

Original Research Article

Awareness and use of internet services among first MBBS students

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ABSTRACT

Background: Internet is used for various reasons in the field of medicine which include teaching, diagnosis, conduct of medical examination and research. It has become the world's biggest library where retrieval of scientific re-sources is only a mouse click away thus providing a wide range of information.

Methods: A cross sectional study was carried out on of 142 first year MBBS students at PESIMSR, Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh, India. Data was collected with the help of a questionnaire.

Results: The present study revealed that all students were using internet and felt it to be a useful tool. Most of the individuals felt that use of internet was time saving and utilized them for various activities.

Conclusions: Though majority of the students have knowledge and awareness about the internet usage it is not being utilized properly as an educational tool. Attention should be paid to bring about interventional measures that can improve computer usage skills and access among students to reduce the occurrence of internet addiction behaviour.

Keywords: Awareness, Internet use, Students

INTRODUCTION

Computers are used for a wide range of functions in medical education, which range from computer based lectures to more advanced simulations and intelligent tutoring systems.¹ The internet is a global system of interconnected mainframe that use the standard Internet protocol to serve billions of users worldwide. It is a network of networks that consists of millions of private, public, academic, business and government networks that are linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless and optical networking technologies.²

Internet has become the world's biggest library where search for scientific re-sources is only a mouse click away thus providing a wide range of information which gives an opportunity for individuals to interact with friends and family members to discuss any topic of interest, to explore the world sitting in comfort at their

home. This geometric growth in Internet usage is mainly due to the great success of "World Wide Web".³

Internet is used for various reasons in the field of medicine which include teaching, diagnosis, conduct of medical examination and research.⁴ It is a cost effective medium of communication which can help in meeting the complex information needs of healthcare professionals and has important implications in medical education.

It can serve as an important learning tool in medical education by providing access to latest evidence anytime and anywhere but would be a mirage if the medical students lack adequate computer skills and the necessary resources are not made available.⁵ Nowadays internet is very effective and popular tool used by the students for education as well as variety of other purposes including entertainment. It provides an interactive environment for sharing as well as seeing of information on a wide range

to supplement their studies. Since the internet has a key role in student life the present study is an attempt to obtain information about pattern of internet access and utilization among first MBBS students at tertiary health care centre, Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh, India.

METHODS

The present cross sectional study was carried out at PESIMSR, Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh, India. The study population consisted of 142 first year MBBS students .Data was collected with the help of a questionnaire which was prepared by referring previously drafted questionnaires contained in the similar studies done earlier.

The Performa contained the questions regarding age, gender, use of computer and internet service, place and purpose of using internet, reasons for dissatisfaction with regard to internet services and various applications used by them. Prior to administrating the questionnaire, the class was addressed regarding the purpose of study and also assured that the collected details for the study is an attempt for improvement in the facilities so that they are benefitted.

They were also told that participation or otherwise in this study will not affect the relationship with either the investigators or the institution in which they are studying. After obtaining the informed consent from the study subjects, they were divided into groups of 30-45 and were made to sit in such a way that copying and discussion is not possible. The students were informed not to mention their identity so that they feel free to give true information. The returned questionnaires were checked for completeness.

RESULTS

In the present study 142 students were included, among them all students were using internet and majority felt it to be a useful tool (Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of study population according to use of computers.

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------------|-----|----|
| Do you feel internet useful | 140 | 2 |
| Do you use internet | 142 | 0 |

Among 142 students 76.64% used internet daily, 16.19% once a week, 1.41 % fortnightly and 2.81% monthly. About 58.45% preferred to browse in the night, 30.28% in the evening, 9.85% in the late night and only 1.4% in the morning. About 41.54% of the student spend one hour on internet, 25.35% spend two hours 7.74% used for three hours and 23.94 % for four hours (Table 2). Most of the students preferred mobile (88%) for using internet followed by laptop (7%), tablet (3.52%) and desk top (1.4%) (Table 3). Most of the individuals (47.2%) said

that use of internet was time saving and 45% said that it is an easily accessible tool (Table 4).

Table 2: Internet access pattern of medical students.

| Characteristics | Number (%) | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Frequency of internet usage | Daily | 106 (74.64) |
| | Once a week | 23 (16.19) |
| | fortnightly | 2 (1.4) |
| | Monthly | 4 (2.81) |
| | Hardly ever | 7 (4.93) |
| Preference of time for internet usage | Morning | 2 (1.4) |
| | Evening | 43 (30.28) |
| | Night | 83 (58.45) |
| | Late night | 14 (9.85) |
| Time spend on internet | One hour | 59 (41.54) |
| | Two hours | 36 (25.35) |
| | Three hours | 11 (7.74) |
| | Four hours and above | 34 (23.94) |
| | Depending on the necessity | 02 (1.4) |

* Multiple answers were given

Table 3: Appliance chosen for internet usage.

| *Appliance | No | Percentage |
|------------|-----|------------|
| Laptop | 10 | 7% |
| Mobile | 125 | 88% |
| Desk top | 2 | 1.4% |
| Tablet | 5 | 3.52% |

* Multiple answers were given

Table 4: Preference for internet usage.

| *Reason | No | Percentage |
|--------------------|----|------------|
| Easy accessibility | 64 | 45% |
| Time saving | 67 | 47.2% |
| Latest knowledge | 11 | 7.7% |

* Multiple answers were given

Table 5: Materials searched.

| *Materials | No | Percentage |
|------------|----|------------|
| Text | 96 | 67.6% |
| Pictures | 59 | 41.5% |
| Video | 70 | 49.29% |

* Multiple answers were given

Table 6: Difficulty faced during internet usage.

| *Difficulty faced | No | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----|------------|
| Slow speed | 109 | 76.7% |
| Irrelevant information | 16 | 11.2% |
| Downloading problem | 43 | 30.28% |

* Multiple answers were given

About 67.7% of the subjects browsed for text materials, 49.29% for videos and 41.5% for pictures (Table 5).

Most of them (76.7%) complained of slow speed, 30.28% had problems in downloading and 11.2% complained of irrelevant information (Table 6).

Table 7: Purpose of internet usage.

| *Purpose | No | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Course related | Entertainment | 73 51.4% |
| | Assignment | 82 57.7% |
| Non course related | Music downloads | 97 68.3% |
| | email | 86 60.5% |
| | Movie | 77 54.2% |
| | Games | 83 58.4% |
| | Chat | 112 78.8% |

* Multiple answers were given

Table 8: Website used for searching information.

| * website | No | Percentage |
|-----------|-----|------------|
| Google | 140 | 98.59% |
| Yahoo | 5 | 3.5% |
| Bing | 1 | 0.7% |
| MSN | 1 | 0.7% |
| Operamini | 1 | 0.7% |
| Others | 2 | 1.4% |

* Multiple answers were given

About 57.7% of the students used internet for completing assignments and 51.4% for course related entertainment. 78.8% used for chatting purpose, 68.3% for music downloads, 60.5% for checking emails 58.4% for playing games and 54.2% for watching movies (Table 7). The main accessed website reported among UG students was google (98.59%) followed by Yahoo (3.5%), Bing (0.7%), MSN (0.7%) and operamini (0.7%) (Table 8).

Table 9: *Recent applications used.

| Mobohwik | Messenger (facebook) | Daily hunt |
|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Face book | Wnyk music | Play store |
| Whats app | You tube | UC browser |
| Skype | Hike messenger | Tube mate |
| Saavn | Anatronica(off line) | Instagram |
| Daily rounds app | 3D animated apps | Imochat |
| Bobble chat | Flipcart | Amazon |
| Twitter | WPS office | CM private browser |
| Hang outs | Samosa app | Share it |
| PDF reader | True caller | 9 apps |

* Multiple answers were given

DISCUSSION

The present study observed the awareness and pattern of internet use among first MBBS students. All the students included in the study were using internet which was quite similar to the studies of Aggarwal summit et al.⁶ When

frequency of internet usage was observed 74% used internet services daily which shows that the internet has become an integral part of their daily activities and most of them (88%) preferred to access internet on their internet enabled mobile and less than 10% preferred laptop /desktop which is in contrast to the findings of Unnikrishnan et al who observed that 62% UG medical students access internet using personnel computers.⁷

Preference for mobile might be because of portability of the device and recent development in features. Most of the individuals preferred to browse in the night (58%) which matched with the findings of Chongtham B D.⁸ whose findings revealed that 49% of the individuals preferred to browse in the night. With regard to time spent 23.94% of the individuals use internet for more than 4 hrs which coincides with the findings of Aggarwal summit et al The main accessed website reported among UG students was google followed by Yahoo which was quite similar to the findings of Neeraj C.³

Majority of the individuals used internet for chatting purpose (78.8%) which is quiet contrast compared to findings of Basavaraja K which showed that only 49.91% were using internet for entertainment purpose and of Chongtham BD in which only 14% used internet services for chatting purpose.^{8,9} The present observation shows the change in the trend of internet use where more attention is given to the entertainment aspect rather than academics.

Majority of the individuals preferred internet because of its easy accessibility and lesser time consumption. In our study 67.8% of the individuals searched for text versions compared to pictures or videos and majority of the students 76.7% reported that slow speed was difficulty faced by them while browsing the reason for this could be weak signals at certain locations and introduction of high speed internet services like 4G and students being accustomed to high speed internet access elsewhere.

Most of the students were aware of recent applications and were using around 30 applications for both academic and entertainment purpose which shows the awareness about recent developments in the IT world.

CONCLUSION

Although majority of the students have knowledge and awareness about the internet usage it is not being utilized properly as an educational tool. Since computer and internet are likely to play more important roles in many aspects of medicine.

Attention should be paid to bring about interventional measures that can improve computer usage skills and access so as to motivate and train the students to obtain medical knowledge and know the recent advancements in the field of medicine thereby enabling them to compete with the other students around the world.

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