

**Providing access to public health information via the institutional repository, Faculty of Medicine: A feasibility study based on medical undergraduates**

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Community Medicine Clerkship and Community Attachment programs provide opportunity for medical undergraduates to learn how public health services are provided to the community. Their knowledge on health promotion, disease prevention, healthcare planning and management, demography and understanding epidemiology of diseases in the Sri Lankan context are very important. They are expected to read from diverse information sources to gain this knowledge, in addition to field based learning. As most of the recommended reading materials are considered grey literature sources, students are in a difficulty to access those resources within the library. Students face difficulties in accessing available online materials too, as some of the websites do not provide the information in a user friendly manner.

With the understanding of possible barriers to access information, the Medical Library, University of Kelaniya, has developed a repository collection on 'Public Health Information Resources,' which are recommended as student reading materials for Community Medicine Clerkship and Attachment programs. This is under its online Institutional Repository (IR), developed using DSpace Software. This repository provides links to access a collection of resources published by different institutes. This is in addition to university libraries, which develop online digital repositories to preserve and distribute the intellectual scholarly information of the parent institute.

A questionnaire and the User Guide to access the repository were given to a sample of fifty (50) students from Batch 21, who completed the Clerkship programme. Response rate to the questionnaire was 82% and more than 80% of students who were among the respondents ranked the collection as a useful resource which fulfilled their public health information needs. Barriers to information access were also assessed. Respondents have identified a list of difficulties they had in the past. Based on the feedback received, a resource collection inclusive of students' suggestions is being planned to be introduced to the next batch of students.

**Keywords: Education, Medical, Undergraduate, Grey Literature, Information Needs, Institutional Repositories**