

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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The use of the University of Zimbabwe, College of Health Science Library's electronic resources in evidence based clinical decision making by Physicians at Parirenyatwa Hospital.

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ABSTRACT

The study was triggered by low download and session visit statistics of evidence based electronic resources by physicians attached to Parirenyatwa Hospital. This was being witnessed in the context of increased subscriptions of electronic resources, ICT infrastructure investment and programmed training and promotion of e-resources to physicians by the UZCHS Library. As Medical Libraries have gained acceptance as a valid member of the healthcare delivery system through their provision of electronic point-of-care resources to inform clinical care, it became imperative to investigate the extent of use of electronic resources to inform evidence based clinical decision making by physicians at Parirenyatwa Hospital. The study objectives were to investigate physician's knowledge of evidence based practice (EBP), use of EBP resources, clinical activities supported by use of e-resources and the factors that influence physicians' use of e-resources in EBP. The literature review explored various theoretical positions and arguments that seek to understand and justify physicians' use of electronic resources in clinical decision making. A survey design was used which adopted a questionnaire instrument to collect data from 84 physicians. An interview on the clinical director was conducted to illuminate the findings of the questionnaire data. The results showed that more than 80% of physicians expressed very good knowledge of EBP and the resources such as Medscape, UpToDate, PubMed and Cochrane were used for diagnosis, treatment, patient advice, choice of drugs and choice of laboratory tests. However, they pointed out that due to heavy workload, limited searching skills and unreliable Internet connection in the clinical wards, there were sometimes not able to keep up-to-date with latest evidence. The study recommended the promotion and marketing of EBP resources, training and retraining programmes on how to search for the evidence, clinical librarianship in which the library offers searching services to physicians and the creation of an EBP repository of health information. The study also recommended provision of electronic resources which are mobile compatible and the formulation of an EBP policy that will guide physicians on the need to use evidence in clinical decision making.