

Open Educational Resources (OER) and Social Media (SM) for Academic Information Seeking at Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya

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Use of Open Educational Resources (OER) and Social media (SM) for academic information seeking is a common practice among modern undergraduates. There are limited data in Sri Lanka on OER and SM use as educational tools. This study aimed to evaluate the use of OER and SM for academic purposes among the medical students at Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya.

We undertook a cross sectional study at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya. Stratified sampling with proportional allocation was used to select students from each batch and 287 students were recruited from 1st to 5th year. Informed written consent was obtained and a self-administered questionnaire was given. The questionnaire consisted of questions on OER and SM use in academic activities along with the frequency of usage. 257 completed questionnaires were analyzed.

Of 257 (89.6%) respondents, 185 (72.0%) were females. The OER and SM use in education were 92.5% (95% CI: 89.3% - 95.8%) and 89.0% (95% CI: 85.2% - 92.6%) respectively. Both findings were not significantly different by gender or between academic years. The reasons for using OER in education included: the availability of information at any time (38.1%), easiness to search (33.9%), availability of detailed information (17.3%) and updated information (7.2%). Wiki sites (89.0%) were the most popular OER followed by Slide Share (37.2%) and e-journals (20.3%). 3.8% participated in medical forums. 53.4% believed information in wikis are reliable. Facebook (79.8%) was the commonest SM platform followed by YouTube (60.3%) and Google+ (50.2%). 79.0% used SM to follow the medical related web sites. 76.3% used SM to join education groups. 41.2% used SM in academic discussions and sharing information with group of foreign students. 35.8% could not find academic information via SM due to the information overload. 31.1% mentioned that the SM disturbed concentration on their academic works. 12.5% did not trust the contents in SM. Students also searched the web to find the information. 58.9% trusted the information without considering the source and only 36.4% specifically searched the information in educational and government related sites. Majority of students have used OER and SM for academic purposes. Wiki sites and Facebook were the most popular OER site and SM platform among students. Majority students trusted the information found on web search without considering the credibility of sources. E-journals are not popular among students. The majority had followed the medical related web sites and joined educational groups via SM. Disturbances to academic works and difficulty in finding accurate information were major concerns in using SM. This study highlights the importance of improving information literacy among the medical students.

Keywords: Open Educational Resources; Social Media; Undergraduate medical students; Wiki; Face Book

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