

Library Resources and Services Usage by Undergraduate and Post Graduate Medical Students of a Medical College in Maharashtra: A Cross-Sectional Study

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Abstract

Background: As medical science is a continuously advancing discipline, use of the medical library by students is very important for updating their knowledge and competence. **Objectives:** To study the pattern of library usage by undergraduate and postgraduate medical students and to compare library utilization across academic years.

Materials and Methods: A cross-sectional study was carried out among undergraduate and post graduate students in a medical college. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection.

Results: Total 250 students (231 undergraduate and 19 post graduate students) participated in the study. 34% of undergraduate and 21% post graduate students were found visiting library daily. Increasing trend was observed in daily visits of the students as academic years progress. Students spent significantly more time during examination days in the library as compared to usual days. The primary reason for visiting the library was to prepare for the examination. 73.20% students reported that recent editions of books and journals were available in library. Most of the students were satisfied about the library services.

Conclusion: Students are utilizing library facilities and services to a great extent but still there is a need to sensitize students to use library for activities such as research, reading recent journals, preparation of seminar.

Key words: Library usage, medical students, academic years, recent books, satisfaction

Introduction

In medical education one has to be a good learner to maintain their knowledge and develop their skills

to give the best medical care to patients as well as to achieve best academic position as student¹. As medical science is a continuously advancing discipline, the use of the medical library by students is very important

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for updating their knowledge and competence. One of the major goals of medical education is to encourage students to maintain their knowledge of medical science by becoming life-long learners².

Libraries are reservoirs of knowledge forever.³ An academic library is an inexhaustible store house of knowledge, where one can go at will, unrestricted to help himself to the whole field of knowledge and practical life of the past, present and prognostications for the future. If a library is well stocked and the students know they can find more information than what they are taught, they will use the library maximally.⁴

Medical library as a center of information helps to enhance the knowledge by providing the collection of books, journals, place to study and new modern library provides internet and computer¹.

Though an institution may have the best stocked libraries, the utilization of the libraries by the students need not simply depend on the number of books and journals in the library. Many factors like personal preferences, the general environment in the library, inconveniences of the working hours, distance from the place of residence may influence the use of the libraries by the medical students⁵.

With this back-ground, the present study was an attempt to study the utilization of library resources and level of satisfaction among the undergraduate and postgraduate medical students of a Medical College in Maharashtra.

Aims and Objectives:

The present study aims at studying library usage pattern among undergraduate and post graduate medical students. The specific aims and objectives of the study include:

1. To study the pattern of library usage by undergraduate and postgraduate medical students.
2. To observe the library utilization by the students across the academic years.
3. To identify the level of satisfaction of the students about library services.

Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional study was carried out among undergraduate and postgraduate medical students

of a Medical College in Maharashtra to observe the pattern of library utilization by them. The study was approved by Institutional Ethical Committee. The approval letter from Institutional Ethical Committee has reference number and date as follows: IEC/MIMER/2020/695 dated 09/03/2020. The study population consisted of undergraduate and post graduate students studying in a Medical College.

Sample Size: A previous study reported that 42% of the medical students were using library services daily.⁶ Considering this data with 95% of confidence limit and 15% of allowable error (i.e., 15% of 42%), the estimated sample size was 236 and it was rounded up to 250.

Study Tool: A structured questionnaire was used as a study tool for data collection. The questionnaire was in two parts. The first part covered the data regarding demographic characters of the students such as name, age, gender, academic year etc. The second part of the questionnaire included questions regarding the pattern of library usage by the students. The questions were related to frequency of visits to library, time spent in library, purpose of visit to library and level of satisfaction of the students.

Sampling Type: All undergraduate and postgraduate students who gave the consent for the study, were incorporated in the study till the required sample size was fulfilled.

Data Collection: The purpose of the study was explained to the students. The questionnaire was offered to the students by personal contacts. The data was analyzed using appropriate statistical methods like averages and Chi square test. Further, Yate's correction was applied whenever required.

Results

A cross-sectional study was carried out to study the library usage pattern among undergraduate and postgraduate medical students in a medical college.

Total 250 undergraduate and post graduate students participated in the study. Among total 231 undergraduate students. Almost equal proportion of students was observed across all academic years of MBBS. There were 19 post graduate students. Proportion of male and female students was almost equal.

Table 1: Students’ visit to library across academic years

Academic Year	Daily	Once or twice a week	Occasionally	Total
First Year MBBS	12 (16%)	24 (32%)	39 (52%)	75 (33%)
Second Year MBBS	29 (37%)	23(29%)	27(34%)	79 (34%)
Third Year MBBS	38 (49%)	19 (25%)	20 (26%)	77 (33%)
Total	79 (34%)	66 (29%)	86 (37%)	231

Table 1 shows an increasing trend of daily visits to library as academic years progress from First year MBBS to Third year MBBS. The difference was tested by applying Chi Square Test and it was found significant.

$(\chi^2 = 20.52, p < 0.05)$

It was also observed that very few (21%) post graduate students were found to visit library daily.

Table 2: Time spent by the undergraduate students in the library

Variable	Academic Year	Time spent in library by the students in hours			Total
		1 to 2 Hours	2 to 4 Hours	> 4 Hours	
Time spent in library by the students	First Year MBBS	35(47%)	36(48%)	4(5%)	75 (33%)
	Second Year MBBS	32(41%)	37(47%)	10(12%)	79 (34%)
	Third Year MBBS	17(22%)	29(38%)	31(40%)	77 (33%)
	Total	84 (36%)	102 (44%)	45 (20%)	231

Table 2 shows that students spent more time (more than four hours) in library as the academic year progresses. After applying Chi square test, the difference was found to be statistically significant.

$(\chi^2 = 31.53, p < 0.05)$.

Almost half of the post graduate students were also found to spend 1 to 2 hours in the library.

Table 3: Time spent in library by students on usual days and examination days

Variable	Time spent in library in hours by both students			Total
	1 to 2 Hours	2 to 4 Hours	> 4 Hours	
On usual days	95(38%)	107(43%)	48(19%)	250
During examination days	66(26%)	33(13%)	151(61%)	250

Table 3 shows the time spent in library by both undergraduates and post graduate students on usual days and during examination period. It was observed that there was sharp increase in time spent in library

during examination days. The observation was found statistically significant after performing Chi square test. $(\chi^2 = 97.65, P < 0.05)$.

Table 4: Purpose of visits to library by the students

Purpose of the visit	Frequency	Percentage
To borrow /return/renew books	85	34%
To read text books	162	65%
To read reference books	91	36%
To complete class assignments or class work	73	29%
To prepare for examination	198	79%

It is evident from the above Table 4 that the students utilized library facilities more to prepare for the examination. Other purposes were reading text books, to borrow/return/renew books, to complete the class assignments.

Table 5 Availability of recent editions of books and journals and response of the students.

Academic Year	Positive Response
First Year MBBS	64(85%)
Second Year MBBS	52(66%)
Third Year MBBS	53(69%)
Post Graduate Students	14 (74%)
Total	183(73%)

Table 5 shows about two third of the students from all academic years reported that recent editions of text books, reference books and journals are available in library. However, availability of books was maximum for the first year, as reported by the students.

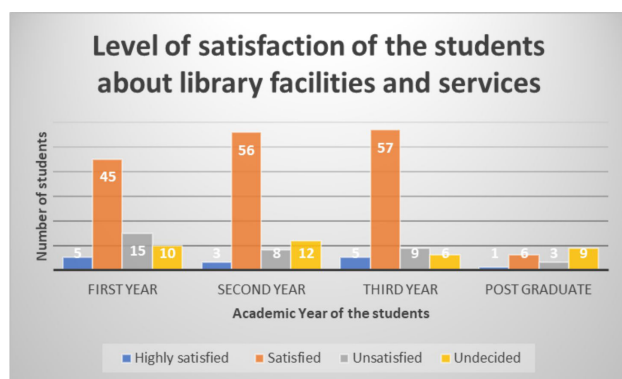


Fig 1 Level of satisfaction of the students about library facilities and services

Fig 1 shows that most of the students were satisfied about library facilities and services. However, proportion of satisfaction was more among second year and third year students. Level of satisfaction was very low among postgraduate students.

Discussion

The present study was a cross-sectional study conducted in a medical college to study the pattern of library usage among undergraduate and postgraduate medical students. Total 250 students participated in the study. Among which 231 were undergraduate and 19 were postgraduate students.

In our study, percentage of undergraduate students visiting library daily was found 34%. Similar findings were reported in a study conducted by Parande M. et al⁷. The study conducted by Goel N.K. et al⁵ reported little lower percentages. This difference may be attributed to different purpose of visit like borrowing/reading books. Slightly higher percentage i.e. almost 41% was reported in the study conducted by Ayan Pal et al² for students visiting library daily.

Percentage of Post graduate students visiting library daily was found 21% while study conducted by Parande et al⁷ reported it at much higher level (64%).

It was also observed that percentage of daily visits showed increasing trend as academic year progresses among undergraduate students. This means that usage of library services is more as academic year progresses. Almost similar findings were reported in the study conducted by Sahak M.et al⁸ and by Abdulgani PM. et al⁹.

It was observed that students spent more time (more than 4 hours) in library as the academic years progress from first year to third year. The association was found to be significant. This means that usage of library services is more as academic year progresses. Almost similar findings are reported in the study conducted by Sahak M.et al⁸ and Abdulgani PM. et al⁹.

It was found that students spent more in library during examination days and it was found statistically significant. It is expected that time spent by the student in the library will be more during examination period and this finding was confirmed in our study. Similar results were reported in a study conducted by Parande M. et al⁷.

It was observed that students used library facility primarily to prepare for examinations. Similar reasons were reported by Kalita H. et al¹⁰. In another study conducted by Basu M. et al¹¹ and Chatterjee C. et al¹², the main purpose to visit library was to read the text books.

Almost two third of the students in our study reported that recent editions of books and journals were available in the library. Similar findings were observed in a study by Srinivasalu P. et al¹³. However, in the study conducted Parande M. et al.⁷ very few students reported positively.

Majority of the students in our study were found satisfied about facilities and services in library. Similar findings were reported in studies conducted by Rathnakara UP¹⁴ and by Basu M. et al.¹⁰

Conclusion

It was found that most of the undergraduate and postgraduate students are utilizing library services. It was observed that students visited library for preparation of exams. It was evident that students use library facility daily as academic year progresses. Students spent more time in library, during examination periods than on usual days. Almost two third of the students opined positively for availability of recent editions of books and journals. Most of the students were satisfied with library services.

Recommendations:

Based on above findings it can be recommended that there is a need to sensitize students to use library for activities such as research, reading recent journals, preparation of seminar. Students should be encouraged to use library facilities regularly. Availability of recent editions of the books and journals should be increased in library for all academic years. Though most of the students are found satisfied with the library facilities.

Limitations of the study: This study was conducted in only one private medical college. Such studies may be carried out in other Government Medical colleges to confirm our findings.

Ethical Clearance: The study was approved by Institutional Ethical Committee. The approval letter from Institutional Ethical Committee has reference number and date as follows: IEC/ MIMER/2020/695 dated 09/03/2020

Conflict of Interest: There is no interest of conflict.

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