

# UNDERSTANDING AND MODERATING THE USE OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AMONG THE MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS: A PILOT STUDY

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## **ABSTRACT -**

This study explores the use of e-resources among medical practitioners in the environment of ever-mounting online electronic resources. The library plays the most crucial role in health service. The objective is to study the access, purposes, and extent of exploitation of electronic resources among the medical practitioners of Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore. This study's design was descriptive survey method and used questionnaire as a research instrument. Five objectives and five research questions guide this study. The sample respondents chosen for study consists of Professors, Associate Professors, etc. Fifty-five questionnaires were circulated and 45 responses returned. The users are aware of various services of the library under study. Besides, the library administration should arrange training programs whenever new user groups arrive to make effective use of library services. This investigation expected that this study would help CMCH Library administrators develop a more comprehensive understanding of medical practitioners' electronic information needs and identifies barriers.

**Keywords:** Use study, E-resources, Medical practitioners, Christian Medical College (CMC) Vellore, Information Services

## **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of "e-resources," which stands for electronic resources, has become a global phenomenon that emerged due to headway in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) (Abubakar, 2010). All the library services have been given a tremendous boost by applying information and communication technologies to the daily functions of the librarians in the library. ICTs have increased the global dissemination of information such that e-journals, e-books, e-databases, web resources, and e-serials are easily accessible in remote areas. The acquaintance and use of electronic information resources in libraries for rapid development are unavoidable and necessary.

The academic library's role is to implement and support to provide the approved scholarly sources that will incite users' interest in developing and scoring marks for such an institution (Hisle, 2005). The relationship between effective teaching, learning, and clinical evidence-retrieving activities in the academic library will promote the rendering of effective library services in the library environments to various users (Nkiko, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a study to analyze and understand the effectiveness of electronic resources in the Christian Medical College and Hospital Library, Vellore.

## REVIEW OF LITRATURE

A number of studies on this area have been found in the literature and for the purpose of this paper only a few relevant studies have been identified and reviewed. These reviews have facilitated for the design of the present study.

Barteit (2020) discussed the effectiveness of e-learning initiatives for medical education in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Fifty-two studies totaling 12,294 subjects were included, most of which were pilot studies. The study quality, evaluation durations, outcomes, and effectiveness measures varied significantly, as did the study designs, evaluation, and assessment methodologies. Most of the studies included research used subjective metrics and unique evaluation frameworks with poor validity and limited comparability. However, the low quality of the studies evidence for comparability, evaluation tool validity, research outcomes and participant blinding was shown by MERSQI and NOS evaluations. The cornerstone for guiding and improving e-learning interventions,

increasing their sustainability, addressing the scarcity of healthcare personnel, and enhancing the standard of medical treatment in LMICs is valid and accurate evaluations.

Vijayakumar (2020) found that the BLDE Medical College faculty members in Vijayapur, Karnataka, have access to and use e-resources. It includes using electronic resources, utilizing various electronic resource types, internet access, information searching habits, use of electronic databases to which the library has subscribed, the purpose of use, and challenges encountered when using online search to access information resources.

Devi (2020) analyzed the perception and use of e-resources in libraries, their usage, satisfaction with the infrastructure and resources available for using e-resources and the need for training to promote e-resource use. It found that 23 Ayurvedic Medical Colleges in North Karnataka librarians received a perfect response rate and recommended advice and recommendations for enhancing the use of resources.

The influence and value of electronic resources on knowledge delivery in modern learning contexts at Kerala medical colleges was examined by Sebastian (2020). The primary goals were to determine the undergraduate students' awareness, purpose, frequency, access points, significant barriers to usage and level of satisfaction with e-resources use. A well-structured questionnaire was used to gather pertinent data from the pupils. The study's conclusions show that most of the respondents were aware of e-resources and that they are primarily utilized to prepare for higher education. The main obstacle inhibiting their practical usage

is the cost of the e-resources, but it has boosted their learning and professional competence and increased their reliance on print media.

Naik (2021) studied how graduate and undergraduate students of Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute Library used the internet and digital information sources. A sample of 300 medical students was used. The data was acquired via a survey questionnaire. This study indicates that since last year 100% of participants have used the internet to get pertinent information. A whopping 87.33% of users look at internet articles regarding medical research, 72% of respondents use the resources to keep up with technological advancements and nearly 50% of respondents thought the information on the internet was reliable.

A study by Ganesan (2022) shows that the majority of people accessed health information to update their expertise and gather general information. The poor level of information literacy among the students may have contributed to their difficulty in finding the materials they were looking for, which was also partially accompanied by reports of ignorance, insufficient e-resources, and irrelevant information. The author concluded that the authorities and library administration of the assessed Institution to take the necessary actions for effective resource utilization.

Hulke (2022) found that students had more difficulty using software, technical difficulties, and lack of face-to-face engagement than instructors, while professors preferred PowerPoint with narrative and students preferred audiovisual recordings. E-learning for

practical/clinical instruction was heavily discouraged by both students and instructors.

The utilization of electronic resources by medical colleges in north India evaluated by Tyagi (2022). 200 students from 20 medical institutes in the northern portion of India comprises the study's sample. Data showed that 92.73% of medical students use free and open-access web resources for research purposes, 56.36% access the online library from their homes and 43.63% prefer the ease of online/electronic resources. It was suggested that new electronic journals should be subscribed to and students should have access to the tools they need to read them.

The relationship between mean variation regarding medical e-resources' awareness, satisfaction, utilization, and barriers with respect to respondents' gender traits have been investigated by Habib (2022). A questionnaire was used to conduct a cross-sectional survey research design, and the response rate was 88%. The study found that patrons of medical libraries had a basic understanding of e-resources and used them for learning, education, and knowledge updates. The main issues encountered when using e-resources included lack of training or orientation, slow internet, energy shortages or load shedding, printing capabilities, the lack of full-text access to the majority of journals, a lack of awareness, information overload, and a lack of adequate IT infrastructure. It was concluded that this study could help Pakistani medical college libraries to promote digital library services, goods and virtual culture.

Arti (2022) conducted a survey aimed at ascertaining the current level of e-resource usage, accessibility, and knowledge at the Government

Medical College in Jammu. A sample of 220 MBBS students were considered in this study. The study found that most medical students (35%) use a library catalog, and few use electronic journals. Most medical students (43.63%) are least satisfied regarding the accuracy of the information retrieved, and only some are fully satisfied. The author suggested that library should improve its collection in order to meet the user's needs.

Veeraramu (2022) stated that the best access points to electronic resources are private subscriptions and exploration devices. The data was gathered using a self-structured survey and descriptive analysis. 185 responses were gathered for the investigation, with more medical school students. Medical educators and students are aware of the convenience of online and offline access to knowledge-based e-resources and 53% of them feel that the collections are excellent, 48% of the user read the content in the HTML webpage and 46% downloaded the required e-resources in PDF format. The author found that UG students access electronic databases more when compared to the other library users.

Ankamah (2022) examined to ascertain how users of the College of Health Sciences Library at the University of Ghana accepted and used electronic resources for learning and research. To gather data from 128 respondents, the study used a quantitative technique and a survey research design. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 22 (SPSS) program was used to analyze the data. The survey revealed that most respondents were aware of the electronic resources made available by the library and accessed a variety of e-resources, including Google, Wikipedia, ScienceDirect, and PubMed.

There was no relation between gender and the perceived value of using e-resources. Most of the respondents reported difficulty in accessing e-resources due to the high cost and inadequate internet speed. The study provided recommendations such as frequent training, effective collaboration between libraries and lecturers and including some e-resources in teaching materials.

All the above studies concentrated the use of e-resources by the respective library users. They have not concentrated on the level of satisfaction by the respondents and the impact of the use of e-resources on their academic performance. Hence this study has been proposed and conducted to address these issues.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

While the present study at the Christian Medical College has not been conducted in depth previously, past research on knowledge and use of electronic resources would be helpful. The Christian Medical College library has to widen a robust and equitable document collection to accommodate the needs of present and future necessities of users. It is possible only when the acquirement is planned (Ishola, 2014). All medical libraries have significantly altered content from print to electronic. It is significant for the Christian Medical College library to widen the collection of immense standards to invite users and supply support to utilize e-resources productively.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The management of the Christian Medical College and Hospital has invested a significant amount of money in computer-based technologies

and e-resources to provide access to them. Yet, the resources were not being fully exploited by the medical staff. This research looked at the need for instruction in using digital resources as well as how medical professionals at the Christian Medical College library understood and used electronic resources.

The study is significant in identifying the faculty knowledge of e-resources, faculty access to computers and frequency of use of e-resources, and the areas of training needed by faculty to utilize e-resources efficiently and effectively. It would recommend how the library could meet training needs, what approaches it could take to enhance service, and what topics it could further investigate. This study might help future training institutions benchmark their usage of electronic resources.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study needs to examine and produce evidence about the experience and handling of electronic resources and services offered by the library of Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India. The precise objectives of this study included the following:

- To determine the level of experience among medical practitioners in using electronic resources.
- To assess the impact of electronic resources on the academic performance of the users.
- To Identify the challenges faced by users in their use of electronic information resources.
- To assess the level of satisfaction with e-resource services at the CMC Library, Vellore

### **Research questions**

The following questions were asked in order to meet the objectives of the study:

- How familiar are you with the following electronic resources?
- How do you feel about the factors that influence your information use?
- What are the problems you faced while accessing the e-resources?
- What is your level of satisfaction with e-Resources services at CMC Libraries?

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study selected the positivism method based on quantitative approaches. The study predominantly used a survey design. The use of survey design encourages and enhances the effective gathering of standardized information through the questionnaire. (Kate, 2003). The specimen was drawn from Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore. The respondents consisted of Medical Practitioners from the various departments of Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore.

A pilot study was performed independently of the main study; the random sampling approach was used to determine the respondents for the research before approaching the larger community. A simple technique gives every participant in the study an excellent chance to be included in the sample. Surveys were administered to the Medical Practitioners in Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore, and the selected 55 random samples were chosen to distribute the questionnaires; 45 questionnaires were returned

## Results

A total of 55 well-structured questionnaires were distributed, out of which 45 were returned. The findings are analysed and presented in the form of tables and figures.

## DATA ANALYSIS

**Table 1: Age-wise distribution of respondents**

AGE				
Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
26-30	10	22.2	22.2	22.2
31-35	16	35.6	35.6	57.8
Above 35	19	42.2	42.2	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 reveals the distribution of respondents by age group. It was found that a majority (42.2%) do fall in the age group of above 35 years, followed by 35.6% in the age group of between 31 and 35 years.

**Table 2: Distribution of the Respondents by Gender**

Gender				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
Female	21	46.7	46.7	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 displays the gender representation of respondents that participated in the study. It is found that 24 respondents were male (53.3%) ,46.7% female respondents . Hence, it is concluded that the male respondents were large in number.

**Table 3: Distribution of the Respondents by Designation**

Designation				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Professor	3	6.7	6.7	6.7
Associate Professor	4	8.9	8.9	15.6

Assistant Professor	4	8.9	8.9	24.4
Lecturer	10	22.2	22.2	46.7
Senior Resident	24	53.3	53.3	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows that most respondents (53.3%) are Senior Residents, with 24 respondents, 22.2 % of respondents being Lecturers, and the remaining 24.5 % are professors, Associate Professors, and Assistant Professors.

**Table 4: RQ: 1 How familiar are you with the following electronic resources?**

Familiarity Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
a. Online Public Access Catalog(OPAC/WebOPAC)	45	3	5	4.58	.543
b. Library Websites	45	2	5	3.60	.889
c. Online Bookstores	45	1	4	2.96	1.331
d. Digital Libraries	45	1	5	2.69	1.459
e. Online News	45	1	5	2.73	1.156
f. Index / Abstract databases	45	1	4	2.00	1.087
g. Full-text online journal databases	45	4	5	4.67	.495
h. Open source materials (Books, Journals, and others)	45	3	5	4.73	.539
i. Third party Electronic books/databases	45	3	5	4.38	.747
j. Data Bank	45	3	5	4.60	.564
k. Online Inter Libraries Loan (ILL)	45	3	5	4.33	.564
l. Consulting an expert	45	3	5	4.56	.546
m. Professional networks	45	3	5	4.53	.548
n. Blogs	45	3	5	4.56	.546
o. Vlogs	45	2	5	4.40	.654
p. Medical evidence database	45	3	5	4.02	.783
q. Valid N (listwise)	45				

Note: 5= Extremely familiar, 4= Moderately familiar, 3= Somewhat familiar, 2 = Slightly familiar, 1 = Not at all familiar

The five-point Likert scale is considered in this analysis.. The mean value from 1 to 1.8, means not at all familiar. On the other hand from 1.81 to 2.60, means slightly familiar. The mean from

2.61 to 3.40, means somewhat familiar, from 3.41 to 4.20, means moderately familiar; and from 4.21 to 5, means exceptionally familiar (Mahmutovic, 2020).

Table 4 revealed that the mean value is very significant. The various familiar electronic resources utilized by the Medical Practitioners at Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore.

The study revealed that "Open source materials (Books, Journals, and others)" are highly familiar among the users representing 4.73 means (extremely familiar), and "Full-text online journal databases" stands with 4.67 means (extremely familiar). The mean of "Index / Abstract databases" is 2.00, which is unfamiliar among the users.

**Table 5: RQ: 2 How do you feel about the factors influencing your information use?**

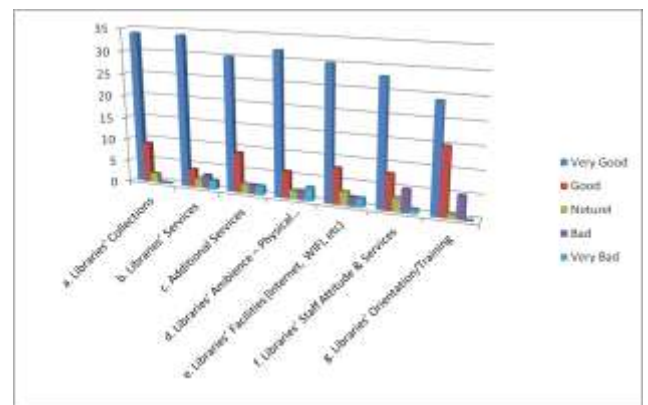
Influencing Factors Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
a. Libraries' Collections	45	3	5	4.71	.549
b. Libraries' Services	45	3	5	4.82	.490
c. Additional Services	45	3	5	4.71	.549
d. Libraries' Ambience – Physical environment (study rooms, Etc.)	45	3	5	4.78	.517
e. Libraries' Facilities (Internet, WIFI, Etc)	45	3	5	4.69	.557
f. Libraries' Staff Attitude & Services	45	3	5	4.69	.596
g. Libraries' Orientation/Training	45	3	5	4.51	.549
Valid N (listwise)	45				

Note: 5= Very Good, 4= Good, 3= Neutral, 2 = Bad, 1 = Very Bad

Table 5 describes the factors that influence the use of information. The user has been given seven options and almost all the services provided by Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore library influence the use of information. Out of which "Libraries' Services" has been ranked with 4.82 mean (Very Good). This is followed by "Libraries' Ambience – Physical environment (study rooms, etc.)" with a 4.78 mean. Whereas "Libraries' Collections" and "Additional Services," "Libraries' Facilities (Internet, WIFI, etc)," and "Libraries' Staff Attitude & Services" shares the same mean of 4.71 and 4.69,

respectively. The precise structure of the data derived has been shown as figure 1.

**Figure 1: RQ: 2 How do you feel about the factors influencing your information use?**



**Challenges Encountered by the users**

The academicians in the current century rely on electronic resources available on the internet. Multiple users can seamlessly access electronic resources with a single-user login, making it user-friendly. However, electronic resource growth has advantages and disadvantages (Chandel, 2012). Among the resources available at the library, the advent of e-resources has an extreme transformation in academic knowledge diffusion. Due to the overload of e-resources, the printed material is less dependent by the user. Considering this, in the current era, libraries

started functioning with a dual ability, leading to a hybrid environment.

Table 6 shows various challenges the Medical Practitioners face while accessing the library services at Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore. The study revealed that problems of “Difficulty in finding relevant information,” “Slow access speed,” “Privacy problem,” “Fewer publications in related area of work,” and “Discomfort in reading the E-Resources for a long time” resulted with 1.62, 3.38, 3.40, 3.64 and 3.93 mean value respectively

**Table 6: RQ: 3 What problems did you face while accessing the e-resources?**

Problems Statistics									
	N	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
a. Slow access speed	45	4	1	5	152	3.38	.132	.886	.786
b. difficulty in finding relevant information	45	1	1	2	73	1.62	.073	.490	.240
c. Overload of information	45	1	4	5	212	4.71	.068	.458	.210
d. Immediate assistance	45	3	2	5	214	4.76	.085	.570	.325
e. Instability of E-Resources	45	2	3	5	214	4.76	.079	.529	.280
f. Less access point	45	3	2	5	200	4.44	.093	.624	.389
g. Instability of Internet connection	45	4	1	5	190	4.22	.110	.735	.540
h. Discomfort	45	2	3	5	177	3.93	.116	.780	.609

in reading the E-Resources for long time									
i. Less publications in related area of work	45	4	1	5	164	3.64	.150	1.004	1.007
j. Privacy problem	45	3	2	5	153	3.40	.116	.780	.609
Valid N (listwise)	45								

Note: 5= Not at all a problem, 4= Minor problem, 3= Moderate problem, 2= Major problem, 1= Serious problem

### Services and Satisfaction

Academic libraries are the centers of professionals and academic life that also work towards enhancing the user's knowledge with the updated information happening worldwide. Researching to determine user-level satisfaction is extravagant in the library budget. However, finding user satisfaction is essential for an academic library. Satisfaction can be articulated with the utilization level and examined with the questionnaires. An efficient library is identified with the level of administration and the use of resources available (Rani,2018).

Table 7 discloses the level of satisfaction among the Medical Practitioners while accessing the library services at Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore. The study shows the satisfaction of "Printing/downloading facilities" stands high with 3.69 mean, "Round the clock accessibility" with 3.47 mean, "Multiple user access license" with 3.38 mean, and "Guidance/Training in accessing e-resources" derived less mean value when compared with others (3.16 mean).

**Table 7: RQ: 4 What is your level of satisfaction concerning e-Resources services at CMC Libraries?**

Satisfaction Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
a. Round the clock accessibility	45	2.0	156	3.47	1.014
b. Multiple user access license	45	2	152	3.38	.716
c. Charges to access e-	45	1	151	3.36	.908

resources					
d. Guidance/Training in accessing e-resources	45	1	142	3.16	.852
e. Promotion of e-Resources	45	1	143	3.18	.973
f. Printing/downloading facilities	45	1	166	3.69	.7687
g. g. Infrastructure	45	2	145	3.22	.795
h. Feedback provision to review the renewal subscription of e-resources	45	1	150.0	3.33	.886
Valid N (listwise)	45				

Note: 5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Unsure, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study discusses the findings on understanding and use of library services among medical practitioners of Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore, Tamil Nadu. The Senior Residents of the Christian Medical College and Hospital has the highest number of respondents. These studies revealed the age category of most respondents are above 35 with 42.2%. The distribution of respondents by sex indicates that male represents the majority of the respondents with 53.3%. This study's discovery also discloses the various library services available in Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore. The familiarity and use of electronic information resources are directly related, helping libraries rapidly develop (Ganiyu, 2012). On the question of familiarity, the "Open source materials (Books, Journals, and others)" option got a high mean of 4.73 (extremely familiar). Neena, (2001) confirms the influence of the library services in the use of information; in the same streak, the findings also revealed that the services provided by the Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore library influence the use of information with a mean of 4.82 (Very

Good). Okogw, (2019) in his case study revealed various challenges the user faces due to overpopulation of the resources. When the question related to the user's problem while accessing the resources was raised, the option "Difficulty in finding relevant information" fills the mean with 1.62 (serious problem). Satisfaction statistics on this study showed that most of the services provided by the Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore library, satisfied its users mainly with the service "Printing/downloading facilities," which got 3.69 mean (satisfied).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The respondents were questioned on how to develop or improve the online library and information services provided by the library at Christian Medical College. The respondents proposed a few changes to raise awareness of and usage of web-based library and information services. The following are the main recommendations gathered from the respondents for enhancing the libraries' web-based library and information services. Based on the outcome of this study, the following are recommended:

- The Library staff shall assist users in locating relevant information from current books and periodicals.
- Staff need to provide access to e-resources promptly, alternative sources of internet supply. Also, the users of this library should have adequate privacy.
- The subject-relevant journal subscriptions requires a thorough examination.
- When a new patron enters the library, e-Resources must be introduced as a part of user orientation.
- An improved version of the reprographic service is needed.
- Provision shall be made for printing facility from all the computers. All of the PCs need to have the connectivity to print.
- The administration must occasionally plan library orientation seminars as needed. Orientation programmes will help to promote library use and will be advantageous to both the user and the society of librarians.

## CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the Medical Practitioners were aware of various services rendered in the Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore library; most library services and Library Facilities (Internet, WIFI, etc.) are also used very well by the Medical Practitioners. The major problem is that users need help finding relevant information in current books and journals. Likewise, a slow-speed internet supply was identified. This study was laid on the face as it is

a pilot study, and the respondents' result was few. The study is limited to the Medical Practitioners at the Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore only. As a result, the findings may need to be more comprehensive. There is a need for the study to understand and moderate the uses of electronic resources among the user community of Christian Medical College and Hospital Vellore. Moreover, the study will help library management allocate funding to acquire resources and contribute to the Institution's development.

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