

Boosting Health Literacy in College Libraries

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Abstract: *This paper presents the information about health literacy and its importance for academic libraries as well as for users.*

Keywords: Health literacy, Health, college libraries, Users.

1. Introduction

Healthy life is necessary for happy life. In modern era mostly people are conscious about their health but some time they do not know how to maintain health and fitness level. Library can play a vital role to aware the users about the ways of keeping good health. Mostly public libraries organize seminar and workshop on the theme of health education for the users to aware them. It is rightly said that "Sound mind lives in a sound body". Thus being a part of an academic institute, libraries must educate the users about the importance of health and fitness. Moreover, by educating the users we can achieve the target of all over development of individual. College students are in their developing age so in this age by awaking the mind of students we can help them to build some good habits which will help them in their whole life. Consequently, we can lay a foundation of healthy life style. We must realize them that healthy mind can work more efficiently as well as accurately.

2. What is health literacy?

Health literacy is defined as the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decision. (U.S department of Health and Human Services, 2000).¹
"The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decision. (Ratzan and Parkar, 2000).²

3. Why it is necessary?

By educating about health we can easily create curiosity and motivation to read more and more books related to health. To achieve the target of all over development, it has become moral obligation of all the academic institutes to make the children responsible towards their health and level of physical fitness. In the present scenario, we come across the fact that modern generation is a push button civilization. Because of infiltration of technical devices, students are keeping them away from any kind of physical activities. Such an over dependency may result in many physical ailments.

The real possession of a man is his health, which help him to fight against the adversities of life. Actually it is a treasure which once lost never comes back. So it is duty of each academic institute to impart health education. Logically

speaking with healthy mind and healthy body one can easily achieves targets of his life. He can reaches at the peak of success and remain there forever.

4. Role of libraries

Unfortunately, we find a drastic decrease in the reading habits of students. Moreover, they consider library is a place to hoard books. Thus they visit libraries only to find books, related to their syllabus. This is the time for libraries to play more active role by following different missions and motives. Libraries should display the journals and magazines to lure the students. On the other hand libraries can organise debates and discussions to take the valuable views of the users about healthy life. Librarians should update their knowledge regarding health websites and display it for the users benefit.

NLM: NLM is the world's largest biomedical library is a great resource for librarians, health professionals as well as for users. It presents online access also.³

MedlinePlus.gov: U.S. National library of medicine provides links to authoritative information almost on every health topic.⁴

Healthfinder.gov: Healthfinder is designed by U.S department of Health and Human Services. It is easy to use. Users can gathered the information about how to stay healthy in life.⁵

MyHealthPedia : It is online health wiki. Users can share personal experiences and case histories with health experts.⁶

HELP: It is a "Health Education Library for People". It is the free health library for the users which is situated in Mumbai. It provides online access also.⁶
<http://healthlibrary.com/aboutus.htm>

Healthy direction of library can also offer new opportunities for the users. Librarians should collaborate with health care professionals and health organizations at local level to improve health status of users.

5. Conclusion

Futuristically, libraries have to adopt holistic approach to realize the people their existence and importance to keep the users attached to them. Library must target different aspects of student's life and to enable them to cope up with the need of changing world. They should enrich the knowledge of

students so that they can understand the needs of realistic world. In libraries health and fitness programme should be organised as a part of education. They should adopt it as a necessary service for the beneficial of its users.

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