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The Rate of Using Internet and Full-text Databases by Academic Members referring to the IT Centre of Kerman University of Medical Sciences

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Background & Objective: The rate of using new information services such as Internet is an important criterion for the assessment of development. This study was designed to determine the rate of using internet and biomedical databases by academic staffs of Kerman Medical University (KMU), and their attitude towards the available services.

Methods: In this cross-sectional study, 120 individuals referring to the KMU Information Center during a period of three months (the first semester of 2006) were selected by convenience sampling and examined by a self-reported questionnaire consisted of 4 sections related to the demographic features, subjects' opinions about the availability of soft/hardware and subjects' attitude and practice in regard to using Internet.

Results: The response rate was 74%. About 64% of the subjects had personal computers at home of whom only 53.5% had internet connection. Only 35% of male respondents and 20% of female respondents had access to KMU Internet connection ($P=0.12$). Among 97% of subjects who had active e-mail addresses, only 21.3% used KMU e-mail service. About 73% of the subjects were using the subscribed full-text databases of KMU. Science direct, Ovid, Blackwell, Image MD and MD Consult were respectively the most used sources. According to the subjects, Internet connection at home had a significant positive effect on their professional communications and use of e-mail services ($P<0.03$). More than 95% of the subjects accepted the important role of Internet on improving their professional activities. According to the respondents, the main obstacles for optimal use of Internet in this center were slow-speed Internet and lack of access to the center at their favored times.

Conclusion: In spite of positive attitude toward Internet advantages, the rate of using Internet (especially at homes) and Full-texts databases is low among KMU academic members and these facilities are available only for one fourth of the target population of KMU staffs and students.

Key words: Internet, e-mail, Information delivery, Full-text resources, Kerman

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