

PERIODICALS USE PATTERN BY MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS OF SHIMOGA CITY

B S Biradar

Chairman
Dept. of Studies & Research
in Lib. & Inf. Sci.
Kuvempu University
Shankaraghatta - 577451
Shimoga Dist.
Karnataka

S Anita

Lecturer
Dept. of Studies & Research
in Lib. & Inf. Sci.
Kuvempu University
Shankaraghatta - 577451
Shimoga Dist.
Karnataka

D K Ushalatha

Dept. of Studies & Research
in Lib. & Inf. Sci.
Kuvempu University,
Shankaraghatta - 577451
Shimoga Dist.
Karnataka

Attempts to know the use pattern of periodicals by medical practitioners. The study reveals that 76.67% and 75% of medical practitioners need current information on new procedures and medicine respectively, 56.67% of medical practitioners get periodicals through medical associations while major percent (86.67%) of them get current information through seminars, conferences and workshops. Besides 57.67% and 53.33% of doctors use e-mail and Internet as a major communication media.

INTRODUCTION

The practicing doctors who are involved in the treatment of patients and who are on the threshold of 21st century find themselves 'uneasy' if they are not aware of information regarding new invention, new theories, new medicine etc. In the present advancing medical science where research and its outcome are continuous due to the new challenges offered by various disorders of the body, the medical practitioners (MP) feel uncertainty due to danger of being ineffective and outdated as practitioners. It has thus become sheerly imperative for their professional career path to update their professional knowledge. One effective way of doing this is regular reading of periodicals, through which the medical practitioners will equip themselves with the necessary skills and techniques to perform their role as practitioners effectively in this challenging age.

IMPORTANCE OF PERIODICALS

Periodicals are serial publications issued in parts with a continuing title usually at regular intervals.

According to *Encyclopaedia of Library and Information Science*, periodical refers to a publication with a distinctive title which appears at stated or regular intervals generally often than once a year without prior decision as to when the last issue shall appear. It contains articles, short stories, or other writings by several contributors.

According Denis Grogan, "A well high universal finding of many surveys of the literature habits of scientists and technologists is that the frequently used of all sources of information are periodicals; typically they account for well over half of all their reading".

In the field of medicine too, medical science periodicals make aware the practitioners with the current trends of medicine. The usage of these sources by medical practitioners has been traced in this study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study on periodical use by medical practitioners in Shimoga city are:

- * To know the nature of information needs of medical practitioners

- * To know the utilisation of periodicals by medical practitioners
- * To know the usage of Indian and foreign periodicals by medical practitioners
- * To know the frequency of using periodicals by medical practitioners
- * To know the sources for getting periodicals
- * To know the sources of current information other than periodicals
- * To know the usage of communication media
- * To know how to access the databases

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Comprehensive and relevant data related to the study has been collected through a well designed questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to 60 medical practitioners in Shimoga

city. Out of 60, 30 questionnaires were distributed to MBBS doctors, 15 were distributed to BAMS and the remaining 15 were distributed to BDS doctors.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The collected data has been analysed and interpreted below :

Information Needs of Medical Practitioners

Information is a vital and indispensable product of the modern society. It grows from experience, observation, inference, interaction and cultivation of knowledge. It is intended for socio-economical development without which the present society cannot move. Such information is very essential for human activity. Nature of information needs varies from one individual to another depending upon subject of interest, area of specialisation and available time. The information needs of medical practitioners (MPs) have been identified and traced in the Table 1.

Table 1

Information needs of Medical Practitioners

Sr. No. Information needs	Medical Practitioners			
	MBBS N=30	BAMS N=15	BDS N=15	Aggr% N=60
1. Information related to prognosis	23 (76.67)	6 (40)	6 (40)	35 (58.33)
2. Information related to diagnosis	25 (83.33)	11 (73.33)	8 (53.33)	44 (73.33)
3. Information related to therapy	27 (90)	9 (60)	7 (46.67)	43 (71.66)
4. Drug Information	21 (70)	10 (66.67)	7 (46.67)	38 (63.33)
5. Current Information on new procedures	25 (83.33)	8 (53.33)	13 (86.67)	46 (76.67)
6. Current Information on medicine	25 (83.33)	11 (73.33)	9 (60)	45 (75)
7. Current Information on surgery	15 (50)	4 (26.67)	7 (46.67)	26 (43.33)

Note : The numbers within the parenthesis indicate percentages

It is evident from the Table 1 that 83.33% of MBBS, 73.33% of BAMS and 60% of BDS professionals sought current information on medicine. On an average 76.67% of MPs desire information on new procedures. Compared to BAMS and BDS, large percent of MBBS doctors need information on various aspects.

Usage of Indian and Foreign Periodicals

Table 2 reveals that 91.67% of MPs use Indian periodicals and only 63.33% use foreign

periodicals. It may also be observed from the table that a large number of MBBS doctors refer to both Indian and foreign periodicals.

Frequency of use of periodicals

Table 3 shows that an average of 30% MPs refer to periodicals once in a month while 16.67% refer fortnightly and once in a week while (15%) of MPs refer the periodicals daily and twice a week.

Table 2

Usage of Indian and Foreign Periodicals

Medical Practitioners					
Sr. No.	Periodicals	MBBS N=30	BAMS N=15	BDS N=15	Aggr% N=60
1.	Indian periodicals	29 (96.67)	15 (100)	11 (73.33)	55 (91.67)
2.	Foreign periodicals	22 (73.33)	6 (40)	10 (66.67)	38 (63.33)

Note: The numbers within the parenthesis indicate percentages

Table 3

Frequency of use of periodicals

Medical Practitioners					
Sr. No.	Frequency	MBBS N=30	BAM N=15	BDS N=15	Aggr% N=60
1.	Daily	4 (13.33)	4 (26.67)	1 (6.67)	9 (15)
2.	Twice a week	4 (13.33)	4 (26.67)	1 (6.67)	9 (15)
3.	Once a week	3 (10)	4 (26.67)	3 (20)	10 (16.67)
4.	Fortnightly	7 (23.33)	1 (6.67)	2 (13.33)	10 (16.67)
5.	Once a month	11 (36.67)	2 (13.33)	5 (33.33)	18 (30)

Note: The numbers within the parenthesis indicate percentages

Sources for getting the periodicals

Table 4 reveals that a large number of MPs get the periodicals either through personal subscription (73.33%) or through Indian Medical Association (56.67%) and very few (8.33%) of them get journals through All Indian Medical Institutions.

Sources for Current Information (Other than Periodicals)

It is evident from the Table 5 that 86.67% of MPs get current Information through seminars, conferences, symposium, workshop etc., while 68.33% of MPs gain knowledge through

discussion with colleagues. 36.67% of doctors get current information through television and consultation with pharmaceutical representatives and only 11.66% of them get information through radio.

Usage of Communication Media

As seen from the Table 6, 66.67% of the doctors receive information through telephone. It is interesting to note that a large number of doctors also receive information through e-mail (45%) and Internet (43.33%), while 18.33% MPs have access to CD-ROMs. Small percentage of doctors also use online services (10%) and Fax (20%) for collecting information.

Table 4

Sources for getting the periodicals

Sr.No.	Sources N=30	Medical Practitioners			Aggr%
		MBBS N=15	BAMS N=15	BDS N=60	
1.	Nearby Medical Library	10 (33.33)	7 (46.67)	6 (40)	23 (33.33)
2.	Nearby Hospital Library	19 (63.33)	7 (46.67)	2 (13.33)	28 (46.67)
3.	National Medical Library	3 (10)	1 (6.67)	1 (6.67)	5 (8.33)
4.	Indian Medical Association	22 (73.33)	8 (53.33)	4 (26.67)	34 (56.67)
5.	All Indian Medical Institutions	3 (10)	1 (6.67)	1 (6.67)	5 (8.33)
6.	Information Centre	8 (26.67)	4 (26.67)	6 (40)	18 (30)
7.	Personal Subscription	26 (85.67)	12 (80)	6 (40)	44 (73.33)

Note : The numbers within the parenthesis indicate percentages

Table 5

Sources for Current Information (Other than periodicals)

Medical Practitioners					
Sr.No.	Sources	MBBS N=30	BAMS N=15	BDS N=15	Aggr% N=60
1.	Discussion with colleagues	20 (66.67)	12 (80)	9 (60)	41 (68.33)
2.	Attending Seminar, Conference Symposia, Workshop	30 (100)	10 (66.67)	12 (80)	52 (86.67)
3.	Consultation with subject experts	17 (56.67)	8 (53.33)	7 (46.67)	32 (53.33)
4.	Radio	1 (3.33)	3 (20)	3 (20)	7 (11.66)
5.	Television	7 (23.33)	7 (46.67)	8 (53.33)	22 (36.67)
6.	Consultation with pharmaceutical representatives	11 (36.67)	7 (46.67)	4 (26.67)	22 (36.67)

Note : The numbers within the parenthesis indicate percentages

Table 6

Usage of Communication Media

Medical Practitioners					
Sr. No.	Communication Media	MBBS N=30	BAMS N=15	BDS N=15	Aggr% N=60
1.	E-mail	17 (57.67)	5 (33.33)	5 (33.33)	27 (45)
2.	Internet	16 (53.33)	6 (40)	4 (26.67)	26 (43.33)
3.	Online Services	5 (16.67)	1 (6.67)	-	6 (10)
4.	CD-ROM	6 (20)	3 (20)	2 (13.33)	11 (18.33)
5.	Fax	7 (23.33)	4 (26.67)	1 (6.67)	12 (20)
6.	Telephone	20 (66.67)	10 (66.67)	10 (66.67)	40 (66.67)

Note: The numbers within the parenthesis indicate percentages

Use of Databases

Table 7 reveals that 28.33% of medical practitioners access information through MEDLARS and about 15% access through EX-MED. Only 1.67% prefer to get information through BIOSIS.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

As seen from the above tables, the following findings have emerged.

- A total of 76.67% and 75% of medical practitioners need information on new procedures and new trends in medicine.
- Irrespective of MBBS, BAMS and BDS doctors, the rate of usage of Indian periodicals is high (91.67%) and that of foreign periodicals is moderate (63.33%).

- Only 15% of medical practitioners use the periodicals daily.
- The personal subscription of periodicals by MBBS is 86.67%, BAMS 80% and BDS 40% respectively. 73% of MBBS doctors, 53% of BAMS doctors and 26% of BDS doctors get information through Indian Medical Association, Shimoga.
- A large number of medical practitioners collect information through television (36.67%) and telephone (66.67%), while 11.66% of doctors collect information through radio.
- The reception of information through MEDLINE is rather high (28.33%) compared to other databases available in the field of medicine.

Table 7

Use of Databases

Sr.No.	Data Base	Medical Practitioners			
		MBBS N=30	BAM N=15	BDS N=15	Aggr% N=60
1.	MEDLARS/MEDLINE	10 (33.33)	6 (40)	1 (6.67)	17 (28.33)
2.	EX-MED	6 (20)	2 (13.33)	1 (6.67)	9 (15)
3.	BIOSIS	- -	1 (6.67)	- -	1 (1.67)

Note: The numbers within the parenthesis indicate percentages

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