

USE OF ELECTRONIC JOURNALS BY THE FACULTY MEMBERS OF TRAVANCORE MEDICAL COLLEGE, KOLLAM, KERALA: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This present paper is a study that seeks to examine the use of electronic journals by the faculty members of Travancore Medical College, Kollam. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed to the various categories of faculty members of Travancore Medical College, out of which all of them responded. The analysis showed that almost half of the faculty members prefer to use e-journals in pdf format, purpose of almost 2/3rd of them is for enhancing knowledge, 2/5th of them are using e-journals once in a week, more than half use journals for one hour per day, evening time is convenient for almost 1/3rd of the faculty, almost 3/5th of the faculty expressed as excellent and lack of training is the main problem for 38.33% of the faculty.

Key words : *Use of Journals, E-Resources, Electronic Journals, E-journals, Online Journals, E-serials, User Study, Medical Faculty, Faculty*

1. Introduction

Libraries and information centers have witnessed a great metamorphosis in the past few years both in their collection and their services. The major transformation is that after the advent of the digital revolution, libraries started acquiring electronic information resources in their document collection. These resources include online full text data bases, electronic journals, image collection, electronic books, electronic theses and dissertations, e-reports, e-zines etc. Among these, electronic journals (e-journals) are an important electronic resource. It has now become a major resource for the academic community in any branch of knowledge. E-

journals are called by various names such as e-journals, network journals, paperless journals, virtual journals, online journals etc. E-journals are needed by the medical professionals at different levels, in the field of medicine, medical research, case studies, health policy statements, medical indicators, vital health statistics, patient care etc.

Gail Macmillan defines e-journals as "any serials produced, published and distributed nationally and internationally via electronic networks such as Bitnet and Internet". According to W. Jones, "E-journals are available electronically via a computer or a computer network, that they may or may not be published in some other physical medium, but that are not CD-ROM's".

Wikipedia defines electronic journals as, "Electronic journals are scholarly journals or magazines that can be accessed via electronic transmission. They are a specialized form of electronic document: they have the purpose of providing material for academic research and study, they are formatted approximately like printed journal articles, the metadata are entered into specialized databases".

Lot of journals in all branch of medicine are coming out. It's availability ranges from table of contents to full text. Some journals exist only in their online format and others have both print as well as electronic version. A study on the use of e-journals in this college has not been conducted so far, and thus the need for this study.

2. Travancore Medical College Library

Travancore Medical College is one of the established medical teaching institutes located at the heart of Kollam, Kerala. It is functioning in Kollam Medicity is a unit under the medical trust TMCH is ISO 9001: 2008 certified institution spread over 98 acres of land. The hospital is facilitated with 850 beds and is a multispecialty hospital equipped with state-of-the art equipment providing end-to end treatment in the field of almost all branches of medicine. The medical college is provided with most advanced level for all superspecialty units and colleges for medical and nursing course (www.tmc.ac.in).

Travancore Medical College library was established in 2008, at the time of the inception of the college. It is a computerized information system and all the functions of the library are performed through automation. The information storage and retrieval programmes of the college central library are growing fast. There are 20 department libraries in addition to the central library of the college. This college library is a member of DELNET (Developing Library Network). Library is also subscribing to some of the important online medical journals. The Travancore

Medical College library is a recognized leader in developing innovative services that enable people to easily link to the recorded knowledge that they need for the creation of a healthier world.

3. Review of Literature

There are plenty of studies on the use of e-journals by the academic community, but those on the faculty members are less, more particularly the medical faculty. Some of the recent studies concerned with the use of electronic journals by the faculty members in medical and allied fields are reviewed here.

The paper by Lwoga and Sukums (2018) aims to assess the usage behavior of e-resources among health science faculty at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS), Dar es salam, Tanzania. The study by Machimbidza and Mutula (2017) investigates the factors influencing the behavior of academics towards peer-reviewed electronic journals at three state universities in Zimbabwe. Electronic journal usage of the academic staff at the faculty of Agriculture of the University of Zimbabwe has been studied jointly by Malapela and de Jager (2017). The purpose of the study by Arshad and Ameen (2017) is to investigate the use patterns of e-journals by teaching community of the University of Punjab. Use of electronic resources by the medical, dental and paramedical professionals in Karnataka has been studied by Anasuya (2017).

The paper by Lobo (2016) is on the use of e-resources by the faculty and post graduate students of medical colleges in Mangalore, Karnataka. The study of Nwaogu and Ifijeh (2014) deals with the use of e-journals by the lecturers in the university of Ibadan, Nigeria. Another study on this aspect has been done in Nigeria in the Olabisi Onabanjo University by Adeniji (2014). Bhat and Mudhol (2014) describes the findings of a survey on e-resource use by faculty members and medical students of Sher-E-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Kashmir. The

purpose of this paper of Ahmed (2013) is to describe the use pattern of information use by the faculty members in eight public universities in Bangladesh. Ratchada Chalarat's (2004) study focus on the behavior and problems in using electronic journals of faculty members, physicians and students of the Faculty of Medicine, Prince of Songkla University. A joint study by Singh and Gill (2012) on the use of e-journals by medical professionals in Delhi is seen in literature.

The paper by McClanahan et al. (2010) synthesizes the findings of two studies (conducted in 2005 and 2008) that assessed the attitude on e-resources by faculty members in several universities in US. The results of a survey on the use of electronic journals by faculty at Istanbul University, Turkey have been described by Dilek-Kayaoglu (2008). Galyani Moghaddam & Talawar (2008) made a study in the similar field and the purpose of this paper is to investigate the use of scholarly electronic journals at the Indian Institute of Science. The purpose of the study of Ali and Nisha's (2011) paper is to determine the extent to which research scholars at Central Science Library, University of Delhi.

4. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:-

1. To identify the preference of use of e-journal format
2. To examine the purpose of use of electronic journals.

3. To study the frequency of access of electronic journals by the medical faculty.
4. To find out the average time in using electronic journals.
5. To know the convenient time of its use.
6. To find out the satisfaction level.
7. To find out the problems faced in using e-journals.

5. Methodology

More than 200 faculty members are working in Travancore Medical College. Out of this 120 active faculty users visiting the library were identified and selected for this study. The faculty members are categorized as Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors and Tutors/Senior/Junior resident doctors. Questionnaire method is used to collect the data. All the 120 questionnaires distributed were returned back and this was further analyzed.

6. Analysis of Data

6.1. Category-wise Response

In this analysis 44.16% are the lower teaching staff like tutor/senior resident/junior resident doctors. More than 1/3rd (34.16%) are assistant professors. Associate professors are 12.50%. Those professors who participated in this survey are very less (9.16%).

Table 1

Category - wise Response

User Category	Number of Questionnaire Distributed	Number of Questionnaire Received	Percentage
Professor	11	11	09.16
Associate Professor	15	15	12.50
Assistant Professor	41	41	34.16
Tutor/Senior/Junior Resident Doctor	53	53	44.16
Total	120	120	100.00

6.2. Preference of E-journal Format

It is found from the study (table 2) that almost half (48.33%) of the faculty members

use the pdf format. More than a quarter (28.33%) of them are preferring the html format. MS word is preferred by only 17.5% of the total.

Table 2

Preference of E-journal Format

Format	Response	Percentage
PDF	58	48.33
HTML	34	28.33
MS Word	21	17.50
Others	07	05.83
Total	120	100.00

6.3. Purpose of E-journal Use

The purpose of almost 2/3rd (64.16%) of the faculty is for enhancing knowledge. Almost half of them (47.5%) use it for examination related activities. Those who

are using e-journals for research purpose is 45.83% and for academic related activities 43.33%. A quarter of them (25.83%) use e-journals for project related work (see table 3).

Table 3

Purpose of Using Electronic Journals

Purpose of Reading	Response	Percentage
Academic related	52	43.33
Project related	31	25.83
Article writing related	44	36.66
Examination related	57	47.5
Research related	55	45.83
Enhance knowledge	77	64.16

* Multiple answers allowed

6.4. Frequency of Use of E-journals

It is found from the analysis (table 4) that 2/5th of the faculty members are using electronic journals once in a week. Those who

are using once in a fortnight are 23.33% of the total. An equal percentage (13.33% each) are using e-journals daily and once in a month.

Table 4

Frequency of Using Electronic Journals

Frequency	Response	Percentage
Daily	16	13.33
Once in a Week	47	39.17
Once in a Fortnight	28	23.33
Once in a Month	16	13.33
Rarely	13	10.83
Total	120	100.00

6.5. Average Time Spent

It is seen that (table 5) more than half (55.83%) use e-journals for one hour per day. A quarter of them (24.17%) are using

between 1 to 2 hours. Those who are using e-journals between 2 to 3 hour are 12.5% and those who are using above 3 hour are very less (7.50%).

Table 5

Average Time Spent to Refer E-journals

Frequency	Response	Percentage
One hour	67	55.83
Between 1 to 2 hour	29	24.17
Between 2 to 3 hour	15	12.50
Above 3 hour	09	07.50
Total	120	100.00

6.6. Convenient Time of E-journal Use

It is found that evening time is convenient for almost 1/3rd (30%) of the faculty

members in using e-journals. A little more than a quarter (27.5%) of the faculty members use e-journals during their spare time. Morning time is preferred by 18.33% of the faculty and afternoon time by 14.17% (see table 6).

Table 6

Convenient Time of E-journal Use

Preferred Time	Respondents	Percentage
Morning	22	18.33
Evening	36	30.00
Afternoon	17	14.17
Late night	12	10.00
Any spare time	33	27.50
Total	120	100.00

6.7. Satisfaction on Electronic Journals

Almost 3/5th (57.5%) of the faculty members expressed their opinion as excellent.

Those who opined as good are 30.83%. Only a meager percentage (11.67%) expressed as moderate.

Table 7

Satisfaction on Electronic Journals

Satisfaction Level	Response	Percentage
Excellent	69	57.50
Good	37	30.83
Moderate	14	11.67
Total	120	100.00

6.8. Problems Faced in Accessing E-journals

The main problem expressed by 38.33% of the faculty is lack of training. For a quarter

(25.83%) of them there is difficulty to read the matter from the computer screen. Those preferring print journals are 17.50% and lack of infrastructure 11.66%.

Table 8

Problems Faced in Accessing Electronic Journals

Problems	Respondents	Percentage
Lack of Training	46	38.33
Difficult to read from screen	31	25.83
Prefer to print journals	21	17.50
Lack of infrastructure	11	11.66
Unorganized	12	10.00
Not easy to use	09	07.50

- Multiple choice options permitted

7. Findings

Major findings of the study are

1. Almost half (48.33%) of the faculty members prefer to use the pdf for using e-journals.
2. The purpose of almost 2/3rd (64.16%) of the faculty members is for enhancing knowledge in their subject area.
3. Two fifth of the faculty members are using electronic journals once in a week.
4. More than half (55.83%) use e-journals for one hour per day.

5. Evening time is convenient for almost 1/3rd (30%) of the faculty for using e-journals.
6. Almost 3/5th (57.5%) of the faculty expressed their opinion regarding satisfaction as excellent.
7. Lack of training is the main problem expressed by 38.33% of the faculty.

8. Conclusion

The study reported here surveyed the medical faculty members in the Travancore Medical College to find out how they use e-journals. This study will help the information professionals of the college as well as the authorities in developing better services in future to their clientele. More aspects like whether print articles or electronic articles are badly needed should be explored. Further the variation in the use by educational background, various levels on experience and service, specialization in relation to e-journal use has also to be explored. Convenience is an important factor in the case of doctors as they are very busy in teaching as well as clinical aspects and has to work in late hours. For the same reason many of them keep personal print subscription for convenience. From the library side, completely switching over to electronic journals is difficult because there are some medical journals which are available in print format only. But it is a real fact that e-journals are highly cost effective.

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