



# ABSTRACTS BOOK

## ASM 2019

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and Innovation in  
Medical Education**

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With Thanks to:



## Information seeking behavior of medical undergraduates, Sri Lanka

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### Background:

Information seeking is a fundamental intellectual activity that facilitates problem solving, decision making, and knowledge creation (1), which are essential attributes of good medical practitioners. Information seeking behavior involves identifying needs, searching approaches and the use of information (2). This study aims to explore the information seeking behavior of the medical students in Sri Lanka.

### Methodology:

A qualitative study, using focus group discussions, was conducted with 85 final year medical students of four universities in Sri Lanka. Male to female ratio was 47:38 and the average age of participants was 26.1(Range: 24 to 29) . All focus group discussions were audio-recorded and the records were transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis of content was carried out using Richie and Spencer framework as the basis (3).

### Results:

The themes identified varied from conceptualization of information seeking behaviours to needs, strategies, barriers and facilitators. Students use limited sources of information in classroom-based learning and they confine mainly to material provided by teachers, i.e. teacher-directed behaviour (“Lecturers guide us and give reference materials to refer. We tend to seek information based on their recommendations.”). This was primarily driven by exam-orientation and the belief of learning (“We seek information to target our exams and we do not go beyond that.”). They seek information external sources, e.g. web, while they learn in clinical environment, i.e. self-directed behaviour, as they face with more uncertainty in learning. Web sources used ranged from informal sources (“Most instances I use Wikipedia for convenience sake.”) to standard sources (“We find information from Medscape, otherwise we refer Radiopaedia or Up To Date.”). Although the participants were millennials some tend to prefer printed material which gives them a higher sense of ‘confidence’ (“Personally I prefer to have printed materials and use textbooks because I can understand better from textbooks.”). The role of a traditional library seems to be weaning-off with smart phones and tablets gaining popularity (“We normally use mobile phones and tablets for seeking information, not the library.”)

### Discussion:

The primary orientation of information-seeking is academic needs. Learning environment and its level of intellectual challenge sophisticates the process; teachers and teaching play a vital role in widening the scope of information-seeking.

### References:

1. Ingwersen P, Jarvelin K. The turn: integration of information seeking and retrieval in context. Dordrecht: Springer; 2005.
2. Julien H. A content analysis of the recent information needs and uses literature. Library and Information Science Research. 1996; 18(1): 53-65.
3. Ritchie J, Spencer L. Qualitative Data Analysis for Applied Policy Research, in A. Bryman and R. Burgess (eds) Analyzing Qualitative Data. London: Sage; 1994.

*Presentation Details: Wednesday 3rd July, 5.30-5.50pm, Carron 1*