

Awareness about Authenticity of Health Care Information from Internet Sources among Health Care Students in Malaysia: A Teaching Hospital Study

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Abstract : Use of internet sources to retrieve health care related information among health care professionals has increased tremendously as the accessibility to internet is made easier through smart phones and tablets. Though there are huge data available at a finger touch, it is doubtful whether all the sources providing health care information adhere to evidence based practice. The objective of this survey was to study the prevalence of use of internet sources to get health care information, to assess the mind-set towards the authenticity of health care information available via internet sources and to study the awareness about evidence based practice in health care among medical and dental students in Melaka-Manipal Medical College. The survey was proposed as there is limited number of studies reported in the literature and this is the first of its kind in Malaysia. A cross sectional survey was conducted among the medical and dental students of Melaka-Manipal Medical College. A total of 521 students including medical and dental students in their clinical years of undergraduate study participated in the survey. A questionnaire consisting of 14 questions were constructed based on data available from the published literature and focused group discussion and was pre-tested for validation. Data analysis was done using SPSS. The statistical analysis of the results of the survey proved that the use of internet resources for health care information are equally preferred over the conventional resources among health care students. Though majority of the participants verify the authenticity of information from internet sources, there was considerable percentage of candidates who feels that all the information from the internet can be utilised for clinical decision making or were not aware about the need of verification of authenticity of such information. 63.7 % of the participants rely on evidence based practice in health care for clinical decision making while 34.2 % were not aware about it. A minority of 2.1% did not agree with the concept of evidence based practice. The observations of the survey reveals the increasing use of internet resources for health care information among health care students. The results warrants the need to move towards evidence based practice in health care as all health care information available online may not be reliable. The health care person should be judicious while utilising the information from such resources for clinical decision making.

Keywords : authenticity, evidence based practice, health care information, internet

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