

## UNDERSTANDING USER INFORMATION NEEDS IN MEDICAL LIBRARIES: A REVIEW STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

Medical libraries play a crucial role in supporting healthcare professionals, researchers, and students by providing access to reliable and up-to-date information. Understanding user information needs is essential for improving library services and ensuring effective information delivery. This paper presents a review-based analysis of user needs in medical libraries by examining existing literature. It highlights the evolving information requirements of users, the impact of digital resources, and challenges faced by medical libraries in meeting user expectations. The study also suggests strategies for enhancing user satisfaction and optimising library services. The findings emphasise the importance of user-centered approaches in modern medical library systems.

**KEYWORDS:** Medical Libraries; User Needs; Information Needs; Library Services; Digital Resources; User Studies.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Medical libraries are integral components of healthcare institutions, serving as knowledge hubs for clinicians, researchers, and students. With the exponential growth of medical information and rapid technological advancements, the role of medical libraries has undergone significant transformation.

Understanding the information needs of users is critical for ensuring that relevant, accurate, and timely information is delivered. Unlike general libraries, medical libraries cater to users

whose information needs are often urgent and directly linked to patient care and research outcomes.

This paper aims to explore user information needs in medical libraries through a review of existing literature without involving primary data collection.

## **2. Concept of User Studies in Libraries**

User studies refer to systematic investigations conducted to understand the behavior, needs, preferences, and satisfaction levels of library users. Traditionally, such studies involve methods like surveys, interviews, and observation.

However, in review-based research, user studies are analyzed through previously published works. This approach enables researchers to identify trends and patterns without conducting direct field investigations.

User studies are essential for designing user-centered library services and improving overall efficiency.

## **3. User Information Needs in Medical Libraries**

Medical library users include a diverse group such as:

- Doctors and clinicians
- Medical students
- Researchers
- Nursing staff

Their information needs are specialized and may include:

- Evidence-based clinical information
- Research articles and scholarly journals
- Drug and pharmaceutical information
- Patient care guidelines and protocols

With the advancement of digital technologies, users increasingly prefer:

- Online databases
- E-journals
- Institutional repositories
- Clinical decision support systems

#### **4. Review of Literature**

Existing literature reveals that medical library users heavily depend on digital resources for accessing timely and reliable information. Several studies indicate that time constraints in clinical environments significantly influence information-seeking behavior.

Researchers have highlighted the growing demand for remote access to medical resources, especially in academic and hospital settings. Additionally, there is a strong preference for user-friendly interfaces and efficient search systems.

However, the literature also points out several gaps, including:

- Lack of awareness about available resources
- Underutilization of library services
- Need for information literacy training

#### **5. DISCUSSION**

The review indicates that user needs in medical libraries are dynamic and continuously evolving. The transition from print to digital resources has reshaped user expectations and information-seeking patterns.

Medical libraries face several challenges in meeting these needs, such as:

- Limited financial resources
- Rapid technological changes
- Lack of user awareness

To remain relevant, libraries must adopt innovative approaches and align their services with user expectations.

#### **6. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

To effectively address user needs, medical libraries should:

- Expand access to digital resources and databases
- Conduct regular user orientation and training programs
- Improve remote access facilities
- Integrate advanced technologies such as AI-based search tools
- Periodically assess user satisfaction through feedback mechanisms

## 7. CONCLUSION

Understanding user information needs is fundamental to the effective functioning of medical libraries. This review highlights the importance of adopting user-centered approaches and leveraging modern technologies to meet evolving demands.

Medical libraries must continuously adapt and innovate to ensure they remain valuable resources within the healthcare ecosystem.

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