Information needs and information-seeking behavior of physicians : the users of the Alfred Goldschmidt Medical Sciences Library of Technion : case study / Alona Danilov

Abstract

The thesis focused on exploring the information needs and information seeking behavior of physicians (specialists and residents) at the Alfred Goldschmidt Medical Sciences Library of Technion, Haifa, Israel that also serves Rambam Medical Center. In particular, the study aimed to find out the types of doctors' information needs, the sources of information they preferred in searching, and the issues and concerns of doctors in information seeking process.

A strategy of mixed-method procedures was followed to gather the research data using an electronic and paper-based questionnaire: out of 95 questionnaires distributed, 66 valid responses were selected and used for further statistical analysis. The findings of the study showed that the most frequently reported types of information needs were a need for clinical information and pharmaceutical information. In addition, it was observed that electronic information resources were the participants' primary resources of which online medical databases, e-books, e-journals and the Internet were most frequently selected and used (PubMed, Google and UpToDate were rated as variable resources); print resources were rated as the second preferred sources of information. However, the degree of use of clinical information sources showed that doctors' information seeking varied depending on the respondents' demographic characteristics (specialty type and age).

The study results illustrated that some contextual factors either supported or hindered doctors in seeking the information they needed. In this relation, it was important to examine not only what, but also why information resources were selected by the

users: the study revealed that doctors' information resources selection based on resources' characteristics.

Both surveyed groups indicated a desire for more training; all the respondents showed a desire for searching skills training: the majority indicated that online tutorials were the preferred training format. On average, the participants rated the services of the Alfred Goldschmidt Medical Sciences Library of Technion highly.

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