Hospital Physicians’ Use of Medical Literature Databases

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Introduction:
Questions about the best care for patients’ problems arise often in clinical practice. The pace of development of new evidence from research is too fast for standard textbooks to be of reliable help and without the best evidence and information, care and patient safety may be compromised (1,2).
Over the last two decades, changes in information technology have allowed medical libraries to deliver the world of biomedical information to the physicians’ computer, facilitating the access to up-to-date clinical information and making it possible to search a range of medical databases via the internet (2,4).

Although many recent studies have examined the physician information-seeking behavior and their use of the medical literature databases resources, little is known about the experience of physicians in Saudi Arabia with the medical literature databases resources, except for one published study that was limited to dermatologists (3).
This study will explore the experience of physicians with Medical Literature Databases Resources (MLDR) in Imam Abdulrahman Al Faisal Hospital in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

Methodology:

**Study Setting:** Imam Abdulrahman Al Faisal Hospital in Dammam.

**Study design:** Exploratory cross-sectional study.

**Target population:** All physicians who work in Imam Abdulrahman Al Faisal Hospital during the study period were targeted to participate in the study.

**Sample size:** 81 Physicians with 83.5% response rate.

**Sampling Technique:** Convenience sampling.

**Data Collection Tool:** A Self-reported questionnaire that consists of 23 items. This study has shown that there is a wide use of the medical practice in Imam Abdulrahman Al Faisal hospital, which is expected to lead to better delivery of patient care.

**Results:**

- This study shows that (98%) of respondents had access to the internet in their clinic.
- The use of the MLDR to update medical knowledge was reported by 90% of physicians, with more than half (56.16%) of them stating that they use it more than once a week, while (19.17%) use it daily.
- The most three reported barriers for the use of the MLDR were: slow internet browsing (26.36%), no time to search (21.81%) and too time consuming (20%).
- Forty percent of the physicians stated that textbooks was the most important sources of information to physicians in solving medical problems, while, 41.3% of physicians stated that MLDR were the most important sources of information to them for updating their medical information.
- Almost two thirds of physicians indicated that they didn’t receive any formal training on how to search the medical database search engines.
- Also, the study found a statistically significant difference (P<0.05) between physicians’ years of experience, physicians’ self-rating of their search skills and the use of MLDR.
- Regarding the frequency of use of the MLDR, a statistically significant difference was noted between different physicians age groups and different physicians’ specialty.

Conclusion:

This study has shown that there is a wide use of the medical literature databases by physicians in Imam Abdulrahman Al Faisal hospital. Improving physicians computer skills and search skills by providing courses on how to search, improving the Internet speed and subscribing to more journals will contribute noticeably to best medical practice in Imam Abdulrahman Al Faisal hospital, which is expected to lead to better delivery of patient care.

References: