

Evaluating the Article Request Service provided by the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

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An overwhelming number of evidence is generated daily in the field of healthcare and timely access to the best available evidence is crucial for effective medical education as well as the delivery of quality patient care. University libraries play an integral role in the higher education system. Libraries are constantly on a quest to support the goals of the parent organization and to meet its user needs and expectation. The library of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine (PGIM), University of Colombo, established the article request service to optimize library information sharing services. A descriptive- cross sectional study was conducted with the aim of evaluating the article request service of the library of the PGIM. Data was collected using an online, self-administered questionnaire among the users receiving this service and from the internal data stored in the library database from the inception of this service from 2015 to 2021. A descriptive analysis of data was executed using Microsoft Excel. The number of requests received by the library since its inception increased by more than 4 folds by 2021 [n = 1290 (2015), n = 6014 (2021)]. Amidst a plateau in requests in 2018-2019, the majority of requests were received via the Google Form and specified the author names and title of the article. The postgraduate trainers obtained this service most frequently (42%); more than 6 times per semester whereas 21% of trainees and 38% of examiners obtain this service similarly. While postgraduate trainees utilized the resources obtained for education purposes, trainers and examiners used articles and book chapters for clinical decision-making, preparation of exam material and research purposes. Most postgraduate trainers (88%) and trainees (84%) are highly satisfied with the article request service while only 57% of examiners are of the same opinion. The findings demonstrate the increasing use of article request service, and that the library is satisfactorily meeting the needs of majority of its users. However, the dissatisfaction expressed and less frequent use of the service by examiners demonstrates that the library needs to take measures to identify their needs and optimize its services to cater to this cohort.

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