

An Analysis of Inflationary trend in medical periodical Prices in Sri Lanka.

***Komathy Murugathas and **De Silva, W.R.G.**

**Medical Library, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka.*

***Main Library, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka.*

Medical periodical is of prime importance in the field of health science as it is the method by which new knowledge is imparted as quickly as possible in a brief and a usable form. Increasing price of medical periodicals creates challenges to health science librarians in Sri Lanka. The paper examines the origin of country of publications of available medical periodicals in Sri Lanka, currency exchange rate changes, the trend in price increases of medical periodicals during the period from 1981 to 1999 and the impact of price changes of medical periodicals on purchasing power of health science libraries in Sri Lanka. Twenty- one medical periodicals were randomly selected and their prices of every three-year period from 1981 to 1999 were taken from the respective years of Ulrich international periodical directory. Price information was compared to the general inflation rate experienced in Sri Lanka as reflected by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Purchasing power of libraries was analyzed based on the calculation method followed to update on inflation of journal prices in the Brandon-Hill list of journals. (Kronenfeld, 1996).

The study showed that the fluctuation in the currency exchange rate of Sri Lanka rupee against USA dollar and UK sterling pound significantly influence the purchasing power of health science libraries in Sri Lanka due to over dependence of medical periodicals in USA and UK. The value of money spent on acquisition of medical periodicals deteriorated relatively to that of money spent in the general economy when considering 1981 as base year. It is readily apparent from the study that despite the current low general rate of inflation, the purchasing power of Sri Lanka health science libraries continues to dwindle. The study will allow people to understand better what is happening to a health science library's real purchasing power. The information should help the librarians to justify budget increase needed to maintain their collection.

Reference:

1. Kronenfeld, M.R. (1996). Update on inflation of journal prices in the Brandon-Hill list of journals. *Bulletin of Medical Library Association*, 84 (2): 260-263.