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Familiarity with and Usage of Reference Management Software (RMS) among Undergraduates in Faculty of Dental Sciences, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

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Citations and references are an essential part of academic writing. Managing references in academic writing is a difficult task. Manual typing is a time-consuming process. The Reference Management Software (RMS) is designed for managing citations and references. Therefore, the objective of this study is to explore the familiarity and usage of RMS by the undergraduates in Faculty of Dental Sciences, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. The quantitative method was adopted as a cross-sectional study. A sample of 70 final year undergraduates in the Faculty of Dental Sciences, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka was selected using simple random sampling. A closed ended questionnaire was administered to collect data. Finally, the data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23. The response rate was 100%. Of the sample, 21.4% were male whereas 78.6% were female. The study revealed that 54.3% of the students managed their citations manually, 44.3% used word processor while 1.4% used online citation generators to manage citations. However, 84.4% were not familiar with RMS. 4.3% were familiar with RMS and they had already used it whereas 14.3 % had heard of it but had never used. Among the students who had already used RMS, MS word was the only RMS they had used. They had familiarized with RMS in different ways; by themselves, from a colleague or from a workshop/seminar. RMS had been used only for creating citations/bibliography and searching and retrieving information. Among the students who had never used RMS, 10% were not willing to change the way they manage references, 60% were not familiar with any RMS and 20% mentioned about the lack of assistance to learn RMS. According to the study, the majority of students were not familiar with RMS. Therefore there is a need for establishing an appropriate programme to make them aware of RMS.

Keywords: Reference management software, Citation, Bibliography, Undergraduates