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An exploratory study of the Use of Mobile Phones for Health Information Delivery to Rural Women in Uganda: The Case of Albert Cook Medical Library.

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UP Carnegie Conference, March 2019.
Pretoria, South Africa



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Outline

- Background to the study
- Findings
- Recommendations
- Implementation of mobile svcs at MakLib
- Acknowledgements

Background to the study



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- Drawn from Mak. University strategic direction – Outreach and community development (Mak. Univ. Strategic plan, 2008/09 – 2018/19).
- Mak. Departments mandated to carry out outreach activities.

Background...cont'd



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- MakLib previous outreach activities
 - Reorganisation of Sec. school libraries.
 - Donation of books to nearby Primary schools.
 - “Health Information Digest’ for rural health workers.
 - Training of army officers in use of e-resources, etc.

Methods



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- Interviews
 - Health workers
 - Librarians
 - Rural women
- Translated, interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to obtain data from women.
- Qualitative analysis.

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7

Findings



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- Main health info needs:
 - Maternal and child care
 - Vaccination -Nutrition
 - Family planning options
 - Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)
- Main sources of health info:
 - Health workers - Family and friends
 - Older women - Herbalists.

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8

Findings...cont'd



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- Were unaware of the possibility of obtaining health info. from academic libraries.
- Most own or have access to a mobile phone within their households (feature phones).
- Expressed interest in receiving health related info on their phones.

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9

Findings...cont'd



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- Nearly all preferred voice calls to text messaging,
 - Low literacy levels (unable to read and write)
 - Ability for back and forth dialogue.

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10

Findings...cont'd



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- Library cannot solely implement mhealth svcs
 - Low budgets to host toll free centers
 - Info repackaging a challenge
 - Lack medical training.
- Expressed need for partnership with relevant stakeholders i.e. Ministry of health, Health NGOs, Telecom companies, health workers, etc.

Conclusion



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Healthcare communication directed at women via mobile phones, could empower them with the necessary knowledge to promote not only their own health but also the health of their families.

Recommendations



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- Increase Library budgets
 - Acquire current health info materials and enhance outreach svcs.
- Relevant health organs should implement toll free call centers for women to get free timely repackaged health info.
- Working jointly with other health organs, libraries should offer their expertise in implementing mobile health services.

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13

Implementation at MakLib/MISR



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- WhatsApp reference chat
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Mobile OPAC (MAKULA)
- Mobile library website

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14

Acknowledgement



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Special thanks to:

- University of Pretoria,
- Carnegie Corporation of New York,
- Makerere University Library.

THANK YOU!