**Clinical Information Needs and Seeking Behavior of Remote Health Professionals**

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**Declaration**

I, Salman Bin Naeem, M. Phil Scholar, Roll. No. 15, Department of Library & Information Science, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, hereby solemnly declare that this thesis titled ***“Clinical Information Needs and Seeking behavior of Remote Health Professionals”*** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of degree “Master of Philosophy in Library & Information Science, is my own original research work and has not been published or submitted to any other institution for any degree earlier. It is further declared that this work, in the future, will never be submitted to any other University in Pakistan or outside for acquiring any degree.

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**Supervision Certificate**

It is certified that the research work contained in this thesis titled “Clinical Information Needs and Seeking Behavior of Remote Health Professionals” written by Salman Bin Naeem, Roll. No. 15, M. Phil Scholar, Department of Library & Information Science, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, has been carried out under my Supervision. The data presented in this thesis are genuine and fairly collected from the field.

This thesis is submitted to the Department of Library & Information Science, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of degree “Master of Philosophy in Library & Information Science to Salman Bin Naeem.

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**Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, especially to Mom for opening my eyes to the world; to Dad for instilling the importance of hard work and higher education; his virtues always come to my way and paid me back; to my sister’s for their words of encouragements, and their countless support throughout the process; to family for their prayers; to cousins and friends for their patience and understanding despite missing out my active presence for two long years.

I dedicate this work and give special thanks to each and every person who cares for me. Undoubtedly, without their support it was not possible for me to complete it.

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**Abstract**

**Objectives**

The objectives of this study were to (a) determine the clinical information need of doctors, (b) describe their information-seeking pattern, (c) type of sources they use, (d) present position of clinical information availability at their health facilities, and (e) the barriers they face while seeking clinical information. It was expected that this would identify the gaps in clinical information availability to remote health professionals and will identify the provision of future services to them in order to fill the gaps.

**Methodology**

The study was conducted in remote government health facilities in the District of Multan, Punjab, Pakistan. The participants of this study were all medical officers working in Basic Health Units (BHU), Rural Health Centers (RHC) and Tehsil Headquarters (THQ), as these doctors met established criteria. Criteria included Health Facilities run under Executive District Officer (EDO) Health, Health Department, Govt. Of Punjab; doctors working as full time regular employees in remote government health facilities in the district of Multan.

A descriptive survey was conducted for data collection. A close ended questionnaire was developed after detailed literature review and also accessing the situation of peripheries in district Multan. The questionnaire was discussed with two experts of library and information sciences and two senior doctors (>8 years’ experience) working at remote government health facilities. It was revised to incorporate recommended improvements.

**Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed statistically, through SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 19. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to summarize sets of data, finding relationship and significant difference that includes: frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviations, one way ANOVA, Pearson correlation and multi linear regression model. The variables studied were: gender, age, health facilities were independent, need for clinical information, clinical information sources, clinical information seeking and availability of clinical information were dependent.

**Results**

Out of 122 questionnaires that were distributed, 105 (86.06%) were returned. The valid responses were 100 (81.96%). Patient management, staying current/up-to-date, continuing medical education (CME) and evidence for policies and procedures were the main types of doctors’ information need. Current practices, treatment guidelines and protocols, health status indicators, national policies, clinical trials, evidence based medicine and current research were the main context that gives rise to the doctors’ information needs. Print and human sources were the heavily used channels to seek clinical information. Journals rather than the books were indicated the top preferred clinical information sources. Print format was the preferred format by doctors.

The majority of the respondents were not satisfied with the (a) present position of clinical information availability, (b) no facility of the medical library and services of medical librarian were available to the doctors, (c) access to clinical information sources was very less, and (d) modern ICT equipments were inadequate. The Majority of respondents indicated (a) content, (b) efficiency, (c) skills, (d) availability, and (e) cost based barriers they face in seeking clinical information.

Respondents immediately required (a) consultancy of seniors, (b) improved connectivity, (c) document delivery services, and (d) access to the medical library to improve their clinical practice.

**Summary**

The study summarized that doctors need a wide range of clinical information sources. However, doctor’s information seeking encountered barriers that hindered the fulfillment of information needs.

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