	5(2.57)	2(1.03)	3(1.54)	3(1.54)	00	6(3.09)	8(4.12)
Resident	52(26.80)	19(9.79)	19(9.79)	3(1.54)	16(8.24)	12(6.18)	2(1.03)	18(9.27)	16(8.24)

Diagram



Internet usage is widespread among physicians. However, use of online EBM resources such as the Cochrane library, clinical evidence and up-to-date was very minimal. Awareness and training in the use of EBM resources for patient care is needed. Introduction of EBM in to the existing curriculum would enhance the ability of physicians to acquire, appraise and use EBM resources to solve patient’s health problems. The Internet is a powerful tool in the hands of health-care providers and is also available to health-care users. However, many patients that could actually benefit from proper use of the Internet are unfamiliar with new technologies [7].

It was observed that most of the users in our survey were residents using PubMed (26.80%) indicating that the services provided by the internet or useful for their research work, dissertation purpose. However in of the study held in Iran by Asefeh Asemi[7]. It is depicted that internet utilization for research work purpose is 28% [8].

Conclusion :

Internet usage is widespread among physicians, however, use of online EBM Resources such as the Cochrane Library, Clinical Evidence and Up-to-date was very Minimal. Awareness and training in the use of EBM resources for patient care is needed.

Introduction of EBM into the existing curriculum of Medical Council of India would enhance the ability of physicians to acquire, appraise and use EBM resources to solve Patient's health problems. Concluding it would be helpful if the use of computer is taught

at all level of the staff. Library professionals on the campus may take initiatives to improve the Information searching on the Internet process among the Computer users.

Librarians may take initiatives to prepare the list of subject website, Data useful to researchers, link to free on line database on the Library WebPages necessary. And the

Library should introduce Network literacy program. [9]

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