



# **National Medical Library Organises 5th ERMED Consortium National Training-cum-Conference on “Digital Health Resources: Redefining Access Through Libraries**

**Digital Health Resources Crucial to Building India’s Research Mindset:  
Smt. Punya Salila Srivastava, Secretary, Health**

**Union Health Secretary Calls for Expanding Digital Medical Resources  
to All Medical Colleges, Particularly in Underserved Areas**

**Digital Health Resources Must Translate Information into Evidence and  
Evidence into Better Healthcare: Dr. Lovneesh G. Krishna, DGHS**

**ERMED Conference Features Hands-on Training on Four Digital  
Platforms to Enhance Access to Medical Knowledge**

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The National Medical Library (NML), Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, organised the 5th One-Day National Training-cum-Conference on the ERMED Consortium today at the National Medical Library, New Delhi. The conference was held on the theme “Digital Health Resources: Redefining Access Through Libraries”, highlighting the growing importance of digital knowledge resources in strengthening healthcare delivery, medical education and evidence-based clinical practice.

The inaugural session was attended by Smt. Punya Salila Srivastava, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; Dr. (Ms.) Vinod Kotwal, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Dr. Lovneesh G. Krishna, Director General of Health Services.



Addressing the gathering, Smt. Punya Salila Srivastava, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, underscored the pivotal role of the National Medical Library (NML) in facilitating access to knowledge and information and strengthening the foundations of medical education, research and healthcare delivery. She highlighted the expansion of the NML network to 93 medical colleges and emphasised the need to extend its reach to all medical colleges across the country, particularly those in underserved areas, to ensure equitable access to quality medical literature and digital learning resources.

Emphasising that continuous learning and professional development are indispensable in the medical field, she observed that healthcare is evolving rapidly, with new diseases being identified, innovative therapies emerging and clinical practices continually advancing. She noted that well-equipped libraries and accessible digital resources are essential to strengthening professional competence and enabling healthcare practitioners to provide the best possible care to patients.



She further emphasised that digital health resources are not merely tools for accessing information but also vital enablers of a strong research culture in the country. Referring to the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, she stressed the importance of developing India's indigenous research capabilities and cultivating a scientific temper that encourages innovation and original inquiry.

She also observed that while India may draw upon research conducted elsewhere, its larger aspirations cannot be realised without developing its own research capabilities and mindset. As she emphasised, "We may be able to manage with research conducted elsewhere, but that alone cannot fulfil our resolve to build a strong research ecosystem of our own. For this, we must develop a research mindset, and access to digital health resources is crucial to nurturing that mindset." In this context, she highlighted the complementary role of the *One Nation One Subscription* initiative and the ERMED Consortium in broadening access to scholarly publications, facilitating evidence-based learning and creating an enabling environment for research and innovation. She described the National Medical Library as a legacy institution with the responsibility of serving as a gateway to knowledge and contributing meaningfully to the vision of Viksit Bharat.

Looking ahead, Smt. Srivastava called upon the National Medical Library to develop a comprehensive roadmap for strengthening access to digital health resources, including exploring the role of artificial intelligence in healthcare education, research and professional development. She emphasised the importance of extending guidance and support to States and Union Territories by facilitating the exchange of knowledge and the adoption of good medical library practices across institutions. She encouraged the organisation of focused seminars and professional engagements to identify effective models, share best practices and improve the accessibility and utilisation of digital educational resources nationwide.

Expressing confidence in the deliberations of the conference, she urged librarians, healthcare professionals and other participants to contribute their experiences, insights and actionable recommendations towards building a more accessible, inclusive and

research-oriented medical knowledge ecosystem. She emphasised that empowering medical institutions with reliable knowledge resources and fostering a culture of lifelong learning would be instrumental in advancing medical education, strengthening research and improving patient care across the country.

Speaking at the Occasion, Dr. (Ms.) Vinod Kotwal, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, highlighted the unique nature of knowledge, noting that while material wealth diminishes when spent, knowledge grows when shared. She observed that libraries are rooted in this very ethos of knowledge-sharing and emphasised the importance of leveraging digital resources to make quality medical and educational content more accessible to all. She noted that the three essential pillars of a medical college are its faculty, infrastructure and knowledge resources, including books, journals and other scholarly materials, all of which play a vital role in strengthening medical education and research.



Dr. Kotwal underscored the importance of ensuring that digital educational resources are not merely available but are also accessible and useful to medical practitioners, researchers and students. She exhorted librarians and participants attending the conference to actively engage in the deliberations, share their experiences and provide constructive feedback and practical insights to help improve the quality, relevance and accessibility of digital knowledge resources. She emphasised that such collective efforts would help medical libraries respond more effectively to the evolving learning and research needs of the healthcare community.

Dr. Lovneesh G. Krishna, Director General of Health Services (DGHS), highlighted the changing role of libraries in the digital era, noting that they are evolving from physical spaces where people access knowledge to digital platforms that bring knowledge directly to users. Emphasising the need to ensure the right knowledge reaches the right person at the right time, he described the ERMED Consortium's evolution in 2024 as an important shift towards collaborative access to knowledge. He noted that access to high-quality

medical and scholarly resources for clinicians, researchers, students and nursing professionals helps democratise knowledge and strengthen evidence-based decision-making.

Referring to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the One Nation One Subscription initiative, Dr. Krishna underscored the importance of technology-enabled, equitable and research-driven education, supported by wider access to scholarly resources. He emphasised that the future of medical libraries must go beyond providing information to transforming information into evidence, evidence into knowledge, and knowledge into better healthcare. This, he noted, requires a human-centred approach alongside technological advancement, with greater emphasis on AI literacy, research skills and the ability to critically evaluate information and translate evidence into meaningful action.

Looking ahead, Dr. Krishna encouraged stakeholders to envision what the National Medical Library and the ERMED Consortium should become over the next five to ten years, emphasising the need for more connected, sustainable, inclusive and responsible knowledge ecosystems. He identified access, knowledge, vision and impact as the guiding principles for the future of medical libraries, stressing that their success should ultimately be reflected in stronger medical education, research, evidence-based clinical practice and improved healthcare outcomes.



During the conference, Smt. Punya Salila Srivastava, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, released the National Medical Library (NML) Newsletter and Souvenir, marking an important occasion for documenting the library activities, initiatives and contributions to medical knowledge dissemination and professional engagement.

The conference focused on the evolving role of medical libraries in the digital healthcare ecosystem and the need to strengthen access to credible, high-quality scientific and medical literature. With the increasing use of digital platforms in clinical decision-making,

research and medical education, the programme provided a forum for medical librarians and healthcare professionals to exchange knowledge, explore emerging practices and enhance their capacity to support evidence-based healthcare.

A key feature of the conference was hands-on training on four major ERMED resource platforms—ClinicalKey, BMJ, Access Medicine and MedOne. The training aimed to familiarise participants with these digital platforms and enhance their ability to access and utilise relevant medical literature, clinical information and academic resources effectively.

The conference also featured a panel discussion on “From Custodian to Clinical Partner: The Next Mandate for the Medical Librarian”. The discussion explored the changing responsibilities of medical librarians, emphasising their expanding role beyond the management of information resources to actively supporting clinical teams, researchers, faculty members and students in accessing and applying evidence-based knowledge.

The conference reaffirmed the importance of strengthening digital access to medical and scientific information and building the professional capacities of medical librarians to respond to the changing needs of healthcare institutions, medical education and research. Through knowledge-sharing, practical training and professional dialogue, the ERMED Consortium continues to provide a platform for advancing the use of digital health resources across the medical community.

Dr. Mukesh Pathak, Director, NML, Dr. B. Srinivas, DDG, DGHS, Distinguished Guests and Field Experts were present at the event.

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**SR**

**HFW/5th One-Day National Training-cum-Conference at NML/09 October 2026/2**

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