



Perception of First-Year Medical Students About Awareness of Information and Informatics

KEYWORDS

Awareness of information and informatics, first-year medical students

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ABSTRACT **AIM:** To judge medical students' awareness with information literacy and informatics. **Method:** A survey was conducted at the start of the 2015 school year to judge general library interest, students were asked to state their expected library usage during their time at Adesh University. The survey questions were developed on paper and designed to generate data. **Results:** To judge general library interest, 105 survey respondents were asked to state their expected library usage during their time at Adesh University. The respondents selected the resources they were likely to use the most were Physical material 31(29.5%) Late night studying 22(20.9%) Study desk 16 (15.2%) Smart desk 14(13.3%) library's online collection 12(11.4%) interest in using a personal librarian 10 (9.5%). **Conclusion:** A preliminary study assessed the future usage of library by medical students in Adesh University. However further investigation is required to validate its effectiveness. Moreover orientation is required to develop the competencies, research skills, and information literacy as a regular and comprehensive tool which will help students to explore in more depth.

Introduction

Today's medical students learn by using different approaches such as team-based learning, decision making, and medical practice. [1–3] Therefore the need of development of informatics and bioinformatics competencies, research skills, and information literacy has become the topic of interest because of recent advances in medical research, health care, and health information technology, along with changes in medical school curricula [4, 5]. Few reports suggest literacy competencies, skills, and capabilities vary among medical students in their first and second years [6, 7]. It may, therefore, be valuable to gauge student information literacies prior to the start of their academic journeys.

Methods

Chief Librarian and library staff at the Adesh Institute of Medical Sciences of Research, Adesh University, Bathinda did a survey among incoming medical students for their self assessed familiarity with a variety of information resources and services, prior to beginning the first-year curriculum. We met in person and communicated online to develop questions in the different areas: library services and materials, accessing reference services, searching online literature, or utilizing the services of a librarian. The survey questions were developed on paper and designed to generate data. After reaching internal consensus, we formatted the questions as a survey tool. We refined questions after pilot-testing the survey questions with one librarian and three library technical staff that were not part of the survey development process. Students were given the survey at the library's orientation, after they had completed activities meant to familiarize them with the library, its resources, its services, and its personnel.

Results

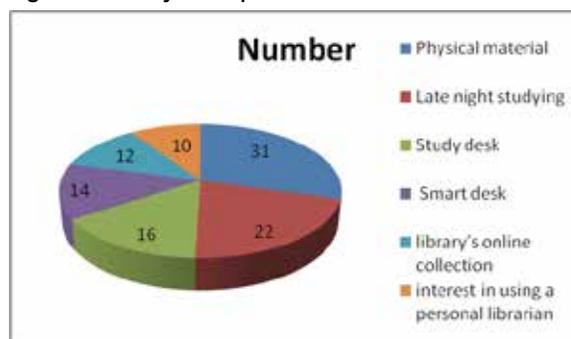
There were 105 survey respondents; the ages of the students were primarily 17-20 years old. To judge general library interest, students were asked to state their expected library usage during their time at Adesh University. Respondents selected the resources they were likely to use the most (Table -1 and figure -1). Physical material (31%) and Late night studying (22%) was found to be selected by most of them. Study desk (16%) and Smart desk (14%) was

also marked by some of them. Library's online collection (12%) and interest in using a personal librarian (10%) were least responded by some of them respondents.

Table -1 Survey of respondents

Resources	Number	%
Physical material	31	29.5
Late night studying	22	20.9
Study desk	16	15.2
Smart desk	14	13.3
library's online collection	12	11.4
interest in using a personal librarian	10	9.5

Figure 1- Survey of respondents



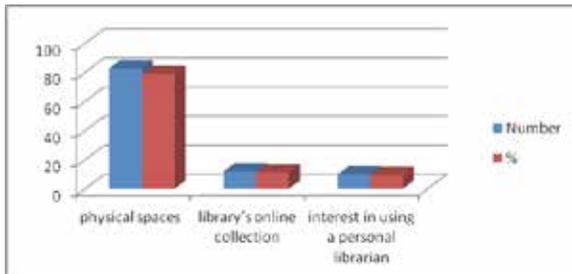
If grouping into 3 categories (Table -2 and figure -2) library's online collection (consisting of online journals and books,) physical material and spaces (consisting of study areas, Study desk, Smart desk) and interest in using a personal librarian —students were split as to what resources they expected they would use. We found they expected to use more physical spaces and reference material as compared to research services.

Table -2 Survey of respondents as per grouping in different categories

Resources	Number	%
physical spaces	83	79

library's online collection	12	11.5
interest in using a personal librarian	10	9.5

Figure 2- Survey of respondents as per grouping in different categories



Discussion

The results offered interesting insights into whether students found it amenable to use what could be considered "traditional" services and resources, such as a "personal librarian" or physical space in the library. Our results demonstrate that students may require training to learn preferences for accessing online information which may change in a future survey. Second, some of respondents were somewhat or very likely to use a "personal librarian" service during their first year, and over half were interested in using what could be considered physical resources and in-person services. These findings highlight the importance of providing in person services rather than online services only. The findings provide our librarians, and associated library stakeholders, insights into the ways new medical students think about information services and tools, as well as help us focus limited resources that can help them develop as they progress through the curriculum. The findings also highlight the value of surveying students about resources that perhaps extend beyond traditional library resources. A survey of this type can be used to demonstrate the importance of developing skills that support work in data-intensive biomedical environments [8]. We intend to administer a version of this survey to this same cohort of students at a future time to learn how their perceptions about information and informatics literacies have changed. A future revision could ask the use of databases for searching literature like PubMed; and inquire about ways that the library can best integrate bioinformatics instruction into library services.

Conclusion: We conducted a survey to understand the familiarity and experience with a variety of information resources and services among a cohort of new medical students. These findings and others are helping our library to understand the needs of our newest customers and consider how we prioritize limited resources to best support students as they progress through the curriculum. We believe that other libraries should carry out similar efforts to identify their own customers' needs. The findings will help them determine ways that the libraries can impact their institutions and identify areas for future research.

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