



OPEN ACCESS E- RESOURCES ON COVID-19: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT:

The researchers have compiled a list of quality open access e-resources on COVID-19 by consulting various secondary sources, including websites of reputed publishers / R & D organizations, library guides, and Google Dataset. It covers the initiatives of the libraries, mega publishers, organizations, government bodies, preprint servers etc. The major limitation of this study is that the compiled list of Covid-19 e-resources is not comprehensive. Detailed information about the initiatives is also not given.

Keywords: Open Access, E- Resources, COVID-19, OER, Preprint Servers

Introduction:

In the first phase of the COVID-19-induced lockdown period (25 March to 14 April 2020) and subsequently, in phases 2, 3, and 4 (up to 31 May 2020), all educational institutions, government offices, businesses, malls, etc. were shut down and only emergency services operated (Sawant,2021).

During the pandemic, many publishers, libraries, government/ non-government organizations, R & D firms, educational institutions and associations removed their paywalls for coronavirus-related research. They proactively provided free access to COVID-19-related literature through the internet. In the present study, the researchers have attempted to compile a list of open access e-resources on COVID-19.

Definitions of Key Terms:

1. E Resources:

According to igi-global.com (n.d.), “Electronic resources form one of many formats that the library collects to support its universal collections. Electronic resources include, web sites, online databases, e-journals, e-books, and physical carriers in all formats, whether free or fee-based, required to support research in the subject covered, and may be audio, visual, and/or text Files.”

2. Open Access:

According to UNESCO (n.d.), “Open access (OA) means **free access to information and unrestricted use of electronic resources** for everyone. A publication is considered Open access if:

- ✚ its content is universally and freely accessible, at no cost to the reader, via the Internet or otherwise;

- ✦ the author or copyright owner irrevocably grants to all users, for an unlimited period, the right to use, copy, or distribute the article, on condition that proper attribution is given;
- ✦ it is deposited, immediately, in full and in a suitable electronic form, in at least one widely and internationally recognized open access repository committed to open access.”

3. Covid-19:

According to WHO (n.d.), “Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Most people infected with the virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. However, some will become seriously ill and require medical attention. Older people and those with underlying medical conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, or cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.”

Literature Review:

IFLA (2020) in its article titled ‘Key resources for libraries in responding to the Coronavirus pandemic’, mentioned, “In the academic field, many have provided **open access** to materials related to COVID-19. Others have facilitated access by making it **easier to log-in and access materials** from outside of official networks.”

A blog titled ‘Researcher’ has described the various initiatives taken by the publishers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A study by Teixeira da Silva, Tsigaris, & Erfanmanesh (2021) found 23,634 unique documents on Covid-19 indexed by Scopus and Web of Science database during the period of January 1 to June 30, 2020.

The International Publishers Association (n.d.) has described the COVID-19 pandemic-related initiatives taken by the publishers in different countries across the World.

Sevryugina and Dicks (2022) collected 4,031 peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in PubMed and their associated preprints posted on bioRxiv and medRxiv servers. They noted ‘the early bird effect produced an ephemeral perception of a global rush in scientific publishing during the early days of the Coronavirus pandemic.’

Objective of the Study:

The main objective of the present study is to search and compile open access e-resources related to Covid -19.

Need and Significance of the Study:

The researchers have attempted to compile open access e-resources on COVID-19. It has numerous benefits like:

- ✦ It provides updated COVID-19-related information to researchers and laypersons.
- ✦ It provides one-stop access to COVID-19-related OER.
- ✦ It is free from licensing restrictions.
- ✦ It gives a range of formats such as scholarly articles, preprints, texts, images, videos, datasets, portals, statistics etc.

Research Methodology:

The researchers have identified and compiled COVID-19 related open access e-resources by consulting the various secondary sources, including websites of reputed publishers/academic institutions/ R & D organizations, and library guides. The Google Dataset is also consulted for finding open access e-resources on COVID-19.

Open Access E- Resource on COVID-19:

Table 1: Compiled List of Open Access E-Resources on Covid-19

S.N.	Name of the E-resource(s)	URL with Accessed Date	Publisher
1.	The Lancet:Covid-19 Resource Centre	https://www.thelancet.com/coronavirus Accessed on 12/7/2022	The Lancet
2.	Science Café in Japan	https://www.science.org/collections/coronavirus Accessed on 13/07/2022	Science (AAAS)
3.	Annals of Internal Medicine	https://www.acpjournals.org/topic/category/coronavirus Accessed on 13/07/2022	American College of Physicians
4.	BMJ's Corona virus (covid-19) Hub	https://www.bmj.com/coronavirus Accessed on 13/07/2022	The BMJ
5.	Public Health Emergency COVID-19 Initiative	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/about/covid-19/ Accessed by 13/07/2022	NIH National library of information National Center for Biotechnology information
6.	WHO COVID-19 Research Database: user guide and information	https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/quick-search-guide-who-covid-19-database Accessed by 14/07/2022	World Health Organization -
7.	Public Health Emergency COVID-19 Initiative	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/about/covid-19/ Accessed by 14/07/2022	National Library of Medicine
8.	ASM COVID-19 Initiatives	https://asm.org/Press-Releases/2020/ASM-Initiatives-for-COVID-19 Accessed by 14/07/2022	American Society for Microbiology
9.	COVID 19 Temporary Open & Free Resources	https://www.mcgill.ca/library/covid-19-open-resources Accessed by 14/07/2022	McGill Library
10.	Access to OUP resources on COVID-19, other corona viruses, and related topics	https://academic.oup.com/journals/pages/coronavirus Accessed by 14/07/2022	OXFORD Academic
11.	Covid -19: Novel Corona virus Outbreak	https://novel-coronavirus.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/ Accessed by 15/07/2022	Wiley online Library
12.	Coronavirus (Covid -19) Research highlight	https://www.springernature.com/gp/researchers/campaigns/coronavirus	Springer nature

		Accessed by 15/07/2022	
13.	“My Hero is You”	https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/my-hero-you Accessed by 15/07/2022	Unicef
14.	COVID-19 SARS-CoV-2 preprints from medRxiv and bioRxiv	https://connect.biorxiv.org/relate/content/181 Accessed by 15/07/2022	Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory
15.	COVID-19 Related E-Resources	http://www.unishivaji.ac.in/library/COVID-19-Related-E-Resources-n Accessed by 15/07/2022	BBKKRC, Shivaji University, Kolhapur
16.	WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard	https://covid19.who.int/ Accessed by 15/07/2022	WHO
17.	COVID -19 Updates of India	https://www.mohfw.gov.in/ Accessed by 15/07/2022	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, GOI
18.	Coronavirus Free Access Collection	https://www.cambridge.org/core/browse-subjects/medicine/coronavirus-free-access-collection# Accessed by 15/07/2022	Cambridge University Press
19.	Topic Article Package: Coronavirus (COVID-19)	https://www.karger.com/Tab/Home/278492 Accessed by 15/07/2022	Karger Publisher
20.	Free Resources on MUSE During COVID-19	https://about.muse.jhu.edu/resources/freesourcescovid19/ Accessed by 16/07/2022	Project MUSE, U.S.A.
21.	Novel Coronavirus Resource Directory	https://www.elsevier.com/novel-coronavirus-covid-19 Accessed by 16/07/2022	Elsevier
22.	Coronaviruses	https://www.microbiologyresearch.org/content/coronaviruses Accessed by 16/07/2022	Microbiology Society
23.	ACM	https://dl.acm.org/action/doSearch?AllField=covid Accessed by 16/07/2022	ACM Digital Library
24.	Coronavirus	https://publishing.aip.org/publications/journals/covid-19/ Accessed by 16/07/2022	AIP Publishing
25.	Covid -19 resources (Dimensions Database)	https://www.dimensions.ai/covid19/ Accessed by 16/07/2022	Digital Science & Research Solutions Inc.
26.	SSRN's Coronavirus & Infectious Disease Research Hub	https://www.ssrn.com/index.cfm/en/coronavirus/ Accessed by 16/07/2022	SSRN

27.	SARS-CoV-2 & Covid-19 Preprints	https://www.researchsquare.com/corona virus Accessed by 16/07/2022	<i>Research Square</i>
28.	Covid-19 Datasets (Lens Database)	https://about.lens.org/covid-19/ Accessed by 16/07/2022	<i>Lens</i>
29.	Open Educational Resources (OER): COVID-19 Free Resources	https://library.evangel.edu/research/open educationalresources/covid19freeresour ces Accessed by 16/07/2022	<i>Evangel University Libraries</i>
30.	Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resource Center	https://aub.edu.lb/libguides.com/COVID 19/OER Accessed by 16/07/2022	<i>American University of Beirut - University Libraries</i>

Major Findings:

Table 1 represents following findings:

- During the Covid-19 pandemic, mega publishers like Elsevier, Springer, BMJ, Oxford, Cambridge etc., have provided free access to Covid-19 related literature. They have launched portals for giving access related to Covid-19 publications.
- Preprint servers like medRxiv, bioRxiv, SSRN and Research Square etc., have provided free access to Covid-19-related preprints.
- The databases like Dimensions, PubMed, Lens etc. have provided free access to Covid-19-related publications.
- Mega organizations like WHO has taken special initiative. The WHO COVID-19 database is one of the comprehensive and curated databases. The Covid-19 dashboard of WHO provides updated statistics about Covid-19 cases, deaths, vaccine doses etc., across the globe.
- The different government organizations across the globe maintained various interactive web portals related to Covid-19. For

instance, the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India is providing Covid-19-related updates through its portal at: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>

- The different types of libraries have compiled Covid-19-related OER. For instance, Barr. Balasaheb Khardekar Knowledge Resource Centre, Shivaji University, Kolhapur (India), Evangel University Libraries (U.S.A.) etc., have compiled free resources on Covid-19 and made it freely available on its web portal.

Suggestions:

- The compiled list of e-resources should include the initiatives taken by the non-government organizations.
- The compiled list should consist of the initiatives taken by the data repositories like Github, Zenoda, Figshare etc.
- The compiled list should include the significant initiatives taken by different governments in the World. E.g. China, U.S.A., U.K., Russia etc.
- An interactive web portal or a blog should be created to provide e-resources related to Covid-19.

Conclusion:

The present study has attempted to search and compile the Covid-19-related open access e-resources. It has identified thirty Covid-19 initiatives across the globe. It covers the initiatives of the libraries, mega publishers, organizations, government bodies, preprint servers etc. Major limitation of this study is that the compiled list of Covid-19 e-resources is not comprehensive. Some of the major initiatives may not be covered. The detailed information about the initiatives is also not provided.

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