

**A Critical Study of the Information Resources  
and Services in Academic and Research  
Libraries in Medicine in Sri Lanka**

A thesis submitted


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## ABSTRACT

The rapid proliferation of literature is prominent in the medical field due to various investigations carried out by researchers all over the world. This rapid growth of knowledge in the field of medical sciences has created challenges for librarians in developing countries like Sri Lanka. Presently there are several medical libraries attached to universities, government organisations and autonomous bodies. In common with many developing countries, in Sri Lanka too, the development programmes have been hampered due to a variety of factors. One important factor is the non-availability of information. Medical scientists need extensive use of upto-date specialised information. The medical librarian has to play a key role as a timely, relevant and quality information provider. There is an urgent need to identify the factors affecting the deficiencies in the process of information provision and its dissemination in medical sciences. The aim of the present study was to investigate the available information resources in the selected medical libraries and assess the services provided by them. In this context, attempts were also made in this study to appraise the strengths and weaknesses of the collections and the services and finally to suggest ways and means of improvement.

The major research tools employed for data gathering were interviews and questionnaires distributed among librarians, staff and the users. The results were analysed in terms of percentages, frequencies and ranks using 'Kruskal-Wallis k test' .

Detailed information about, history and the present status of these medical libraries, the available manpower and their qualifications, information resources, financial position and services provided for the users, were gathered. An attempt was taken to find out the satisfaction of medical library clientele over the resources and services available.

The study revealed that Sri Lankan medical libraries are capable of providing only the basic services. According to the survey results, the existing resources and services provided to the medical community are grossly inadequate to meet the demands. Library collections need strengthening and staff need more training to cope with the modern technology. In addition, it is suggested that a central medical information centre be set up. This could function as a nucleus of a resource sharing network.

