Scholarly Use of Internet by the Faculty of Medical Sciences: An Evaluative Study

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Abstract: *The study was conducted to assess   the Internet usage amongst Faculty members of medical colleges. This study has taken a sample of 200 Faculty Members working in 03 Government Medicals Colleges spread over three geographical revenue divisions of Odisha. This study aims to identify the use of Internet by Faculty members of Medical Sciences and the purpose and frequency of using Internet by them. It covers only four categories of Faculty Members in Medical Science who are working in Government Medical Colleges (Allopathic) in Odisha and excludes those   teachers who are working in Private Medical Colleges as well as Homeopathic and Ayurvedic Colleges from the ambit. The study revealed that, most of the faculty members in medical sciences who are using internet are keen to undergo further training in making best use of internet resources and services so as to enhance their professional image.*
Key words: *www, internet usage, e-mail, web resources, health science info.*

I.   Introduction

Internet is continuously evolving as a global communications network. Many health science professionals across the globe   use internet   as a most valuable source of health information. Medical professionals are increasingly relying on the internet to update their clinical knowledge. The speed with which new technologies and   treatments are being developed indicates that, many   health professionals are using the internet so as to access health- related information to guide them in their day to day practice and use e-mail to   communicate to the people and their fellow   colleagues sharing clinical and health related information.

There is an explosion in the amount of health information available on the internet. For example, entering the word 'health' in a generic search engine like, Google currently yields over thousands of pages covering a wide spectrum of health science information. Today, there are different types of health-related websites   available on the internet which vary from highly-academic sites, online peer-reviewed journals, various databases and websites, governmental sites, and health-provider-institutions' sites to countless individual contributions from citizens, patients ,as well as   health science professionals, well known medical practitioners and medical researchers world wide.

II.   Size Of Sample

For the purpose of the present study, information pertaining to the 'State of Use of   Internet' was collected from 200 Faculty Members working in 03 Government Medicals Colleges spread over three geographical revenue divisions of Orissa.

III.   Objectives

The basic objectives of this study are:
(i)   To unfold the internet use habit and attitude of   faculty members in   Medical Science   towards internet use.
 (ii) To find out the place and frequency of use of internet resources and services by the faculty members of medical science.
(iii) To unmask the quantum of time spent by these faculty members in browsing the internet.

IV.   Limitations

The present study has the following **limitations** in its ambit:
(i)   This study covers only four categories of Faculty Members in Medical   Science such as the Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, and Lecturers of three major Government   Medical Colleges of Odisha as the target respondents .

(ii) This study is primarily concerned with those Faculty Members who are teaching only in Government Medical Colleges within the territorial jurisdiction of the State of Odisha only .

(iii)This study included only those Faculty Members who working in three Government Medical Colleges (Allopathic) and hence, excludes those teachers who are working in Private Medical Colleges as well as Homeopathic and Ayurvedic Colleges in Odisha from its ambit.

V.   Analysis

The collected data has been analyzed and interpreted below:

5.1 Distribution of Respondents by Category of Posts

Table-1 shows that, 53(37.85%) out of 140 respondents are Associate Professors; followed by 46(32.85%) respondents are Assistant professors, 25(17.85%) respondents are Professors and only the remaining 16(11.45%) respondents are currently working Lecturer/Senior Residents. This table shows that, maximum respondents included in the sample are currently holding the post of Associate Professors. The resulting responses are shown in the diagram below (Fig.1)

Table-1 Distribution of Respondents by Category of Posts

| S.L.No	Designation	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Professor	25	17.85
2	Associate professor	53	37.85
3	Assistant professor	46	32.85
4	Lecturer/Senior resident	16	11.45
5	Any other	0	0
		Total=140	Total=100

Figure-1
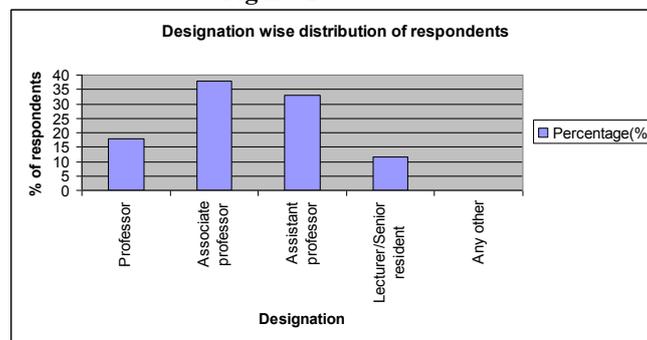
5.2. Distribution of Respondents by Medical Colleges

Table-2 shows that, a total of 200 questionnaires were distributed among the faculty members of three government medical colleges of Orissa, out of which 140 faculty members responded to the questionnaire. The overall response rate of the faculty members from three government medical colleges is 70%. The college-wise response rate is 50(76.92%) from MKCG college, Berhampur; followed by 50(71.42%) from VSS College, Burla, 40(61.53%) from SCB Medical College, Cuttack. This table is diagrammatically shown in Fig.2 below.

Table-2 Distribution of Respondents by Medical Colleges

| Sl.No.	Name of the Govt. Medical colleges	Questionnaire Distributed	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	MKCG Medical college, Berhampur	65	50	76.92
2	VSS Medical college, Burla	70	50	71.42
3	SCB Medical college, Cuttack	65	40	61.53
		Total=200	Total=140	

Figure-2

Medical college wise respondents
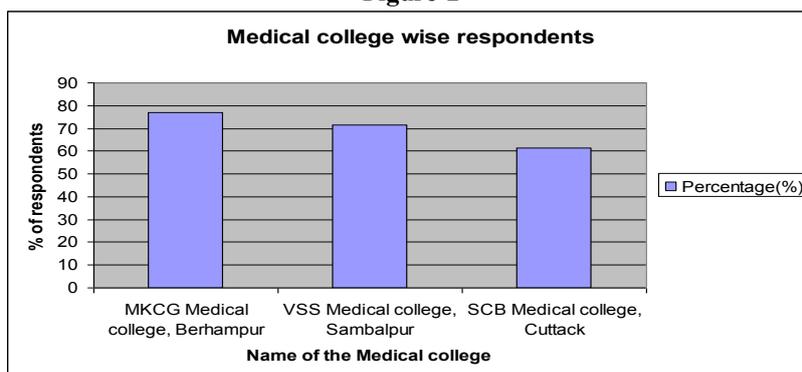
5.3. Distribution of Respondents by Internet Use Habit

From table-3 it is clear that, a majority of the faculty members,i.e. 110(78.57%) have used internet for one or the other purpose; followed by 30(21.43%) faculty members do not use internet at all. However, it is quite encouraging that, most of the medical college faculty members are interested in using internet to fulfill their health information needs and to update their clinical knowledge as shown in the Fig.3.

Table-3 Distribution of Respondents by Internet Use Habit

S.L.No.	Types of Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage(%)
1	Yes	110	78.57
2	No	30	21.43
		Total=140	Total=100

Figure-3



Use of internet by Faculty Members
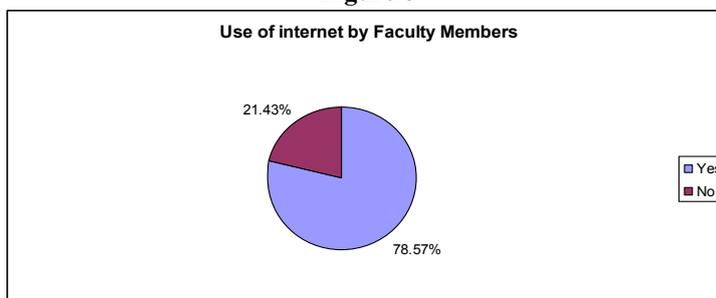
5.4 Distribution of Respondents by purpose of using Internet

Table-4 shows that, a majority of 58(52.72%) respondents are using internet for research purposes; followed by 39(35.45%) respondents using internet for health education or clinical information, 35(31.81%) respondents are using internet for to update their professional knowledge,32(31.81%) respondents using internet for professional contact and/or communication and, only 12 (10.90%) respondents are using internet for entertainment. The total percentage as depicted in the table 4 has exceeded 100% so about total number of respondents because, most of the faculty members use internet for different purposes and the percentage of such respondents under each of the set variables were calculated separately from the total number of respondents. The graphical representation of the responses of the respondents is shown in the Fig. 4 below.

Table-4 Purpose of Using Internet by Faculty Members

S.L.No.	Purpose of Internet use	No. of Respondents	Percentage(%)
1	Research	58	52.72
2	Entertainment	12	10.90
3	Health Education/clinical information	39	35.45
4	Professional communication	32	29.09
5	To update professional knowledge	35	31.81
6	Any other	12	10.90
	Total	188	170.87%

Figure-4
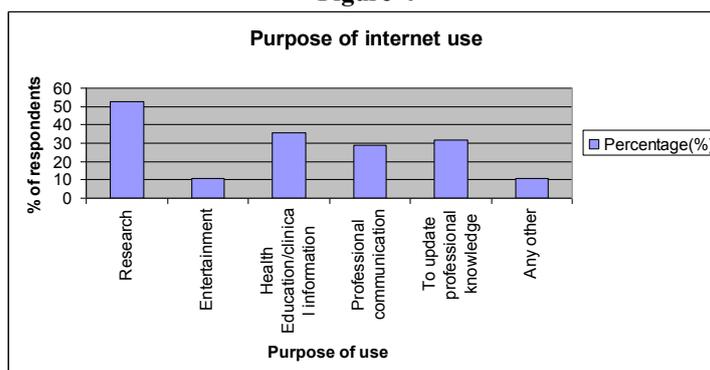
5.5. Distribution of Respondents by Experience in Using Internet

Table-5 shows that, majority of 55(50%) respondents are using internet with no specific period or amount of experience. Presumably, these 50% users are either using internet since last more than 4 years or do not use internet at all or use internet as and when required having no specific time frequency for such use; followed by 22(20%) respondents have the internet usage experience of 1-2 years; 12(10.91%) respondents each have been using internet for a period of less than 6 months and between 6 months-1year and, only 9(8.18%)respondents are using internet since last 2-4 years. Thus, a majority of around 92% respondents do not have adequate experience in using internet. The resultant data are reflected in figure 5 below.

Table-5 Distribution of Respondents by Experience in Using Internet

| S.L.No.	Year of Experience	No. of Respondents	Percentage(%)
1	Less than 6 month	12	10.91
2	6 months-1 year	12	10.91
3	1-2 years	22	20
4	2-4 years	9	8.18
5	Any other duration	55	50
		Total=110	Total=100

Figure-5
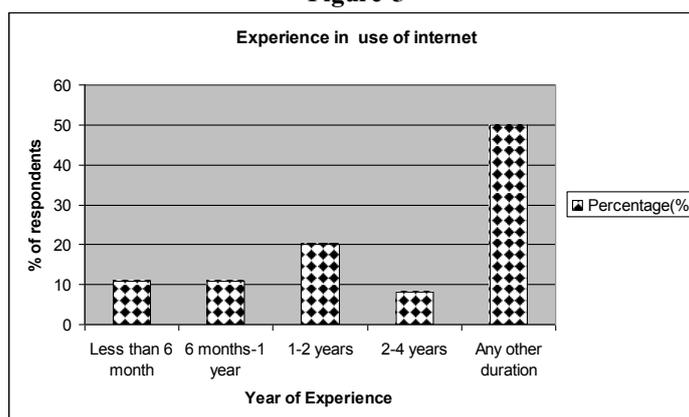
5.6. Distribution of Respondents by Frequency of Using Internet

Table-6 shows that, 46(41.81%) of the total respondents use internet 2-3 times a week; followed by 34(30.93%) respondents use internet daily,16(14.54%) respondents use internet once in a month and 9(8.18%) respondents use internet 2-3 times a month, while only 5(4.54%) respondents use internet with no specific duration i.e. as and when they require information they use internet. This shows that, a large number of respondents use internet weekly, presumably because they use internet at week ends. Surprisingly, none of the respondents use internet daily presumably due to the fact that, the faculty members in Medical Sciences remain busy in their day-to-day health-care and clinical practice which compel them to use internet at leisure. The resultant data are shown diagrammatically in figure-5.

Table-6 Distribution of Respondents by Frequency of Using Internet

| S.L.No.	Frequency of time	No. of Respondents	Percentage(%)
1	Daily	34	30.93
2	2-3 times a week	46	41.81
3	Once in a month	16	14.54
4	2-3 times a month	9	8.18
5	Any other duration	5	4.54
		Total=110	Total=100

Figure-6
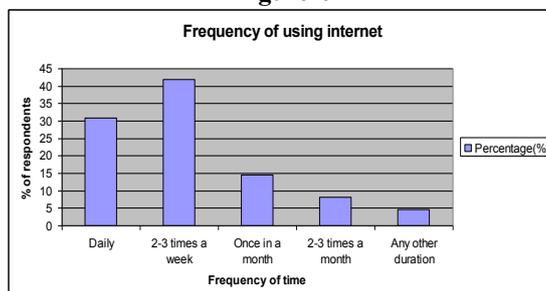
5.7. Distribution of Respondents by Place of Access to Internet

Table 7 clearly reveals that, a majority of 92(83.63%) respondents are using internet at their home or clinic, followed by 23(20.90) respondents are using internet at commercial Cyber café, 12(10.91%) respondents are using internet at their respective colleges or in their respective workplace; 7(6.36%) respondents are using internet at their hospital library, and only the remaining 3(2.72%) respondents are using internet at any other place that remain unspecified which may be through mobile internet. The total percentage as depicted in the table 7 has exceeded 100% so also the total number of respondents because, most of the faculty members use internet in more than one place for their convenient hours and accessibility and the percentage of such respondents under each of the set variables were calculated separately from the total number of respondents. Hence, the percentage exceeded 100%. The resultant data are diagrammatically shown in the figure- 7.

Table-7 Distribution of Respondents by Place of Access to Internet

S.L.No.	Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	At college or work place	12	10.91
2	At hospital library	7	6.36
3	At home and/or clinic	92	83.63
4	At commercial cyber café	23	20.90
5	Any other	3	2.72
	Total	137	124.52%

Figure-7
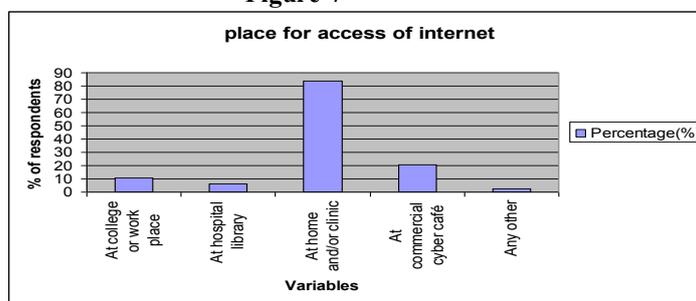
VI.   Conclusion

Internet provides a number of medical websites and medical resources which are quite helpful for health professionals. Health professional used internet primarily for research purpose and to update their clinical knowledge. They used internet to access health-related information to guide them in their day to day practice and use E-mail to communicate to the people and their fellow colleagues.

References

[1].   Rao(M),Mudhoi(Mahesh V.)and K.(Shivananda Bhat).2008. "Towards Quality of Health Information on the Internet'. DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology;28(6);pp.27-33