

Chapter 3

Usage of Electronic Resources Among Ophthalmologists in India

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ABSTRACT

The contribution of ophthalmologists is inevitable for visually challenged patient care and to eradicate unnecessary blindness in this society. Other than the academic focus of the medical students, the importance of continuing medical education (CME) for doctors in all disciplines, including ophthalmology, is a well-known factor to enhance their day-to-day clinical practices. The role of electronic and online resources in academic curriculum of medicine and CME is acceptable and inexorable among the user community worldwide. In the last several years, many research studies have focused on how people use electronic resources or on their feelings about electronic and online resources in various fields. In this study, the researcher analyzed the electronic resources usage among the ophthalmologists which indirectly supports their day-to-day clinical practices and serves the society against blindness. The results of the study show that the respondents have an average level of e-resources usage skills, particularly on awareness about many available e-resources.

INTRODUCTION

The prominence of electronic and online resources in this information era is a fact that is inevitable. Electronic and digital formats of information are interspersed in our day to day routines personally, academically and professionally. John Shaw Billings, a great surgeon and librarian once famously mentioned, “The learning of

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the doctor which goes on after he has his degree is, after all, the most important part of his education” (Billings as cited in Manning & Debakey, 1989). The above quote insists about the importance of continuing medical education to be a virtuoso medical professional. For continuous learning, digital resources play a vital supportive role to adopt. As it supports and enhances the output of the better patient care in the society, it is fruitful to do research on the same.

The role of ophthalmologists in this society is unavoidable for eye and vision care of patients. Earlier the information which they sought to support their patient care and medical practices depended solely upon the print versions, but after the technological evolution the multifarious digital formats were also available. Even in the present scenario, some of the medical professionals prefer printed versions of resources, now the condition is changing as they need not come physically to the library premises to find the print formats but can stay at their clinic table and access online resources through networks at any time. The eclectic availability of e-resources has changed what users actually read and use. The users, particularly doctors now tend to use only what is easily accessible during their constrained time. Serendipity of getting authenticated and reliable resources is still an issue in the usage electronic and online resources.

Hence, the necessity of analyses on the usage of e-resources among ophthalmologists spontaneously rises to predict the supportive elements in their clinical practices. In this chapter, the various facets involved and combined in the present research have been presented and elucidated.

Electronic Resources

The emergence of information technology has brought tremendous changes and developments in almost every discipline and field. In academic and research, the ICT influences the reading materials format from print to digital. Electronic resources, shortly known as e-resources are ever growing to support research and education in this digital era. This new frontier has been hastily populous over the last few years with the explosion of e-resources in the forms of newspapers, magazines, journals, books, statistical data, images, audio including music, videos and websites. The electronic and digital resources can be characterized as ‘born digital’ and ‘digitalized’, which means the resources are digital by origin and digitally archived by scanning printed materials, respectively.

The need of electronic formats of information resources is due to sustenance easy access, quick access, share, port, edit and search capabilities compared to printed versions. The challenges of using electronic resources are the need of supporting equipment and devices; technical and computer literacy; network connectivity and

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