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PAPER

Information Seeking Behavior of Students of the Medical Faculty, University of Kelaniya

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The study investigated the information seeking behavior of the medical students of the University of Kelaniya. The objectives of the study were to examine how the medical students obtain required information; to identify the types of library services frequently used by the medical students; to determine if the medical students sought current information; to ascertain the problems encountered by the medical students in the process of seeking information and to identify the additional library services preferred by the medical students.

Structured questionnaires were distributed among 248 medical students randomly selected out of a population of 865 students. Comparison of information seeking behavior of students at each level was performed with Principal Component Analysis (PCA) of Conoco 4.5.

Major findings include: all 3 levels other than level 4 showed a somewhat similar pattern of information seeking. Students in level 1 seem more keen in library usage for finding answers to questions, while level 3 for research work and experimental purposes. Level 4 students use color guides/ atlases and dictionaries/glossaries/encyclopedia for accessing information than those at the other levels.

The result shows that the Medical Library is the most frequently used place of the best access for information gathering of the students. The respondents especially relied on text books and online full text journals for current information. Clinical practice and lecture hours are the major limiting factors for level 4, more than other levels. The medical students have totally agreed that up-to-dateness of the collections is the major issue. The development of the novel collection and the provision of new editions of text books are recommended by the respondents and the number of copies of frequently used text books should be increased based on their demand. The improvement of Information Technology (IT) is also essential in the library for enhancement and ease of retrieval of information for the students.