

REVIEW PAPER

Consortia to Promote Access to Medical Information: Some Experiences of the Indian Council of Medical Research

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ABSTRACT

Financial crunch and ever rising cost of journals have constrained many scientific/research libraries, especially the medical libraries, to satiate the demands of the users forcing them adopt to new technologies to overcome the challenge of ever rising information demands of the users. In the recent years, library consortium has emerged as a viable solution for resource sharing among libraries. This paper is an overview of the consortia initiated by the Indian Council of Medical Research to share the resources of its medical libraries among its 25 institutes.

Keywords: Library consortia, medical resources, medical researchers, medical libraries, e-consortia, national health priorities, information and communication technologies

1. INTRODUCTION

Information is considered a vital resource for communication/dissemination of knowledge of one individual to another from the early stages of human civilisation, and has therefore become an inevitable element of all human activities and development. The rapid progress of information technology now tries to satisfy the information needs of the human being in diverse manner. The expression of information, in multidimensional form and voluminous development has necessitated the libraries to adopt new philosophies and technologies for collection, and development, reduce the cost of information, and to eliminate the duplicity. It is equally true, as well as applicable for all types of libraries/information centres not to hold the full stock of information resources or to procure all information, which may be in demand by its users; not a single library/information centre can meet the thrust of knowledge of all the readers from its stock of information to the fullest extent. To overcome this problem, libraries started cooperation through library networks, document delivery, inter-library loans, etc. Library consortium has now come into existence as a more accepted system of resource sharing among libraries with a wide coverage.

2. NEED OF LIBRARY CONSORTIUM

Due to financial crunch and the rising costs of journals, many research/scientific libraries cannot

subscribe to all the required journals and databases. Libraries formed consortia to overcome the problem and share the resources. Sharing electronic resources have become necessity of individual libraries due to their decreasing excellence. Libraries in consortia have discovered that as a group, they have a combined set of resources of a single library. Membership in a consortium allows a group of libraries to pool their financial resources to leverage greater control over market place. Consortia enable the library to improve quality of services offered to their patrons by enhancing collections and by increasing access to information. Some special libraries and organisations like the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA), Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Raman Research Institute (RRI), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), National Medical Library (NML) under Director General Health Services (DGHS), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) have established consortia to share electronic access to journal literature [1].

3. ABOUT ICMR

The Indian Council of Medical Research, the apex body in India for the formulation of biomedical research,

was founded in 1911, and is one of the oldest medical research bodies in the world. As early as in 1911, the Government of India set up the Indian Research Fund Association (IRFA) with the objectives of supporting and coordinating the various medical researches in India. It was renamed as Indian Council of Medical Research in 1949. The Council's research priorities coincide with the national health priorities such as control and management of communicable diseases; fertility control, maternal and child health; control of nutritional disorders; developing alternative strategies for health care delivery, containment within safety limits of environmental and occupational health problems; research on major non-communicable diseases like cancer, cardiovascular diseases, blindness, diabetes and other metabolic and hematological disorders; and mental health research and drug research. All these efforts are undertaken with a view to reduce the total burden of disease and to promote health and wellbeing of the population. The Council promotes biomedical research in the country through intramural as well as extramural research.

In this digitally-enabled world, the convergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the web, and the Internet are the most striking developments. The whole world is converting into a Global Electronic Village as the traditional constraints of time and space are disappearing. The globalisation of information is taking place and territorial boundaries are becoming meaningless due to developments in ICTs. In present scenario, there are many ways available for accessing and dissemination of information to the users. A consortium is the best way to fulfill all the requirement of the users. ICMR has undertaken various activities to help address the challenges of digital technology to research scholars/scientists. ICMR has initiated two types of consortia: (i) JCCC@ICMR which covers all ICMR subscribed journals and full text of over 200 free journals, and (ii) ICMR e-consortia which provides full text of subscribed e-journals only [2].

3.1 JCCC@ICMR

(<http://www.jcccicmr@informindia.co.in>)

J-Gate Custom Content (JCC) acts as a bibliographic database and provides single access point for searching the locally subscribed journals, both print and electronic. This is based on Ranganathan's local documentation list. The major advantage of JCC is its ability to maximise the usage of the journals subscribed by the library. It provides access to all the print and electronic journals to the users under a single platform. J-Gate Custom Content for Consortia (JCCC) is an extension for library consortia. It is a shareable bibliographic database between the member institutes which allows the members of the consortia to access the full text and the incorporated union catalogue of the journals managed by the Informatics India Ltd [3].

JCCC-ICMR is an extension of JCC for a group of homogenous consortia members of the ICMR. It was started in 2004 and covers 1047 journals received collectively at 25 institutes/centres of the ICMR. In addition, around 189 open access journals are also covered. In all, journals from 448 publishers are covered on a single platform. As it is always a daunting task to locate an article or journal from the collection of more than one library. For the faster retrieval of details regarding a particular journal or the article, it is difficult to rely on manual technique. ICMR with the help of Informatics India took the initiative to provide a common access point to its different libraries and information centres, so that they can know what the other libraries of the Council are subscribing and at the same time also increases the usage of these sources among the Council's libraries. All the 25 ICMR's libraries and information centres are the members of JCCC@ICMR and reaping its benefits. JCCC@ICMR was launched on 27 July 2004. Presently, JCCC@ICMR is providing a single point access (updated weekly) to around 1047 journals out of which 858 journals are subscribed by 25 ICMR's network of library and information centres and 189 are open access (free) biomedical journals. Institute-wise contact persons for the JCCC@ICMR are given in *Appendix 1*.

Scientists of ICMR can now access the full text and the abstracts of all the journals available free on the platform. The scientists can easily locate the journal of their interest from the journals subscribed by the member library and if they find any article then by using the same platform they can send an e-mail request to that particular library of the consortia. JCCC@ICMR is a bibliographic database of print and electronic journals that the member libraries are subscribing. It provides a common platform for all the members to have an access of detail regarding the availability of journals. After locating the article, request can be made by clicking the "hard copy" button.

4. MISSION OF JCCC-ICMR

- ❖ To provide a common gateway to e-journals for the participating members of the consortium.
- ❖ To provide a common access and search interface for all journals subscribed by the consortium members.
- ❖ To provide an insured and dependable journal archive source for the consortium members.

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF JCCC-ICMR

- ❖ Common access to table of content (TOC) and full text articles for 1047 journals.
- ❖ Common TOC and Database search facility for print and online journals, which have scholarly content and are subscribed by the consortium members.

- ❖ Links to abstracts of articles.
- ❖ Links to full-text articles from JCCC interface.
- ❖ Facility to search bibliographic database of articles.
- ❖ Content is mirrored in the server of each participating consortia member.
- ❖ Links to the journals subscribed by each participating consortia member.
- ❖ E-mail request for photocopies can be sent from one consortia member to the other [4].

6. ICMR E-CONSORTIA

ICMR e-consortia was started in 2007. ICMR initially subscribed few e-journals in a consortia mode for all ICMR Institutes. All the scientists of ICMR and its institutes can access these journals from their desktop.

6.1 Salient Features of ICMR E-Consortia

- ❖ Journals can be accessed through IP addresses of the various institutes' libraries including HQ.
- ❖ Several user awareness meetings were organized to promote the use of these journals.
- ❖ Back volumes of *Lancet* (1996), *BMJ* (1994), *NEJM* (1993), *Nature* (1997), and *Science* (1997) are also available online.

6.2 Usage

Availability of the e-consortia among ICMR network of libraries has enabled scientists to access the journals from their desktop. As per the latest usage statistics, usage of journal literature has been increasing every year. The interaction among ICMR librarians has increased a lot and dissemination of information in a more organised and efficient manner.

7. CONCLUSION

The unending responsibility of libraries is collection development, preservation, retrieval of information for providing the library service to the users. These

responsibilities have become more complex with the introduction of computer and communication technologies in libraries. In a developing country like India, different steps are being taken to disseminate information more or less in all subject areas, especially in science and technology.

Any set of objectives will only be achieved, if there is a willingness to join together and to believe that more will be achieved through the efforts of everyday than at the individual level. According to Allen Kent, "The success and survival of libraries will much depend on how much and to what extent the libraries cooperate with each other in future". So, cooperation is an essential facet of modern library management in most developed countries of the world, but our country is still in the normative stage. Tremendous explosion of information, financial constraints, information in different forms, etc., have necessitated resource sharing networking as an important alternative.

In the light of the above, establishment of better consortium, integrating intellectual access are all the important steps for moving towards the 21st century libraries. Indian librarians should seriously rethink and reinstate consortium movement like western countries for maximum utilisation of resources at a reduced cost, time, and space.

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Institute-wise Contact Persons for the JCCC@ICMR with Library Subscribed Journals

Name of the Institute/Address	Library subscribed journals	Contact Person	Tel No./E-mail	Fax
National JALMA Institute for Leprosy & Other Mycobacterial Diseases , Post Box No. 101 Agra- 282 001	43	Librarian	0562-2331756 rohinik@sancharnet.in jalma@zyberway.com	0562-2331755
Centre for Research in Medical Entomology P. B. No. 114, Sarojini Street, Chinna Chokkikulam, Madurai	28	Dr S.C. Tiwari	0452-2650281; 2525131 icmrcme@ren.nic.in icmrbicmku@dbt.ernet.in	0452-2530660
Desert Medicine Research Centre Post Box No.122, New Pali Road Jodhpur-342 005	28	Shri Manjeet Singh	0291-2726227, 2722403 director@dmrc.jodhpur.org; icmrdrmrc@ren.nic.in http://icmr.nic.in/000518/dmrc.htm	0291-2720618 2741022
Enterovirus Research Centre Haffkine Institute Campus, Acharya Donde Marg, Parel, Mumbai	33	Librarian	022-24148750 erc@bom3.vsnl.net.in	022-24156484
Indian Council of Medical Research, HQ V. Ramalingaswami Bhawan, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi-110 029	61	Shri K.V. Ratnakar	011-26589585;26588980, venkat_60a@yahoo.co.in icmrhq_11@yahoo.co.in	011-26589258
National Institute of Medical Statistics Medical Enclave, Ansari Nagar New Delhi-110 029	14	Shri Naresh Agarwal	011-26588905;26589635 irms@icmr.delhi.nic.in icmrirms@ren.nic.in	011-26515635
Institute of Cytology & Preventive Oncology , 1-7 Sector 39, Near Degree College, Opp. City Centre Noida-201 301	29	Shri C.V. Joshi	95120257941;951202579472 icpoicmr@hotmail.com	011-23233406
Institute of Immunohaematology 13 Floor, New Multistoreyed Building, KEM Hospital Campus, Parel, Mumbai-400 012	30	Shri Vijay Padwal	022-24132928 dir@icmriih.ren.nic.in vijaypadwal@rediffmail.com	022-24138521
Institute of Pathology Safdarjung Hospital Campus, Post Box No 4909 New Delhi-110 029	50	Smt Anita Sharma	011-26165797 instpath@bol.net.in icmriop@ren.nic.in	011-26198401
National Institute of Malaria Research 22, Sham Nath Marg, Delhi-110 054	68	Shri J.N. Dash	011-23981690;22042621 icmrmrc@ren.nic.in vinodkj47@yahoo.com	011-22946150 27234234
National AIDS Research Institute 73, G Block, MIDC, Bhosari Pune-411 026	38	Library-in-Charge	020-27121280;27121072 hivnet@vsnl.com	020-27121071
National Institute for Research in Reproductive Health Jehangir Merwanji Street, Parel, Mumbai- 400 012	109	Smt Shanti Ganeshan	022-2419 2003/2102/2103 (Library) lionirrh@yahoo.com	022-24139412
National Institute of Cholera & Enteric Diseases P-33, CIT Road, Scheme XM, Beliaghata, P.O.Box 177 Kolkata-700 010	453	Smt Keya Ray	033-23504598;23538349 niced@cal2.vsnl.net.in kray352@yahoo.co.in	033-23505066
National Institute of Epidemiology Post Box. No. 2577, 1 Sathyamurthi Road, Chetput, Chennai-600 031	39	Shri S. Satish	044-28261642;28265308 nieicmr@vsnl.com contact_satishs@yahoo.co.in	044-28264963 28264638

National Institute of Nutrition Jamia–Osmania Hyderabad- 500 007	186	Shri M. Devidas	040-27008921-26, Extn-224 nin@ap.nic.in icmmin@ap.nic.in	040-27019074
National Institute of Occupational Health Meghani Nagar Ahmedabad -380 016	77	Smt Ketki Bhatia	079-2686142 niohahd@adl.vsnl.net.in ketki911@yahoo.com	079-2866630
National Institute of Virology 20-A, Dr. Ambedkar Road P.O.Box No. 11 Pune-411 001	157	Dr S.N. Singh	020-26127301;26126302 , 26123679;26123688(CTO) nivcl@pn3.vsnl.net.in icmrmiv@ren.nic.in	020-26122669 26123679
Rajendra Memorial Research Institute of Medical Sciences Agam Kuan Patna-800 007	74	Shri Brijnath Prasad	0612-262633367;23508493 icmrmri@ren.nic.in dirrmris@sanciamet.in	0612-2664379
Regional Medical Research Centre Nandankanan Road P.O. Chandrasekharapur, Bhubaneswar-751 023	56	Dr Banambar Sahoo	0674-2301322;2301412 rmrclibrary@vsnl.net	0674-2440974
Regional Medical Research Centre N.E. Region (ICMR) Post Box No. 105 Dibrugarh-786 001	46	Shri Prema Konwar	0373-2381494;2381591 icmrrcdi@ren.nic.in	0373-2301512
Regional Medical Research Centre (Indian Council of Medical Research) Post Bag No. 13, Andaman & Nicobar Islands Port Blair-744101	52	Library-in-Charge	03192-251043;251158 pblicmr@sanchamnet.in	03192-251163
Regional Medical Research Centre for Tribals Medical College Campus, Nagpur Road , P.O. Garha Jabalpur-482003	91	Shri K.V.K. Rao	0761-2370239;2372597 icmrrcja@ren.nic.in Tribals98@sanchamnet.in	0761-2426335
Tuberculosis Research Centre Mayor V.R. Ramanathan Road Chetput Chennai-600 031	56	Shri R. Rathinasabapathi	91-44-28369637 director@md2.vsnl.net.in icmrtrc@ren.nic.in	91-44-28362528 91-44-28362529
Vector Control Research Centre Medical Complex Indira Nagar Pondicherry-605 006	51	Smt R. Sunderammal	0413-2272422;2272396, sundari_5@yahoo.com	0413-2272041
Genetic Research Centre National Institute For Research in Reproductive Health Complex Jehangir Meherwanji Street Parel, Mumbai-400 012	12	Dr Zarine Patel	grcnirrh@rediffmail.com zmpatel@hotmail.com	