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Utilization of ERMED Consortium by the Library Users of Jorhat Medical College & Hospital, Assam, India: an Analytical Study

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Abstract:

Purpose: The primary aim of this study is to find out the usages of ERMED consortium, purpose for accessing of e-journals, frequency of ERMED consortium usages, training for accessing e-journals, publisher's wise choice in accessing e-journals, problems in accessing ERMED consortium, & satisfaction level of library users of Jorhat Medical College & Hospital (JMCH).

Methodology: A set of questionnaire has been distributed among the registered library users of JMCH. User's data have been collected by using convenience sampling from different categories of library users.

Findings: Data have been received from 127 users (79%). Library users mainly access ERMED consortium for academic, research & patient care information. Users are benefited from time saving by searching e-resources than printed collections. Sometimes users also get problem for accessing e-resources due to non availability of relevant topics and lack of time.

Research Limitations: The present study is limited only for the registered library users like MBBS students, PG students, physicians, faculties, resident doctors of JMCH, Assam.

Practical Implication: ICT is the chief part for the development of library environment. It is necessary to procure the electronic resources for maximum accessibility of library collection by the medical professionals. E-resources are very important for keeping up breast for the medical professionals. Medical library users can access multiple e-journals through ERMED Consortium provided by National Medical Library (NML), New Delhi. By using ERMED Consortium medical libraries can distribute maximum e-resources within a limited budget and user can also utilize at optimum level within short period.

Originality: This is the original work of the researcher. Data analyses have been done from primary data which was received from the targeted responses (medical library users). Some additional information has been collected personally from the library users to know the better accessibility of e-resources through ERMED Consortium.

Keywords: *ERMED, Consortium, E-resources, E-journal, Medical Library, Jorhat Medical College & Hospital.*

Introduction:

Jorhat Medical College & Hospital (JMCH) is one of the good and well furnished medical college under Govt. of Assam which foundation stone was laid on 25th August, 2008 by Honourable Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh. Formally JMCH was established on 12th October, 2009 by the former Honorable Chief Minister Late Tarun Gogoi and Honorable Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of Assam, and Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma. From the year 2010 first batch of MBBS students have been admitted in this college with 100 students and PG course has been started from 2017 in this college. There are total 26 clinical and non clinical departments. The college has been rendering the services for the paramedical and nursing students also besides biomedical science. There are total 883 students and 287 physicians.

The central library of JMCH has been providing good facilities for the registered library users. The library keeps open from 8 A.M. to 10 P.M. for 6 days except Sunday & govt. holidays. The library has approx 13000 printed resources and 500 e-resources collections. E-resources can be accessed through consortium & other medical databases in the central library and departmental library. E-resources can be accessible within campus from the student's hostel and physician's residency. The library has a well equipped internet section with 50 numbers of nodes and Wi- Fi facility for the users. The library has been providing the ICT based services along with traditional library services.

Library Consortium:

When two or more libraries are ready with a mutual agreement to cooperate their functions among their member institutions with a same goal then it is known as library consortium. Library consortium is very essential for sharing the resources among their participating members for maximum utilization of e-resources. With the help of ICT and internet, now days all the libraries are accessing multiple e-resources at low cost. For distributing e-resources through consortium, different types of publishers & vendors are engaged to collaborate among the member libraries those who have uniform interest. Library consortia help in sharing multiple e-resources & maximize the library collection with limited budget and also provide the ICT based library services among the library users.

Medical professionals always need recent and updated resources for their academic, clinical & non clinical and research purpose. It is not possible for a library to procure all resources for the users. Due to development of emerging ICT, online resources have been growing at fast speed and for that demand of library consortium have been seeing among the medical libraries also.

ERMED Consortium:

ERMED (Electronic Resources in Medicine) Consortium is a medical science consortium which was developed by National Medical Library (NML), New Delhi. This initiative was taken on January, 2008 by Director General of Health Services (DGHS) & Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MOHFW) to improve the usages of electronic resources in the medical

science. For the member institutions of ERMED Consortium there is no requirement of any membership fee for accessing the e-journals. The aim of NML is to provide the library and information services among the medical institutions of the entire country. Five primary publishers have procured total 243 e-journals for distributing among the member institutions of India. There are total 71 member institutions from India under this ERMED Consortium. Three prominent agents have been subscribing the most important journal packages among the leading institutions like medical institutions, Central Universities, IIT's, IIM's and other private institutions. NML also conducts national and regional level training program for the institutional members. Users can also access the back issue journals along with current journals through ERMED Consortium. Some required articles may be asked by the membership institutions by forwarding mail also through ERMED Consortium. Five leading publishers are highly associated with this ERMED Consortium. End users can access the e-journals through ERMED Consortium by clicking a single first step www.irmed.in. The publishers are

1. British Medical Journal (BMJ) Publisher
2. Cambridge University Press (CUP)
3. Oxford University Press (OUP)
4. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins (LWW)
5. John Wiley

Statement of the Problem:

Medical professionals always need different types of relevant information related to their subject and for that printed library collection is not only enough for the library users. Due to expansion of biomedical literature, e-journals are widely disseminated through World Wide Web (WWW). Through ERMED consortium, library users of JMCH also access e-journals regularly. Usages of ERMED consortium by JMCH library users is one of the areas of concern at present. The present study has been highlighted to know the utilization of ERMED consortium by the library users of JMCH, Jorhat (Assam).

Literature Review:

Chattopadhyay, A. (2011) has described about the importance of ERMED consortium and services of National Medical Library (NML), New Delhi. Due to increasing cost of medical journals and books, ERMED consortium has been providing the cost effective service among the member institutions by distributing e-journals.

Ravishankar, G. & Rao, P.N. (2012) has elaborated about the importance of consortium in the medical libraries of Tamilnadu, India. Medical professionals always need recent and updated information related biomedical science. Explosion of e-resources can be distributed among the medical professionals at least cost through consortium. The author has also

highlighted about the proposal to establish MEDLIBCON consortium among the medical libraries of Tamilnadu (India).

Ara, T. (2013) has described about the need of e-journals consortium for the development of research and teaching learning activities for the higher institutions in Delhi (India). A consortium is a single agent for distributing the huge collection of e-journals among different locations institutions. Consortium is helpful for the libraries due to growth of literature, price hike of printed journals, cost effectiveness etc.

Kumar, R. (2016) has elaborated about the e-resources usages by the users of M. M. University, Ambala, India. The author has also described that U G and P G students search e-resources by using different search strategies. Users have also faced trouble due to slow net connection, non availability of full text e-resources etc.

Saini, A. (2017) has described about the importance of consortia for distributing e-resources among the different institutional libraries. The author has also described about different types of consortium like ERMED, FORSA, HELINET, CSIR etc.

Selvamani, J. & Thavamani, K. (2017) has elaborated about usages of ERMED Consortium by faculties of Stanely Medical College, Tamilnadu (India). Maximum faculty member's access e-journals for teaching, research & reference purpose.

Objectives:

The study has conducted to reveal the following objectives;

1. To know the purpose of accessing ERMED Consortium.
2. To find out the frequency of ERMED Consortium usages.
3. To know the maximum accessibility of articles from different publishers of ERMED Consortium.
4. To identify the training methods for accessing the e-journals from ERMED Consortium.
5. To know the satisfaction level of users by using ERMED Consortium.

Scope and Limitation:

For the present study the researcher has showed the usages of ERMED Consortium by the library users of JMCH, Jorhat (Assam). The study is limited only for the registered library members of JMCH to know the utilization of ERMED Consortium.

Methodology:

The study is based on primary data which was surveyed by distributing the questionnaire among the library users of JMCH. Total 160 numbers of questionnaires have been distributed among the library users including MBBS & PG students, faculty members and physicians of

clinical and non clinical departments of JMCH. For data collection convenience sampling has been used and 127(79%) number of respondents have provided the responses. Google form has been also sent through mail and Whatsapp to some respondents.

Data Analysis:

Table1: Category wise library users

Users	Responses	%
UG Students	23	18%
PG Students	42	33%
Physicians	18	14%
Faculty Members	44	35%
Total Members	127	100%

From the above table it is found that 18% UG students have provided data followed by 33% PG students, 14% physicians and 35% faculty members.

Table2: Purpose of accessing of ERMED Consortium

Purposes	UG Students (%)	PG Students (%)	Physicians (%)	Faculty Members (%)
For accessing clinical information	7 (6%)	29 (23%)	36 (28%)	19 (15%)
For reference purpose	17 (13%)	42 (33%)	21 (17%)	38 (30%)
For preparation of seminar/conference work	14 (11%)	34 (27%)	15 (12%)	13 (10%)
For teaching the students	-	11 (9%)	9 (7%)	23 (18%)
For patient care information	-	4(3%)	32 (25%)	8 (6%)

From the above table it is noticed that 6% UG students access ERMED consortium for accessing clinical information, 13% UG students access for reference purpose and 11% UG students access for preparation of seminar/conference work, 23% PG students access for clinical information, 33% PG students use for reference purpose, 27% PG students use for preparation of seminar/conference work, 9% PG students use for teaching students and 3% PG students access e-resources for patient care information, 28% physicians access for clinical information, 17% physicians access for reference purpose, 12% physicians access for

preparation of seminar/conference work and 7% physicians access for teaching the students and 25% physicians access e-resources for patient care information, 15% faculty members access for clinical information, 30% faculty members access for reference purpose, 10% faculty members access for preparation of seminar/conference work and 18% faculty members access for teaching the students and 6% faculty members access e-resources for patient care information

Table 3: Frequency of accessing of ERMED Consortium

Frequency of accessing	UG Students (%)	PG Students (%)	Physicians (%)	Faculty Members (%)
Daily	-	31(24%)	-	-
2 to 4 days in a week	3 (2%)	11 (9%)	4 (3%)	11 (9%)
2 to 5 times in a month	6 (5%)	-	12 (9%)	29 (23%)
Occasionally	10 (8%)	-	2 (2%)	4 (3%)
Never	4 (3%)	-	-	-

From the above table it is revealed that ERMED consortium is used by medical library users as per their need and requirement. Here it is noticed that 2% UG students access 2 to 4 days in a week, 7% UG students access 2 to 5 times in a month, 8% UG students access occasionally and 3% UG students never accessed it, 24% PG students access daily, 9% PG students access 2 to 4 days in a week, 3% physicians access 2 to 4 days in a week, 9% physicians access 2 to 5 times in a month, 2% physicians access occasionally, 9% faculty members access 2 to 4 days in a week, 23% faculty members access 2 to 5 times in a month and 3% faculty members access occasionally.

Table 4: Publisher's wise downloaded articles

Publishers wise article download	UG Students (%)	PG Students (%)	Physician (%)	Faculty Members (%)
Oxford University Press (OUP)	8(6%)	35(28%)	8(6%)	22(17%)
Cambridge University Press (CUP)	5(4%)	37(29%)	14(11%)	13(10%)
British Medical Journal (BMJ)	17(13%)	42(33%)	18(14%)	41(32%)
Wiley-Blackwell	9(7%)	40(31%)	13(10%)	22(17%)
Lippincott William & Wilkins (LWW)	8(6%)	40(31%)	16(13%)	18(14%)

From the above table it is found that 6% UG students download articles from OUP publisher, 4% UG students download articles from CUP, 13% UG students download articles from BMJ publisher, 7% UG students download articles from Wiley-Blackwell and 6% UG students download articles from LWW, 28% PG students download articles from OUP publisher, 29% PG students download articles from CUP, 33% PG students download articles from BMJ publisher, 31% PG students download articles from Wiley-Blackwell & LWW publisher, 6% physicians download articles from OUP publisher, 11% physicians download articles from CUP, 14% physicians download articles from BMJ publisher, 10% physicians download articles from Wiley-Blackwell and 13% physicians download articles from LWW, 17% faculties download articles from OUP publisher & Wiley Blackwell publisher, 10% faculties download articles from CUP, 32% faculties download articles from BMJ publisher, and 14% faculty members download articles from LWW publisher.

Table 5: Accessibility of articles through ERMED Consortium for the last 3 successive years

Year	BMJ	CUP	LWW	OUP	Wiley	Total
2018-19	124	7	30	192	76	429
2019-20	445	34	294	256	237	1266
2019-21	491	72	378	306	317	1564

From the above table it is seen that users basically access more articles from BMJ publisher followed by Oxford University Press, Lippincott publisher, Wiley publisher and Cambridge University press through ERMED Consortium. Users have been accessing more e-journal articles for the current year in comparison to last two years.

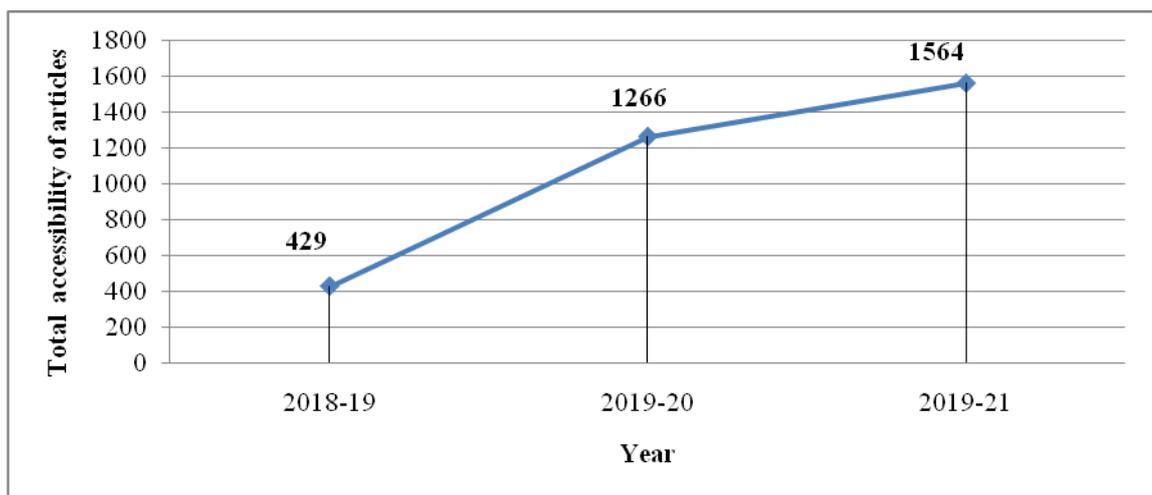


Figure: 1 Total accessibility of articles in last 3 years

From the above figure it is seen that articles accessibility through ERMED Consortium has been improving since last 3 consecutive years.

Table 6: Would you like to propose for addition of any e-journals of your subject in ERMED Consortium?

Addition of more e-journals related to subject	UG Students (%)	PG Students (%)	Physicians (%)	Faculty Members (%)
Yes	-	38(30%)	11(9%)	39(31%)
No	-	4(3%)	7(6%)	5(4%)

From the above table it is revealed that 38% PG students have proposed to add more e-journals related to their subject and 3% PG students have not proposed to add new journals, 9% physicians have proposed to add more e-journals and 6% physicians have not interested to add any journals, 31% faculty members have proposed to add more e-journals and 4% faculty members have not proposed any e-journals for addition.

Table 7: Training for accessing/downloading the e-journals from ERMED Consortium.

Training for usages of ERMED Consortium	UG Students (%)	PG Students (%)	Physicians (%)	Faculty Members (%)
Self learning	17(13%)	37(29%)	11(9%)	17(13%)
Training by NML, New Delhi	12(9%)	28(22%)	7(5%)	14(11%)
Training from workshop & conference	-	9(7%)	4(3%)	19(15%)
Guidance from librarian/library orientation program	23(18%)	39(31%)	8(6%)	40(31%)

From the above table it is revealed that 13% UG students have accessed e-journals through ERMED consortium by self learning, 9% UG students access e-journals through training by NML, New Delhi and 18% UG students access e-journals through guidance from the librarian/library orientation program, 29% PG students have accessed e-journals through ERMED consortium by self learning, 22% PG students access e-journals through training by NML (New Delhi), 7% PG students access e-journals through training from workshop & conference and 31% PG students access e-journals through guidance from the librarian/library orientation program, 9% physicians have accessed e-journals through ERMED consortium by self learning, 5% physicians access e-journals through training by NML (New Delhi), 3% physicians access e-journals through training from workshop & conference and 6% physicians access e-journals through guidance from the librarian/library orientation program, 13% faculty members have accessed e-journals through ERMED consortium by self learning, 11% faculty members access e-journals through training by NML (New Delhi), 15% faculty members access e-journals through training from workshop

& conference and 31% faculty members access e-journals through guidance from the librarian/library orientation program

Table 8: Access pattern of articles from ERMED Consortium

Access pattern of articles	UG Students (%)	PG Students (%)	Physicians (%)	Faculty Members (%)
Abstract	3(2%)	29(23%)	17(13%)	21(16%)
Full text database	15(12%)	42(33%)	12(9%)	39(31%)

From the above table it is seen that 2% UG students consult only abstract and 12% UG student's access full text, 23% PG students access abstract and 33% PG students access full text, 13% physicians consult abstract and 9% physicians access full text, 16% faculty members access abstract and 31% faculty members access full text articles from ERMED Consortium.

Table 9: Problems in accessing ERMED Consortium

Problems	UG Students (%)	PG Students (%)	Physicians (%)	Faculty Members (%)
Time consuming in downloading the articles	7(6%)	15(12%)	6(5%)	19(15%)
Non availability of relevant journals/topics	5(4%)	7(6%)	3(2%)	4(3%)
Lack of time	-	7(6%)	9(7%)	17(13%)
Poor network connectivity	-	-	-	-

From the above table it is disclosed that 6% UG students face problem for downloading the articles due to time wastage, 4% UG students face problem due to non availability of relevant journals/topics, 12% PG students face problem for downloading the articles due to time spending, 6% PG students face problem due to non availability of relevant journals/topics & lack of time, 5% physicians face problem due to time consumption for downloading the articles, 2% physicians get problem due to non availability of relevant journals/topics and 7% physicians face problem due to lack of time, 15% faculty members face problem for downloading the articles, 3% faculty members get problem due to non availability of relevant journals/topics and 13% faculty members get problem due to lack of time.

Table 10: Satisfaction level of users by using ERMED Consortium

Satisfaction level	UG Students (%)	PG Students (%)	Physicians (%)	Faculty Members (%)
Highly Satisfied	6(5%)	11(9%)	8(6%)	17(13%)
Moderately Satisfied	17(13%)	31(24%)	10(8%)	27(21%)
No Satisfaction	-	-	-	-

From the above table it is revealed that 5% UG students are highly satisfied and 13% UG students are moderately satisfied by using ERMED Consortium, 9% PG students are highly satisfied and 24% PG students are moderately satisfied, 6% physicians are highly satisfied and 8% physicians are moderately satisfied, 13% faculty members are highly satisfied and 21% faculty members are moderately satisfied by using ERMED Consortium.

Findings from the above study:

The present study has highlighted for the improvement and publicity of ERMED consortium by the library users of JMCH.

1. Maximum faculty members (35%) and PG students (33%) use ERMED Consortium in comparison to UG students and physicians.
2. E-journals are used by all the library users mostly for reference purpose. PG student's access for preparation of seminar/conference work, physician's access for clinical information and faculty member's access for teaching the students.
3. PG students access ERMED Consortium regularly in comparison to faculty members, physicians and UG students of JMCH. UG students access e-journals as per their need based, physicians and faculty member's access 2 to 5 times in a month.
4. From the last 3 years it was noticed that library users download e-journals from BMJ publisher followed by Wiley publisher & LWW publisher in comparison to CUP & OUP. Accessing/downloading of e-journals from ERMED Consortium by the library users have been improving every year.
5. UG students download e-journals from ERMED Consortium by the guidance of librarian and library orientation program. Maximum PG students & faculty members have become skilled at downloading of e-journals from ERMED Consortium by the training program organized by National Medical Library (NML), New Delhi.
6. Library users of JMCH usually access full text articles from ERMED Consortium and in some cases a few library users consult with the abstract only.

7. All the library users of JMCH are moderately satisfied by using the ERMED Consortium.

Suggestions:

Some suggestions are provided by the respondents of JMCH. These suggestions are highlighted as follows:

1. Some more additional and relevant journals should be included within this ERMED Consortium related to the clinical and non clinical subjects. Some journals may be removed from database which is not accessed by the users at all.
2. All library users of the member institutions of ERMED Consortium should be provided the training facility periodically by NML, New Delhi for downloading/accessing of articles from e-journals for maximum utilization of this consortium. Training program should be conducted to the end users of member institutions by publisher wise also.
3. Indian journals related to medical science may be included in ERMED Consortium for the maximum utilization of national e-journals also.
4. E-journals of ERMED Consortium should be distributed through remote login system also amongst the medical professionals those who stay away from their college campus.

Conclusion:

ERMED Consortium is one the most useful consortium for the medical professionals. Medical library users get benefited by accessing/downloading e-journals through this consortium. The college authority should take the initiative like training, workshop and demonstration program for maximum utilization and promotion of e-journals by the library users of JMCH. By accessing the e-journals, library users can get huge information on same topic very easily within short time. Medical professionals also give the preference on accessing e-journals for their academic, research & clinical purpose in comparison to printed journals. ERMED Consortium is one of the cost-effective services for the medical professionals of the member institutions of the entire country.

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