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Guest Editorial

Health Information Systems and Services

People are facing the deluge of information due to techno-cultural shift and focusing on how to manage, monitor, measure, and adapt information and tools. Technology does not happen independent of human behaviour. Media boundaries and media uses are getting blurred and converged. Media technologies are moving towards mobility and flexibility. This techno-cultural shift in biomedical field has created many complexities for medical librarians to serve academic, research and point-of-car needs. In last five years, many point-of-care products have been evolved. At the same time, doctors are moving away from scribbling illegible notes and prescribe medication from their memory, expect up-to-date authentic information on the monitors (hand-held or desk/lap tops).

Majority of times the doctors themselves try to gather information using *Pubmed* (bibliographic database) or google (internet search engine). In this process, a doctor has to spend lot of time for searching, accessing full-text and synthesising related information, where time is a constraint at the point-of-care or sometimes searching is laborious process, hence there is requirement of clinical medical librarians or informationist.

In this context, many questions arise like how libraries should serve the needs of users? How to deal with the information outputs created by users/researchers? How to cope with constraints of funding for libraries? How to deal with publishers who are greedy for perpetual revenue? All these question are to address the demand and supply of information resources for teaching, learning, research, and clinical needs (at the point-of-care).

The other focus is 'big data' (large and complex data) as huge volume of data is created in the process of clinical work, clinical trials and research projects like Human Genome project, bioengineering of plants and animals, and genetic manipulation in disease. At the same time, patients are also accessing more information than even the medical professionals, for self-diagnose, self-monitor, self-test and self-treat and there are sources to support consumers. In fact, web-based system provides a wide spectrum of literature from user-generated content (inaccurate/un-authenticated data/information) to EBM and meta-analysis literature (most authenticated literature). Even the publishing of scholarly communication has changed and is linked to clinical information system without any barriers. Further, open library environment has created an opportunity to integrate explicit scholarly information to clinical/decision-making environment. Of course, Web 2.0 social networking enhance the capability to share through bookmarking, streaming video, podcasts, tagging, instant messaging, and mash-ups.

In this special issue there are six paper which cover, concept of medical/clinical librarianship, community information and data integration to public library network, collection development, curriculum for health science librarianship and status of medical libraries in one state (Odisha).

There are many new tools and techniques available or other are being developed for managing e-resources called electronic resource management (ERM) and other tools like discovery tools, link resolvers (for article-level linking) to retrieve information. The library services have already reached web-scale management. We have to see how many years we will take to reach web-scale management and filter information to individual requirement. Medical librarians have a bright future, provided they change with the technology and the development.

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About the Guest Editor

Dr HS Siddamallaiah is working in National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences as Principal Library and Information Officer. He has been involved in various projects like development of National Neuroscience Information Centre (funded by DST, DBT, NIC, and NIMHANS); full-text electronic database of three Indian journals on CD-ROM; integration of e-collections (e-books and 1710 e-journals) to academic, research, and healthcare activities, etc. He is the expert member for the curriculum development at universities in Shimoga and Thailand. He has also published many papers in national and international journals and delivered lectures in various universities and national conferences.

He has a work experience of over 25 years. He has been associated with IIM-Bangalore, Tata Consulting Engineers (TCE) - Bangalore, M.S. Ramaiah Medical College, Bangalore. He has been the Vice Chairmen, Medical Division, Indian Library Association (2000-2002) and the President, Karnataka State Library Association (2000-2005). He envisions the Global Neurosciences Initiative Foundation (GNIF) as a "global institution for the brain-mind-behaviour axis" and is a proponent of open access GNIF campaigns. As an instrumental officer of the NIMHANS partnership, he is the official Ambassador to the GNIF.