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ONLINE INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS : A CASE STUDY OF APOLLO BGS HOSPITAL, MYSORE.

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ABSTRACT :

This study is an attempt to know the online information seeking behavior of medical practitioners of Apollo BGS Hospital, Mysore. With the objective of exploring the awareness & use of online information resources, problems encountered while accessing online information resources a structured questionnaire was framed and distributed among 122 medical practitioners working at Apollo BGS Hospital, Mysore. Collected data was analyzed and presented using simple percentage analysis.

The study found that majority of the medical practitioners uses online information daily to update their personal knowledge and improve their day to day medical practice. This study also evidences that only 40% of them use library to access online information resources.

KEYWORDS :*Information Seeking Behavior, Online Information resources, Apollo BGS Hospital.*

INTRODUCTION

Advancement of Information Communication Technology has resulted in a vast change in medical field all over the world. The studies have shown that there has been a great increase in the health care information published online. The necessities to access the medical information in a relevant, authentic, quick and with minimal effort resulted in medical libraries have been the early adopters of electronic resources to provide information and services. Many health information databases like MEDLINE/PubMed, EMBASE, Index Medicus etc., Medical web portals, medical information gateways, digital archives, digital libraries and institutional repositories are serving as means to online health information to the physicians.

The access & use of information by the users varies from profession to profession, person to person depending on their information need. Many studies have been conducted on the information seeking behavior of medical students, physicians. In the present study the researcher has tried explore the information seeking behavior of medical practitioners working in Apollo BGS Hospital.

Apollo BGS Hospital, Mysore: Apollo BGS Hospital was inaugurated in July 2001. it is NABH accredited Super-specialty tertiary care hospital. The hospital claims that it is the only hospital in Mysore to function with a full time specialist system which ensures the access of best medical help 24/7. Initially the hospital was started with only 10 beds, over a decade this was increased to 200 beds with the occupancy level of 100% offering the state of the art diagnostic, therapeutic and intensive care facilities in a one stop center. There are 60 full time consultants, 40 Jr. Doctors and 33 DNB Doctors serving around 62,000 patients a year on average, including international patients.

Medical Departments of Apollo BGS Hospital, Mysore

- General Medicine
- General Surgery
- Dermatology

- Dental
- ENT
- Paediatrics
- Gynaecology
- Orthopaedics
- Neurology
- Neurosurgery
- Urology
- Ophthalmology
- Gastroenterology
- Cardiology
- Cardiothoracic Surgery
- Endocrinology & Diabetes
- Plastic Surgery
- Psychiatry

REVIEW LITERATURE:

Many studies have been made on the online information needs, information seeking behavior of medical practitioners, physicians/Doctors. Singh (2012) conducted a study on information-seeking behavior among Medical Practitioners of Varanasi district. This study identified that factors like awareness of resources, surroundings environment, ability to use of information search tool, self evaluation, intuition are having positive impact on medical practitioners information needs and seeking behavior. Lialiou & Mantas (2016) in their study surveyed 263 healthcare practitioners (nurses and doctors) to evaluate the awareness, use and the impact of online resources on their clinical practice. The study reveals that the doctors compared nurses have the knowledge of using online resources and uses such information in their daily practice. Mikalef (2017) and others have made a research on 303 medical doctors practicing in four major Greek hospitals to know the online information search behavior of physicians. The result of the study is that the doctors use non-authoritative online information sources but still their use was found to have no significant value in fulfilling their information requirements.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

1. To know the online Information sources utilized by medical practitioners
2. Barriers to access online information searching
3. Frequency of accessing online information resources
4. Influence of online resources towards their medical practice.

METHODOLOGY:

The data required for the study has been collected using a survey method. Keeping the objective of the study a structured questionnaire with both open end and closed end questions were designed and distributed among 122 medical practitioners working in BGS Apollo hospital, Mysore. 100 Filled questionnaires were returned showing the percentage 81.96%. Prior permission to conduct survey and other additional information about the Apollo BGS Hospital, Mysore and its physicians has obtained from the management team of Apollo BGS Hospital, Mysore.

Scope: Medical practitioners of Apollo BGS Hospital, Mysore, including physicians, deans, consulting doctors, etc. irrespective of their specialization are surveyed for this study.

Limitation: This study is confined to the physicians working at Apollo BGS Hospital, Mysore only.

Analysis & Interpretation of Data:

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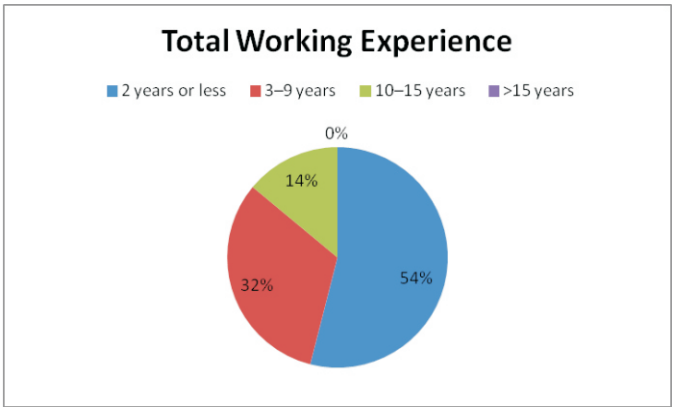
Table 1: Total Working Experience:



This Chart indicates that among 122 physicians working in Appollo BGS Hospital 54% of them are having 2 years or less experienced.

Table 2: Use of Online information resources

Sl No	Response	No of Responses
1	Yes	100
2	No	00
	Total	**100**

This table shows that 99 % of the physicians use online information resources for their daily medical practice.

Table 3: Place of accessing online information resources:

Sl No	Place	No of response
1	Library	40 %
2	Home	80 %
3	Hospital	50 %
4	Other (Mobile Phones)	50 %

The table depicts that majority of the medical practitioners in the said hospital access online information resources through home. Only 40% of them uses library for their online information need.

Table 4: Frequency of use of online resources for medical information search

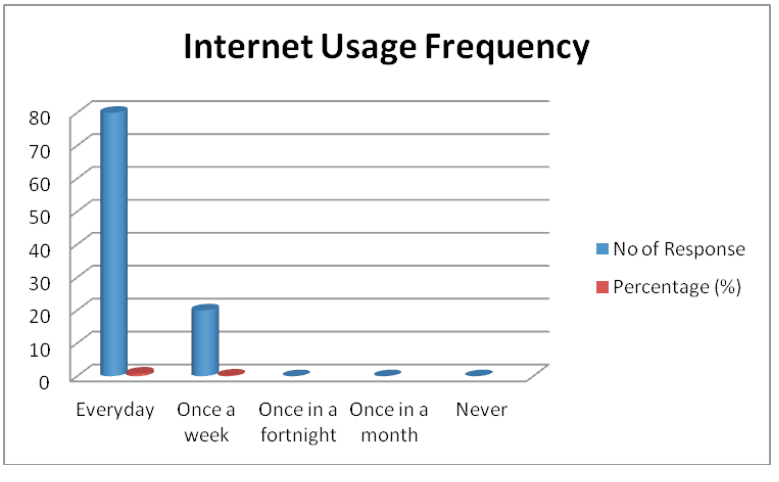


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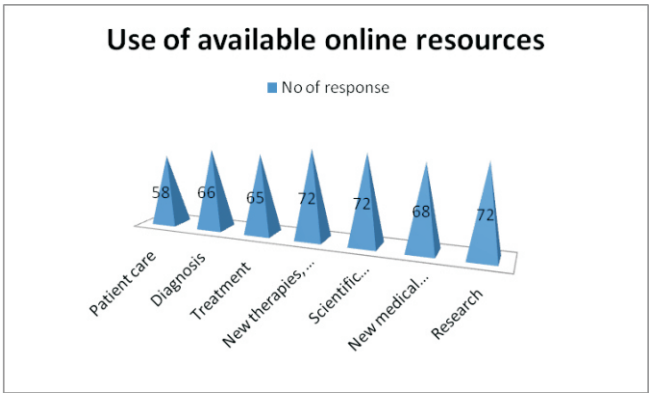
Table 4 shows that majority of the medical practitioners ie 80% of them access online resources for their medical information daily. Remaining 20% of them opined that they use online resources once in a week.

Table 7: Type of online Information sources utilized

Sl No	Online Information sources	No of responses
1	Scientific online databases (PubMed)	98
2	Medical societies web pages (European Society of Cardiology)	00
3	Scientific digital journals (e.g. The Lancet, JAMA etc.) & Digital medical journals of a precise specialty (e.g. Circulation, Heart etc.)	95
5	Government agencies web pages (e.g. Ministry of Healthcare)	30
6	Portals of medical information	20
7	Doctor's personal web pages	10
8	Pharmaceutical agencies web pages	00
9	Social Media (Wikipedia, Facebook groups, YouTube)	40
10	Medical- technological equipment agencies web pages	00

This table shows the source on which the medical practitioners relay to obtain their online information need. The study found that majority i.e. 98% of them opined that they use scientific online databases followed by scientific digital journals 95%, This table also shows that medical practitioners do not relay on websites on Medical societies, Pharmaceutical agencies & Medical- technological equipment agencies for their online information need.

Table 8: Use of available online resources helps in the following area:



Above chart shows that majority of the respondents i.e. 72% of them opined "New therapies, medicines", "Research and scientific developments" are the areas for which they consult online information resources. Other areas are new medical equipment 68%, diagnosis 66%, treatment 65% and 58% for patient care.

Table 9: Barriers encountered while accessing online information.

Sl No	Barriers	No of Responses
1	Time consuming	50
2	Retrieval of Junk information	50
3	Restricted access to download full text articles	80
4	Cost of resource	20
5	Unawareness of how the resources is used	10

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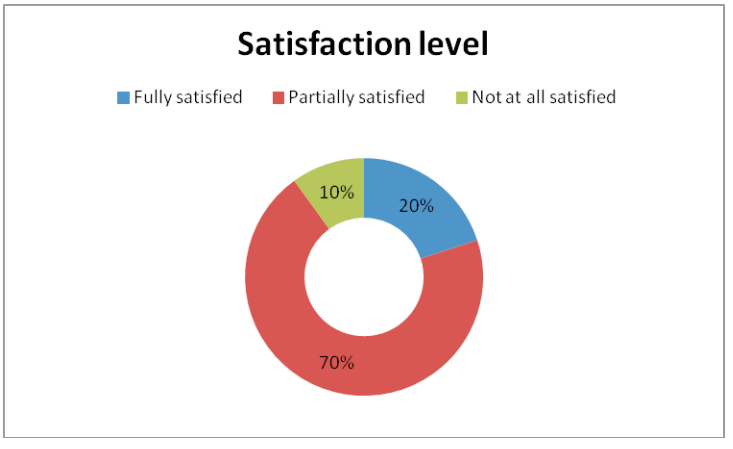
This table reveals the barriers encountered by medical practitioners while accessing online information. 80% of the respondents opined that, restricted access of online journals to download the full text of the articles is the main barrier to access online information. 50% of them opined them it is time consuming and retrieval of junk information is the barrier to access online information.

Table 10: Use of online medical information positively influenced the following areas of medical practice?

Sl No	Area	No of responses
1	Personal knowledge	80
2	Improvement in medical practice	67
3	Reduction of the possibility of a medical error	51
4	Improvement in communication with colleagues	45
5	Improvement in professional position	46
6	Improvement in professional reputation	33

The table illustrates that 80% of respondents have the opinion that online medical resources have positively influenced them in improving their personal knowledge and 67% of them said use of online information has influenced them to improve in their medical practice.

Table 11: Level of satisfaction with currently available online information resource



This chart shows that majority i.e. 70 % of the respondents are partially satisfied with the currently available online information resources.

FINDINGS:

1. This table shows that 99 % of the physicians use online information resources for their daily medical practice.
2. 80% of them access online resources for their medical information daily.
3. Only 40% of them uses library for their online information need & Majority of the medical practitioners in the said hospital access online information resources through home.
4. The study found that majority of the medical practitioners uses scientific online databases & scientific digital journals.
5. 80% of the respondents opined that, restricted access of online journals to download the full text of the articles is the main barrier to access online information. 50% of them opined them it is time consuming and retrieval of junk information is the barrier to access online information.
6. 70 % of the respondents are partially satisfied with the currently available online information resources.
7. Majority of the respondents opined that new therapies, medicines, research and scientific developments are the areas for which they consult online information resources.
8. Majority of the respondents has the opinion that online medical resources have positively influenced them in

improving their personal knowledge and 67% of them said use of online information has influenced them to improve in their medical practice.

SUGGESTION & CONCLUSION:

This study on medical practitioners clearly indicate that almost all of them use online information resources for their daily medical practice but only 40% of them are using library for their information need. Though online journals and databases are the highly used information resources for their practice they are facing restricted access of online journals and retrieval of junk when they search for information is the main barrier.

The role of the Library of Apollo BGS hospital is to be equipped with all the ICT facility, higher bandwidth internet facility and subscribe more and more e-journals and e- databases to cater to the needs of medical practitioners and also library should take initiation to know the information need of medical practitioners, provide them ICT literacy to improve their search skills and techniques.

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