

Library resources and services use for study by students of medical Sciences in Semnan University of Medical Sciences and Health Services, 2006-7

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Abstract

Background and purpose: Today with growth of information, information sources are also growing in number and diversity. The users should welcome these changes and learn the skills which help with optional use of information resources and prevents confusion. This study is an attempt to evaluate student use of information resources and library services in Semnan University of Medical Sciences and Health Services.

Methods: In this survey a questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire included question on demographic data such as the degree program of study, sex, living place and 15 items on study habits and library use. The last year students of 13 disciplines leading to Associate degree, Bachelors degree, and Professional doctoral degree (medicine) were included in this study. The association of variables was tested with chi-square and fisher exact tests and to examine the correlation of variables Spearman correlation coefficient was used. A P value of less than 0.05 was considered significant

Results: In this study 215 last year students participated. Of all participants 70.3% were female; 43.3% study for an associate degree, 47.4% studies for Bachelor's degree and 9.3% studied for doctoral degree; 92.6% lived in dormitories. There is a significant association between use of library sources and the study program degree ($r=0.191$, $P=0.005$) and living place ($P=0.026$) Original English books are used scarcely. Use of English sources are associated with the degree the students studied for ($r=0.137$, $P=0.045$) and sex; using specialty journal is associated with program degree ($r=0.160$, $P=0.013$). Most students of doctoral degree (40%), bachelors degree (42.2%), and associate degree (32.3%) did not use library as an educational setting. Male students (28.2%) and students living in dormitories (24.6%) "always" used library as main study place.

Conclusions: Most of our students always or often preferred transcripts of instructors' lecture over other resources of library which might be due to the lack of information handling skills. Training students on the potentials of library in helping them with their education can help in this regard.

Keywords: LIBRARY SOURCES, LEARNING SOURCE, LIBRARY SOURCE

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Introduction

One major center for knowledge distribution, innovation, and knowledge generation are universities (1). Universities are places where new paradigms and thoughts generated (2). The library of universities is a corner stone for transfer of knowledge providing resources for all working in academic enterprise (3). No academic centers are able to materialize its mission without an enriched library (4). The libraries had a history of more than a thousand years and each has provided special services (5). The studies on library use have shown that frequent library service users are actually searching for high quality information (6). This has emphasized the role of university libraries as a major contributor for advancing knowledge and student education (7). Teachers encourage students to use textbooks beyond the class notes to enrich their experience (8). The faculties and students should identify their study needs and learn effective ways to find the information sources they need (9, 10, 11). Today with growth of information, information sources are also growing in number and diversity. The users should welcome these changes and learn the skills which help with optional use of information resources and prevents confusion (12). This study is an attempt to evaluate student use of information resources and library services in Semnan University of Medical Sciences and Health Services.

Methods

In this survey a questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire included question on demographic data such as the degree program of study, sex, living place and 15 items on study habits and library use. The questionnaire validity was approved by a panel of expert and reliability was tested through a test-retest procedure in a pilot study. The last year students of 13 disciplines

leading to Associate degree, Bachelors degree, and Professional doctoral degree (medicine) were included in this study.

The last year students are usually were experienced in using university resources and are more familiar with their sources of knowledge reducing confounding factors such as low orientation to university resources that may hinder use of them. The association of variables was tested with chi-square and fisher exact tests and to examine the correlation of variables Spearman correlation coefficient was used. A P value of less than 0.05 was considered significant.

Result

In this study 215 last year students participated. Of all participants 70.3% were female; 43.3% study for an associate degree, 47.4% studies for Bachelor's degree and 9.3% studied for doctoral degree; 92.6% lived in dormitories.

More than 90% of students studied for associate, bachelors, and doctoral degree often or always during the semester and at exam time use lecture notes or instructor lectures transcripts more than other sources such as internet, original English books, translated test books, and journals. There is a significant association between use of library sources and the study program degree ($r=0.191$, $P=0.005$) and living place ($P=0.026$). About half the doctoral degree, bachelors degree students, and 45.2% of associate degree students often get sources other than transcripts of instructors lecture from library. Original English books are used scarcely; 65% of doctoral degree, 61.8% of bachelors degree and 88.6% of associate degree student use the relevant journals "never" or "rarely". Use of English sources are associated with the degree the students studied for ($r=0.137$, $P=0.045$) and sex; using specialty journal is associated with program degree ($r=0.160$, $P=0.013$).

Most students of doctoral degree (40%), bachelors

degree (42.2%), and associate degree (32.3%) did not use library as an educational setting. Male students (28.2%) and students living in dormitories (24.6%) "always" used library as main study place.

No significant association was found between, sex and living place and using library as main study place.

More than half the students preferred to use library in the morning; about 5% of students used the library for study on a daily basis. Most students of doctoral degree (40.6%) and associate degree (33.3%) used library every other day for study for one hour or more.

Discussion

Most of our students always or often preferred transcripts of instructors' lecture over other resources of library which might be due to the lack of information handling skills. A study in Illinois, university medical school showed that those students who had training for using library as a source more frequently used the library resources in comparison with students who did not have these training (13). Since significant financial resources are spent to provide the library resources appropriate use of these resources prevent waste of resources. Training students on the potentials of library in helping them with their education can help in this regard. On the other hand libraries have to provide up to date resources and establish student friendly environment that encourage students to use these resources.

One recommendation is for the libraries to go beyond the traditional services, provide more audio-visual and multi-media resources, and identify the specific needs of various users and provide them with their needs, expand electronic, web-based services to information resources. Faculty members also can help with encouraging students to use library services through assignment that involve effective use of these services.

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