

LIBRARY USE BY IRAN UNIVERSITY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES AND HEALTH SERVICES' FACULTY MEMBERS - 2005

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Abstract - Liveliness of any library is directly related to the rate of using its information services and resources. Studying the amount of the existing information resources used by faculty members, who account for a considerable portion of the library users, can be a positive step for promoting the quality of library services and resources. In this descriptive survey, 72 percent of research community (Iran University of Medical Sciences' Faculty Members) answered the research questionnaire. Findings indicated that the rate of Central Library use was 18.8% in 2005. This study investigates the problems preventing the use of library services and resources. Also, it probes into the rate of using existing services and resources in the Central Library as well as faculty ranking in terms of library use. Finally, according to the findings, there are some recommendations for promoting the quality of existing services and resources in the Central Library of IUMS.

Keywords: Medical staff, Information Retrieval Faculty Members, Using Printed Library Resources, Using Electronic Library Resources.

INTRODUCTION

Awareness of the state-of-the-art information in the medical science is a professional responsibility for faculty members [10]. Owing to the amazing pace of information development, faculty members in the medical science universities need new information materials such as periodicals, databases and printed materials to fulfill their educational and research responsibilities. The advent of new technology and its application in information exchange in Medical Science necessitates paying more attention to "selection and collection development" in preparing printed and electronic materials for libraries.

Findings of a research conducted in 2003 indicated that medical faculty members of Brown University used electronic journals and library website more than other sources [15]. Also, in another research carried out in 2006, it was concluded that the faculty members of Medicine, Technology and Agriculture had used electronic information resources more than faculty members of other fields [4].

The central library of a university is one of the organizations which requires a massive information resource to meet information needs of users. The central library of Iran University of Medical Science and Health Services (IUMS) was founded in 1975 with the aim of collecting credible scientific resources related to medical society's needs and began its work throughout the country. Faculty members of IUMS account for an important part of central library users. In 1992, 55% of them did not use central library resources at all. The given three main reasons are: "distance", "lack of time" and "unawareness of the existing library resources" [11].

According to a research [9], lack of awareness is one of the main factors affecting users not to use electronic journals and databases. Also in another research [14], distance was reported as one of the reasons preventing use of library resources. There have been no research findings about analyzing the use of printed and electronic resources since creating network databases in the central library of IUMS.

This study is to investigate the effective factors in using the library as well as analyzing faculty members' use of printed and electronic resources. Finally, the findings of the research will offer some guidelines in order to be applied in future planning in library collection development.

METHODOLOGY

This descriptive survey was conducted with the aim of assessing medical faculty members' use of central library's printed and electronic resources in 2005. Respondents were all full-time IUMS faculty members.

Data were collected by a questionnaire which was designed in two parts in order to analyze both use and non-use of library information resources. Part A of the questionnaire contained 3 open and 3 close questions related to non-use of the library. Part B included 22 close and 6 open questions related to the use of library resources. After all, the data were analyzed using SPSS software.

PARTICIPANTS

Majority of the participants (60.4%) were male and the remaining (39.6 %) were female with the age range of 40 to 45. 28.7% of the respondents had worked at the IUMS for 10 to 14 years most of which were assistant professors (67.7%). The respondents reported their purposes of using the library sources as following:

1. Education: 95.5%
2. Research: 14.1%
3. Clinical outcome: 6.2%.

The faculty affiliation of the respondents was as following:

1. Faculty of Medicine: 64.2%
2. Faculty of Paramedical: 4.3%
3. Faculty of Public Health: 3.4%
4. Faculty of Nursing: 12.8%
5. Faculty of Rehabilitation: 9.9%
6. Faculty of Management: 2.8%
7. Faculty of Psychology institution: 2.6%

FINDINGS

467 members out of all 650 faculty members of IUMS responded to the questions. Findings indicated that 81.2 % of faculty members did not use library in 2005. The rate of use was 18.8 %.

Figure 1 ranks faculty members in terms of their use of central library and electronic resources in 2005.

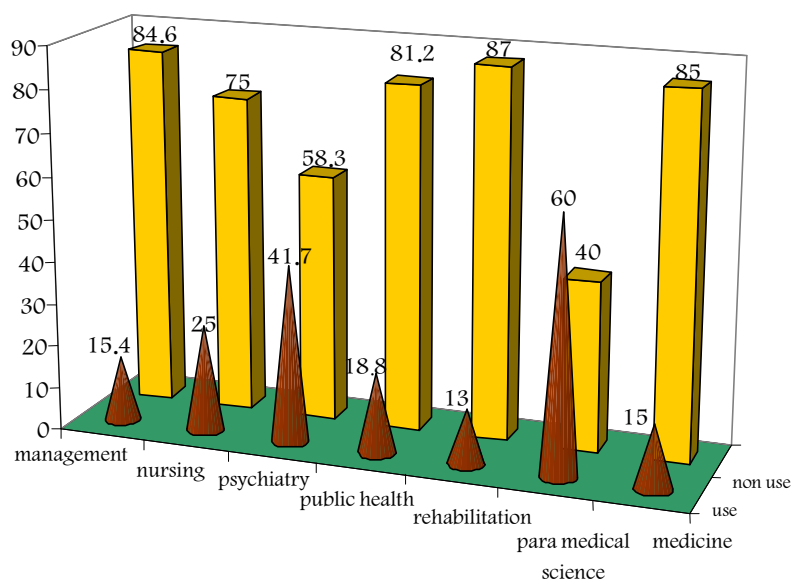


Figure 1: Ranks of faculty members in terms of use and non-use of library resource.

According to Figure 1, the maximum (60%) and the minimum (13%) rates of library use in 2005 are respectively related to Paramedical and Rehabilitation faculty members.

Table 1: Priorities of reasons for non-use of library resources.

| Priorities reasons for non-use | First priority N (%) | Second priority N (%) | Third priority N (%) | Not select N (%) | Total N (%) |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Distance | 139(36.7) | 32(8.4) | 78(14.5) | 130(34.3) | 379(100) |
| Library's insufficient serving time | 6(1.6) | 1(0.3) | 13(2.6) | 359(94.7) | 379(100) |
| Lack of time | 60(15.8) | 41(10.8) | 44(6.6) | 234(61.7) | 379(100) |
| Unawareness | 47(14.4) | 101(26.6) | 46(7.9) | 185(48.8) | 379(100) |
| Out of date resources | 15(4) | - | - | 361(95.3) | 379(100) |
| insufficient existed resources | 48(12.7) | 17(4.5) | 8(2.1) | 290(76.5) | 379(100) |
| Use of other libraries | 139(36.7) | 81(21.4) | 108(28.5) | 39(10.3) | 379(100) |
| Other reasons | 10(2.6) | 9(2.4) | 2(0.5) | 358(94.5) | 379(100) |

Findings indicate that the most important reasons causing non-use of library resources are use of other libraries, distance, unawareness of existing needed and relevant resources, lack or insufficiency of existing relevant resources in the library and limitation of libraries' serving time. It seems that Paramedical faculty's proximity to central library and easy accessibility to resources are two important reasons for the highest use rate of the library. For this group of users, distance was not considered as a drawback for using library resources.

Table 2: The resources except for central library used by respondents to gain information

| Priorities of other resources | First priority N (%) | Second priority N (%) | Third priority N (%) | Not select N (%) | Total N (%) |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Faculty or hospital library | 225(59.4) | 68(17.9) | 27(7.1) | 55(14.5) | 379(100) |
| Personal journal subscription | 49(12.9) | 89(23.5) | 21(5.5) | 23(56.2) | 379(100) |
| Connection to internet from home or office | 131(34.6) | 123(32.5) | 88(23.2) | 29(7.7) | 379(100) |
| Conference/ meetings | 31(8.2) | 29(7.7) | 87(23) | 141(37.2) | 379(100) |
| Workshop | 21(5.5) | 2(0.5) | 32(8.4) | 237(72) | 379(100) |
| Colleagues | 15(4) | 6(1.6) | 13(3.4) | 292(77) | 379(100) |
| Other reasons | 1(0.3) | 1(0.3) | 2(0.5) | 375(98.9) | 379(100) |

Table 2 indicates that 59.4% of non-user respondents who did not use central library in 2005 reported that they used faculty and hospital libraries instead of central library. Connecting to the internet from home or office has been the second important channel for getting needed information by faculty members. Participating in meetings,

conferences, workshops as well as consulting with colleagues have been the other prioritized channels of getting needed information of which consulting with colleagues has turned out to be the least desired option. It means that it has been less considered than the others for getting needed information.

Table 3: Frequency of using electronic resources.

| Library sources frequency of use | Website N (%) | E-Journals N (%) | CD-Rom databases N (%) | Audio-Visual materials N (%) | Internet N (%) |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Weekly | 8 (9.1) | 21(23.9) | 17(19.3) | 11(12.5) | 35(39.8) |
| Monthly | 19(21.6) | (31.8) | 6(6.8) | 2(2.3) | 2(2.3) |
| Once per semester | 13(14.8) | 9(10.2) | 20(22.7) | 9(10.2) | 1(1.1) |
| Yearly | 8(9.1) | 1(1.1) | 9(10.2) | 6(6.8) | 0(0) |
| Non-use | 40(45.5) | 29(32.9) | 36(40.9) | 60(68.2) | 50(56.8) |
| Total | 88(100) | 88(100) | 88(100) | 88(100) | 88(100) |

Table 3 indicates that the maximum and minimum rates of using electronic resources are respectively related to e-journals and audio-visual materials. The majority of faculty members have used electronic journals monthly. 56.8% of faculty members have not used internet terminals of central library in 2005. Comparing Table 3 with Table 2 reveals that connecting to internet from home or office can be a reason for non-use of internet terminals in the library. Poor qualified as well as old-fashioned audio-visual materials are the main reasons for not being used.

Table 4: Frequency of using library printed resources by faculty members.

| Library printed sources frequency of use | Book N (%) | Periodical N (%) | Dissertation N (%) |
|---|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Weekly | 8(9.1) | 14(15.9) | 2(2.3) |
| Monthly | 29(33) | 41(46.6) | 6(6.8) |
| Once per semester | 17(19.3) | 16(18.2) | 34(38.6) |
| Yearly | 13(14.8) | 7(7.95) | 3(3.4) |
| Non-use | 21(23.8) | 10(11.4) | 43(48.8) |
| Total | 88(100) | 88(100) | 88(100) |

Table 4 indicates that printed journals and dissertations have had the highest and lowest rates of use respectively. Comparing Table 4 with Table 3 reveals that faculty members' use of printed journals is 28% more than that of electronic journals. Also, in either of them the highest frequency of use is the "monthly" use. Printed books rank second in terms of rate of use. Like journals, printed books have had the highest frequency of monthly use. According to the findings, the highest frequency of use for dissertation has been once per semester.

Table 5: Reasons for not using the electronic resources.

| Priorities of reasons for non-use | First priority N (%) | Second priority N (%) | Third priority N (%) | Not select | Total |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------|---------|
| No need | 9(10.2) | 0(0) | 3(3.4) | 76(86.4) | 88(100) |
| Unawareness of existed electronic resources | 11(12.5) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 77(87.5) | 88(100) |
| Not knowing how to search | 3(3.4) | 2(2.3) | 0(0) | 83(94.3) | 88(100) |
| Use of printed resource instead of electronic resource | 3(3.4) | 11(12.5) | 0(0) | 74(84.1) | 88(100) |

Table 5 indicates that "unawareness" of existing electronic resources is the most important reason for non use of them. Also, it indicates that unfamiliarity with search strategies is not a notable reason for non-use because most of faculty members (94.3%) did not select it as a non-use reason. Feeling no need is the second important reason for not using the electronic resources.

Table 6: Purpose priorities of using library website.

| Purpose priorities of website use | First priority N (%) | Second priority N (%) | Third priority N (%) | Not select | Total |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------|---------|
| Access to E-Journals | 38(43.2) | - | - | 50(56.8) | 88(100) |
| Use of library E-mail | 4(4.5) | 11(12.5) | - | 73(83) | 88(100) |
| Link to HBI by website | 1(1.1) | 5(5.7) | 4(4.5) | 78(88.6) | 88(100) |
| Getting aware of news and events | 9(10.2) | 4(4.5) | 4(4.5) | 71(80.7) | 88(100) |

According to Table 6, the most notable reason for website use is access to e-journals through the library website. The second priority has been due to getting aware of news and events. Link to HBI by library website had less importance than the others.

CONCLUSION

Comparing Katozian's research findings about non-use rate of library in 1992 with this study indicates that the rate of library use has decreased because non-use rate has risen 26 percent. According to the findings of this research, using hospital and faculty library is one of the most significant reasons for the increasing trend in non-use of central library. This research's findings about the importance of faculty and hospital libraries confirm Mihandoost [13] and Brown library needs team's [15] findings.

We found that advent of Internet and expanded use of it in information by faculty

members (34.6%) has caused dwindling use of central library resources (Table 2). It can be concluded that easy access to information may have an effect on the rate of using library. Findings indicate that faculty members' use of printed journals is 20 percent more than electronic journals. This finding is in contrast with Dartmouth [5] and Stetson's library findings [8] and confirms Wyoming and Thessaloniki universities' research findings [3,12]. This is in line with what Adams & Bonk [1] concluded in their research. They also emphasized training users by library. Also, the need for education of librarians for better utilization of electronic resources was confirmed by Adikata [2] and Barton [6]. Besides, we may conclude that unavailability of the same printed journals in the electronic form as well as some printed journal's missing prior issues cause non-use of these resources. Findings indicate that only 31.8 percent of respondents used audio-visual materials in 2005. Respondents reported that "unawareness" is a main reason for non-use of audio-visual materials. Respondents were dissatisfied with audio-visual materials because of their poor quality and unavailability of new versions.

We found that because of unawareness, almost 45.5% of faculty members could not use library website in 2005. Behyar's research findings [7] confirmed our findings about poor awareness of library activities. In the other research "poor communication" and "inadequate interaction" between the faculty members and the library were concluded to be the factors causing failure to promote library resources and services [16].

The main purpose of users of library websites has been gaining access to e-journals and getting the latest information of scientific events. Thus, it can be stated that in the case of "awareness" of accessible e-journals through website by faculty members, the rate of using websites will increase.

Finally, according to the research findings, the following points can be suggested:

1. Preparing full text version of Medline which can be available via library website, because Medline has the maximum rate of use (72.6%) in comparison with the other library CD-ROM databases.

2. Transferring information materials with low frequency of use from central library to faculty and hospital libraries so that they may become more accessible and more usable.

3. Providing more English books according to academic staff's needs.

4. It is suggested that users get information of central library resources and services through faculty and hospital libraries.

5. It is also very crucial that periodical's missing issues get completed and also more subscribed titles of electronic journals be provided.

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