LAFIA JOURNAL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
Volume 4, Number 1, 2023.
Available online ***https://journals.fulafia.edu.ng/index.php/ljlis***
ISSN:Print - 2814-0702, Online - 2814-0710
LJLIS

INFORMATION NEEDS OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCHERS IN SELECTED HOSPITALS IN MAIDUGURI METROPOLIS, BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The study determined "Information Needs of Medical Practitioners for Agricultural Researchers in Selected Hospitals in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria". The study sought to determine the information needs of Medical Practitioners; information resources available to Medical Practitioners and challenges of Medical Practitioners in the process of seeking for information in Maiduguri Metropolis Borno State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was used and the entire populations of 120 Medical Practitioners under study were used. This is in line with Gall and Borg (2007) that the whole population should be studied when the entire size of the population is small and manageable. Questionnaire was used as research instrument. Date collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentage scores. Results were presented in tables. Findings revealed that specific medical information top the list of other information needs; most of the information resources were not available to Medical Practitioners and they were faced with a lot of challenges in the process of seeking for information. The study recommended that there should be more supply of information resources such as electronic resources, internet, cable satellite, audio/visual material e.t.c that will meet the information needs of Medical Practitioner; the hospital management should make sure that the various information resources are made available and they should also allocate enough funds for provisions of information resources.
Keywords: *Agricultural Researchers, Information Needs, Information Resources and Medical Practitioners.*

Introduction

Information has been seen as an essential commodity for development. As a processed data to which meaning may be attached, information is useful for planning, decision making and reduction of uncertainty. Accessing information in a timely way is essential for the clinical decision-making process. If information needs remain unanswered at the time medical practitioners are making clinical decisions, then delayed or uninformed decisions might occur. Consequently, there may be medical errors such as incorrect diagnosis, error in administering treatment or failure to provide prophylactic treatment which impacts the quality and outcome of decisions. Information needs of Medical practitioners are defined as expressions of missing information that is required to accomplish a specific task, which in this case is managing patient care. Medical Practitioners need information to diagnose and treat patients. They also need information to update themselves in order to be able to participate in conferences and seminars. All need information to be able to find facts, but we also need information on particular subjects Adebayo (2014).

Information needs have many facets and medical information comes first on the list; assignment and academic projects were other purposes of seeking information and internet was mostly used by medical students out of other sources to meet their information needs (Oluwakemi and Oluwatoyin 2018). Information seeking behaviours exhibited by information users are derived from users 'information needs when they have the urge for information (Eftekhar and Hayati 2016). Information needs is defined as expressions of missing information of Medical Practitioners that is required to accomplish a specific task, which in this case is managing patient care.

Majority of the ICT facilities including computers and internet require stable energy resources. (Apagu and Wakili 2015). Among all the sources of information identified by authors, (Igwela, Odomi and Nsirim 2019) opined that the library is the most reliable place where the most desirable information can be sought. Information sources including print, non-print, primary, secondary and tertiary sources can be consulted. However, with the emergence of Information Communication Technology (ICT), there is a paradigm shift to electronic information sources which has also made provisions for access to various medical databases. Information Resources are facilities provided to give authoritative response to the inquiries of Medical Practitioners from the existing store of knowledge or expertise.

It seems that most of the time Medical Practitioners concentrate on their own

knowledge which they acquired over the time for making critical clinical decisions. According to Smith (2007) most of the information Medical Practitioner's applies while examining patients is acquired from their memory and unfortunately some of them are out of date or wrong. Therefore, it is necessary for medical practitioners to seek and keep abreast with the current clinical information to provide a better patient care. Medical Practitioners refers to practicing medical doctors in any field of medicine and are concerned with the maintenance of health, preventions and cure of diseases,

Statement of the Problem

Resources may be available in the library and even identified bibliographically as relevant to Medical Practitioners, but they may not be able to lay hands on them. One may identify citations in indexes, but may not have access to sources containing the relevant articles. The more accessible information resources are, the more likely they are to be used. The study determined the awareness of the various information resources available in order to make accessibility easy.

Medical Practitioners lament the attendant features of underdevelopment such as power failure, machine breakdowns, and lack of spare parts and technicians, which intermittently stall the performance of the modern gadgets of information storage and transfer in Maiduguri Metropolis. Frequent power outage faced by Medical Practitioners made it almost impossible for them to use the modern gadget. Due to this problem they can hardly use the information resources available to them in the hospital.

Medical Practitioners are experiencing information overload. The consequences of allowing the unfavourable situation to persist are that it will make them to waste their time searching for a particular information. To address the problem of information overload, an identification of their information needs will assist them in understanding what they view as useful information. Some Medical Practitioners are not aware of the various information resources available to them. The study determined the awareness of the various information resources available.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study determined the:

1. information needs of medical practitioners in hospitals in Maiduguri Metropolis
2. information resources available to medical practitioners in Maiduguri Metropolis.

3. challenges of medical practitioners in the process of seeking for information.

Research Methodology

This study used descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design has been defined by Osuala (2001) as a design that studies populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover the relative incidences of distribution and interrelation of sociological and psychological variables. The population for the study comprised of one hundred and twenty (120) Medical Practitioners of the three Hospitals under study. This includes Borno State Specialist Hospital, Mohammed Shuwa Memorial Hospital and Umaru Shehu Ultra-Modern Hospital, all in Maiduguri. This shows that the entire population was used. This is due to the fact that the targeted population is small, (120) as revealed from the researchers' preliminary investigation (documents from Borno State Hospitals Management Board, 2019/ 2020). Due to the small size of population of Medical Practitioners under study, total enumeration was done. This is in line with Gall and Borg (2007) that the whole population should be studied when the entire size of the population is small and manageable.

Table 1: Population of Medical Practitioners under study

Hospitals	No. of Medical Practitioners
Borno State Specialist Hospital	69
Mohammed Shuwa Memorial Hospital	18
Umaru Shehu Ultra-Modern Hospital	33
Total	120

Sources; Medical Practitioners list of the (3) three hospitals under study (document from 2019/2020) and Borno State Hospital Management Board (BHMB).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 2: Information Needs of Medical Practitioners in Maiduguri Metropolis Hospitals Borno State, Nigeria

Item	N	SA	A	TA	SD	D	TD
I need information on specific medical issues		68(60.7%)	19(17.0%)	87(77.7%)	15(13.4%)	10(8.9%)	25(22.3%)
I need information on general medical issues		40(35.7%	41(36.6%)	81(72.3%)	27(24.1%)	4(3.6%)	31(27.7%)
I need information on medical practice		48(42.9%)	37(33.0%)	85(75.9%)	22(19.6%)	5(4.5%)	27(24.1%)
I need information on Patient diagnosis	112	48(42.9%)	23(20.5%)	71(63.4%)	30(26.8%)	11(9.8%)	41(36.6%)
I need information on drug prescription		47(42.0%)	38(33.9%)	85(75.9%)	19(17.0%)	8(7.1%)	27(24.1%)
I need information on new pharmaceutical drugs		28(25.0%)	32(28.6%)	60(53.6%)	22(19.6%)	30(26.8%)	52(46.4%)
Total		279	190	469	135	68	203
Average		47(42.0%)	32(28.6%)	78(69.6%)	23(20.5%)	11(9.8%)	34(30.3)

Key: **SA**-Strongly Agreed, **A**-Agreed, **SD**-Strongly Disagreed, **D**-Disagreed.

Table 2 presents the responses of respondents on information needs of Medical Practitioners. It was revealed **that** 87(77.7%) respondents agreed that they needed information on specific medical issues, while only 25(22.3%) disagreed

with the statement. On general medical issues 81(72.3%) respondents agreed that they needed information on it while only 31(27.7%) disagreed with the statement. Information needed on Medical practice was agreed by 85(75.9%) respondents and disagreed by 27(24.1%) respondents. 71(63.4%) respondents agreed that they needed information on patient diagnosis while only 41(36.6%) disagreed with it. 85(75.9%) respondents agreed that they needed information on drug prescription and only 27(24.1%) disagreed with it. On new pharmaceutical drugs 60(53.6%) respondents agreed that they needed information on new pharmaceutical drugs while 52(46.4%) disagreed with the statement.

Table 3: Information resources available to Medical Practitioners in Maiduguri Metropolis Hospitals Borno State Nigeria

Items	N	A	NA
Is Library available in your hospital?		19(17.0%)	93(83.0%)
Is Internet available in your hospital?		50(44.6%)	62(55.4%)
Is Cable Satellite (s) available in your hospital?		40(35.7%)	72(64.3%)
Are Electronic Resources available in your hospital?		28(25.0%)	84(75.0%)
Are Printed resources available in your hospital?		53(47.3%)	59(52.7%)
Are CD ROMs available in your hospitals?	112	29(25.9)	83(74.1%)
Are Audio/visual materials available in your hospital?		21(18.7%)	91(81.3%)
Are Television sets available in your hospitals?		45(40.2%)	67(59.8%)
Are Radios available in your hospitals?		13(11.6%)	99(88.4%)
Total		298	710
Averages		33(29.5%)	79(70.5%)

Key: **SA**-Strongly Agreed, **A**-Agreed, **SD**-Strongly Disagreed, **D**-Disagreed.

Table 3 shows that only 19(17.0%) of the respondents indicated that Library were available while 93(83.0%) respondents indicated Library were not available. On Internet, 50 (44.6%) of the respondents agreed that it were available, while 62(55.4%) disagreed to that. The table further showed that 40 (35.7%) respondents agreed that Cable Satellite(s) was available and 72(64.3%) indicated that it was not available. On Electronic Resources, 28(25.0%) respondents agreed to Electronic Resources to being available, while 84(75.0%) of the respondents disagreed to it. On the Printed Resources, 53(47.3%) respondents indicated that printed Resources were available and 59(52.7%) respondents indicated that printed Resources were not available. 29(25.9) respondents indicated that CD ROMs were available while 83(74.1%) of respondents indicated that it were not available. On the Audio/visual materials, 21(18.7%) respondents indicated that Audio/visual were available in their hospital and 91(81.3%) of respondents indicated that Audio/visual were not available. On television sets, 45(40.2%) respondents indicated that they were available while 67(59.8%) indicated they were not available. Finally, the table revealed that on Radios 13(11.6%) respondents indicated that Radios were available and 99(88.4%) of the respondents reported that Radios were not available in the hospitals under study.

Table 4.4: Challenges of Medical Practitioners in the process of seeking for information in Maiduguri Metropolis Hospitals Borno State, Nigeria

Items	N	SA	A	TA	SD	D	TD
There are challenges of poor ICT infrastructure		58(51.8%)	35(31.2%)	93(83.0%)	13(11.6%)	6(5.4%)	19(17.0%)
There are challenges of Inadequate funding.		48(42.9%)	29(25.9%)	77(68.8%)	19(17.0%)	16(14.3%)	35(31.2%)
There are challenges of Frequent power outage		61(54.5%)	30(26.8%)	91(81.3%)	14(12.5%)	7(6.3%)	21(18.8%)
There are challenges of Lack of time.		38(33.9%)	45(40.2%)	83(74.1%)	21(18.8%)	8(7.1%)	29(25.9%)
There are challenges of High cost of information.	112	42(37.5%)	34(30.4%)	76(67.9%)	26(23.2%)	10(8.9%)	36(32.1%)
There are challenges of Lack of skill on how to search for information.		35(31.3%)	24(21.4%)	59(52.7%)	36(32.1%)	17(15.2%)	53(47.3%)
There are challenges of unavailability of information resources.		32(28.6%)	39(34.8%)	71(63.4%)	26(23.2%)	15(13.4%)	41(36.6%)
Total		314	236	550	155	79	234
Average		45(40.2%)	34(30.3%)	79(70.%)5	22(19.6%)	11(9.8%)	33(29.5%)

Key: **SA**-Strongly Agreed, **A**-Agreed, **SD**-Strongly Disagreed, **D**-Disagreed.

Table 4 revealed that 93(83.0%) of the respondents agreed that there were challenges of Poor ICT infrastructure in the hospital and 19(17.0%) disagreed. On challenges of Inadequate funding in the hospital 77(68.8%) of the respondents agreed while only 35(31.3%) disagreed. On challenges of Frequent power outage in the hospital 91(83%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while only 21(19%) disagreed with the statement. On challenges of Lack of time in the hospital 83(74%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while 29(26%) disagreed. High cost of information in the hospital was agreed by 76(68%) of the respondents and disagreed by 36(32%) of the respondents. 59(52%) of the respondents agreed that there were challenges of lack of skill on how to search for information in the hospital while 53(48%) disagreed with the statement. Finally, 71(61%) of the respondents agreed that there are challenges of unavailability of information materials in the hospital while 41(36%) disagreed with the statement.

Discussion

Findings revealed that information needs of Medical Practitioners in hospitals in Maiduguri Metropolis of Borno State Nigeria have many facets of which specific Medical information comes first on the list with 87(77.7%) respondents indicating that they need information on specific issues. This result is in agreement with Adebayo, Akanni and Busuyi (2017) that information needs of Medical students in University of Ibadan have many facets of which specific Medical information comes first on the list. Sapa, Krakowska and Janiak (2014) also affirmed that students more often search discipline-oriented portals searching for specific information. March, Vaikosen and Akporoghene (2020) affirmed that nurses are specific in their information needs due to working environment and patients care.

Availability of information resources reveals that most of the information resources are not available to Medical Practitioners in hospitals in Maiduguri Metropolis Borno state Nigeria. This finding coincided with earlier finding of Bitagi and Udoudou (2013) who argued that the provision of all forms and types of information resources in academic libraries is highly imperative to meet with the information needs of different categories of users. However, he added that due to high cost of information resources and related problems, the type of information resources in most academic libraries are inadequate and outdated to meet the demand for current information needs of its intended users. Various resources though very vital for teaching and learning are not always available to doctors at the point of need. The extent of availability may also vary from one location to another. Different factors and circumstances like costs, time, availability and

purpose may influence the degree of utilization of the different resources. Adebayo and Salau (2014) maintained that information sources available to small scale traders are in different forms but are not made available to them.

On challenges being faced by Medical Practitioners, finding reveals that Medical Practitioners in hospitals in Maiduguri Metropolis Borno state Nigeria were faced with a lot of challenges in the process of seeking information such as poor ICT infrastructure, inadequate funding, frequent power outage, lack of time, high cost of information, lack of skill on how to search for information in the library and inadequate of information materials. This result is in agreement with Abubakar and Reuben (2015) that lack of information resources and services, inadequate funding of the libraries and lack of adequate information resources were militating factors against utilization of information resources. This result is also in agreement with **Ibrahim (2014)**, who affirmed that in Nigeria, we have not quite reached the status of providing access to digital resources and information, due to some challenges which are militating against it.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research study, the following conclusions were made; specific medical information tops the list of other information needs of Medical Practitioners in Maiduguri Metropolis Hospitals Borno State, Nigeria. Most of the information resources are not available to Medical Practitioners in Maiduguri Metropolis Hospital Borno state Nigeria. Medical Practitioners in Maiduguri Metropolis Hospital in Borno state Nigeria are faced with a lot of challenges in the process of seeking for information.

In conclusion Medical Practitioners due to their intensive nature of work and time limitations need specific information in their field of specialization; they need fast and quick information because of limited time to go to the library.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. The hospital management of the hospitals under study should make available Medlars Databases where Medical Practitioners can access specific information.
2. The hospital management of the hospitals under study should make sure that the various information resources are made available, so that Medical Practitioners can access, use and disseminate information within the shortest period of time. The library management should tailor their resources to the

needs of Medical Practitioners.

3. The hospital management of the hospitals under study should address the challenges of frequent power outage by providing a good generator that will supply power specifically to the office of the Medical Practitioners. They should also allocate enough funds for the provisions of information resources.

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