

HYPOTHESIS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RESEARCH SECTION OF MLA

Message from the chair

by Gary Byrd, Ph.D.

(gdburd@buffalo.edu)

In my first *Hypothesis* message (Summer 1999 issue, Vol 13, no. 2) I outlined a number of Research Section objectives for this year. I'm pleased to report that we now have three new task forces appointed and charged to work on these objectives:

Research Distance Learning Course Task Force

This task force is charge to work with the MLA Continuing Education Committee to formulate recommendations for the development of one or more MLA distance learning courses on research methods targeted at the general MLA membership. The task force will recommend a plan at the MLA Conference in Vancouver next spring for possible implementation the next year.

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The following Research Section members have agreed to serve on this task force:

P. Zoë Stavri, University of Arizona, School of Information Research & Information Science (zstavri@u.arizona.edu), **Andrea Ball**, University of Wisconsin (aball@biostat.wisc.edu), **Ellen Detlefsen**, University of Pittsburgh, School of Information Science (ellen@sis.pitt.edu), **Kay Wagner**, University of South Dakota (kwagner@usd.edu), **David King**, New York Academy of Medicine, NN/LM Middle Atlantic Region (dking@nyam.org)

In addition **Julia Kochi** from the University of California at San Francisco (kochi@library.ucsf.edu) will serve as liaison to the Task Force from the MLA Continuing Education Committee.

AHIP Research Credit Task Force

This task force is charged to work with the MLA Credentialing Committee to review the credits offered for research activities to gain or renew membership at the various levels in the Academy of Health Information Professionals (AHIP). They will make recommendations based on this review to strengthen and balance research credits in relationship to the credits offered for other continuing education and professional activities.

The following Research Section members have agreed to serve on this task force:

Jonathan Eldredge, University of New Mexico (Jeldredge@salud.unm.edu), **Ann Weller**, University of Illinois at Chicago (acw@uic.edu), **Carole Gilbert**, Providence Hospital & Medical Center (cgilbert@providence-hospital.org), **Carolyn Lipscomb**, Durham, NC (73223.1145@compuserve.com), **Ellen Marks**, Wayne State University (emarks@med.wayne.edu)

In addition **Ann Weller** will serve as liaison from the Task Force to the MLA Credentialing Committee.

See Message, page 2

HYPOTHESIS. The Newsletter of the Research Section of MLA

<http://gain.mercer.edu/mla/research/hypothesis.html>

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Message, from page 1

Research Mentors Program Task Force

This task force is charged with recommending and working to implement strategies to update the Research Section mentors database and to promote this service to the broader MLA membership via MLANET and the Section Website.

The following Research Section members have agreed to serve on this task force:

Elizabeth Connor, Medical University of South Carolina (connor@musc.edu), **Nancy Roderer**, National Library of Medicine (RodereN@mail.nlm.nih.gov), **Dixie Jones**, Louisiana State University Medical Center, Shreveport (djones@lsu-mc.edu), **Ellen Nagle**, University of Minnesota (e-nagle@umn.edu), **Gary Byrd**, University at Buffalo (gbyrd@buffalo.edu)

If any Section member has ideas or opinions regarding the charges or issues facing these task forces, please contact one or more members of the task force to share your thoughts. Each task force will be making its first formal report and recommendations at the spring MLA Conference in Vancouver.



Food for thought . . .

"You must learn from the mistakes of others ... You can't possibly live long enough to make them all yourself."

... Sam Levinson
(1911-1980), Humorist



"The true worth of a researcher lies in pursuing what he did not seek in his experiment as well as what he sought."

... Claude Bernard (1813-1878),
French Physiologist



**MLA 2000
Research
Section
programs**

... submitted by Jon Eldredge, Ph.D.

**SUNDAY, MAY 7, 2000, 4:00-5:30 PM, PROGRAM
SESSION I**

Tracking the Gray Literature: Capturing the Elusive Dragon, Tracking the Non-commercially Published Literature and Making it Available. Sponsored by the Public Health/Health Administration Libraries, Collection Development, Research, and Technical Services Sections

Evidence-based Librarianship: Tools We ALL Can Use. Part 1. Sponsored by the Research, Collection Development, and Federal Libraries Sections

“Randomized Controlled Trials in Librarianship: a “How To” Guide” by K. Ann McKibbin, Health Information Research Unit, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

“Cohort Studies in Librarianship: Prospective and Retrospective Approaches Involving Library Education Programs and Collection Use Studies” (speaker to be announced)

“Ethnographic Studies in Librarianship” by Michelynn McKnight, Health Sciences Library, Norman Regional Hospital, Norman, OK

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2000, 9:00-10:30 AM,
PROGRAM SESSION IV**

Evidence-based Librarianship: Tools We ALL Can Use. Part 2. Sponsored by the Research, and Public Services Sections

“Systematic Reviews of the Library Literature” (speaker to be announced)

“How Librarians Can Conduct Systematic Reviews for Healthcare Professionals” by Molly Harris, Librarian, Cochrane Collaboration Center, San Antonio, TX

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Research Section Home Page
(<http://www-hsl.mcmaster.ca:80/lrs/index.html>)



Research Spotlight

Survey of Information Needs in Ambulatory Settings

By Carole M. Gilbert, Daria Drobny, Sharon A. Phillips, and Karen M. Tubolino

The Metropolitan Detroit Medical Library Group believes that librarians must carry out research in order to learn, to be heard, and to enhance credibility. Therefore, every three or four years, an ad hoc Research Committee is formed to design and carry out a research project. The subject of the research is chosen by the committee or suggested by the membership, and the project usually takes two years or more to complete.

Preliminary Work

In the Fall of 1997, the newly appointed ad hoc committee met to determine a subject area which was of interest and which would be of value to the library profession. A literature search was done on several subjects. It was decided to survey how clinicians in ambulatory facilities were getting medical information and in what format it was preferred. A survey instrument was designed and sent randomly, for critique, to physicians at the ambulatory sites of two hospitals whose librarians were members of the committee. Upon return of the survey, it was determined that the questionnaire was too long, so it was redesigned, limiting it to one page, front and back. This survey was then submitted to a statistician for approval.

The 1998 AHA Guide was consulted for a list of medical centers in the nine states in the Midwest Chapter/Medical Library Association. Any hospital showing a facility "code 25" (free-standing outpatient care center) was determined to be eligible to participate in the study. The MLA Membership Directory yielded some of the names of librarians in these institutions; Midwest Chapter/MLA Representatives-at-Large were asked to supply names for the others.

In addition, librarians from non-member hospitals in the midwest and members of the Hospital Libraries Section of MLA were invited to participate via MEDLIB-L, the Midwest Chapter of MLA electronic discussion group, the Michigan Health Sciences Libraries Association electronic discussion group, and at the annual meetings.

Method

A survey instrument was designed based on a previous instrument that had been used in the Detroit area to assess information needs of hospital staff [1]. It was then reviewed by a statistician, revised, and field tested at two major medical centers. The committee decided that the only way the survey could be distributed and a meaningful return guaranteed, was to ask the librarians at participating institutions to distribute and collect the surveys from their clinicians and to return them to us. So in the Fall of 1998, the committee mailed surveys to librarians at 239 "code 25" hospitals in the Midwest and to others nationwide who had asked to participate.

Each hospital was assigned a number and packets were sent containing a letter describing the project, the method of distribution, collection, and return of the surveys, and 25 numbered questionnaires. "Clinician" was identified as physicians, residents, nurses, and allied health professionals. Allied health personnel were defined as anyone not a physician, resident, or nurse who had direct contact with patients. "Others" included those who did not have direct patient care responsibilities.

The final survey was sent out on two pages because it was discovered that test survey respondents did not turn the page over; a staple in the upper corner alerted them that there was something more. Librarians were requested to distribute surveys to clinicians at their ambulatory sites, to collect them when they were completed, and to return them to the Research Committee. Distribution of all 25 surveys was not required since some hospitals did not have that many ambulatory clinicians. Any sites that needed more were asked to request them from the Research Group to assure proper numbering for tracking purposes.

***Editor's Note:** The Metropolitan Detroit Medical Library Group (MDMLG) won an Honorable Mention from the Research Section Awards Committee for the Best Research Poster Award at MLA 1999 in Chicago earlier this year. Their presentation entitled "Information Seeking Needs of Clinicians in Ambulatory Care Settings" also won the Hospital Libraries Section/MLA Professional Development Award. The final results of this study have been accepted for publication in the premier issue of a new periodical, Journal of Hospital Librarianship, to debut in early 2001.*

The committee offered to reimburse postage for the returned packets and to share the results from each institution as well as the aggregate information representing the entire study group with each participating librarian.

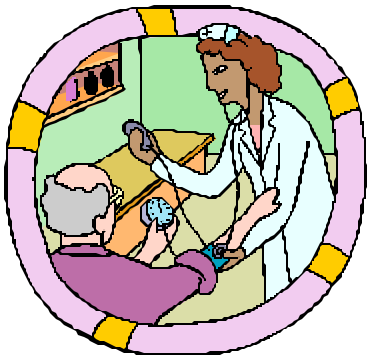
Results

Of the 706 questionnaires returned, all were usable for analysis. SPSS® (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) for the Macintosh (version 6.1, 1995) was used to analyze the data. Cross checking the results was accomplished by data being entered into Microsoft® Excel. Most questions did not limit the number of possible responses to one. Therefore, percentages reported often added up to more than 100%.

A library was present at the ambulatory center for 312 participants. However, several indicated that the libraries were personal, so it is not known whether that figure indicates “real” libraries or just private collections. More than 63% of respondents stated that they still get information from a library at their central site, 38% use private collections, 34% use resource libraries, and 40% use the Internet. The preferred method of delivery was to go to the Library (70%). However, 42% used the Internet, and 30% to 40% preferred phone, fax, or interoffice mail. The most important aspects of library service were: the accessibility of print materials; computer access to MEDLINE and the Internet; and experienced, helpful library staff. Nearly 500 of the 706 questionnaires stated that the services of a librarian were extremely important.

Patient care was the purpose for information seeking for 91.6%. Continuing education accounted for 77.5%, patient education for 65.6%, and research for 64.2%.

In response to the request to choose either print or electronic resource material, the preferred format for books and journals was print. Of the clinicians, 87.5% wanted their information in print, while only 12.5% wanted



L-R, Karen M. Tubolino, Carole M. Gilbert, Daria Drobny

materials in electronic format. When asked the importance of print versus electronic materials, approximately 72% stated print was more important to them than electronic format (8%). Electronic format was not important to 92%. Nineteen percent vs. 81% of the respondents were neutral concerning print vs. electronic format.

Discussion

The assumption of the Committee was that there is a real need for services to be provided to clinicians in ambulatory settings. The questionnaire proved that only about 50% of ambulatory centers have libraries. Because many respondents indicated that the libraries they use were private collections, we think the ambulatory sites without libraries is higher than indicated, especially since more than 70% of respondents stated that they get most of their information from a central hospital library.

The purpose for seeking information was not surprising—91.6% for patient care. What was interesting here was that 95.6% of physicians sought information for patient care, but only 88.5% of residents and 91.1% of nurses did. Also of interest were the respondents (51.2%) who stated that they used information for “management decisions.” However, some responses lead us to believe that these were not administrative management decisions, but rather patient care management decisions. We were also surprised at the number of people who used the library for research (64.2%) and continuing medical education (77.5%).

A surprising ratio of 87.5% to 12.5% indicated that most clinicians preferred print over electronic resources. Electronic resources appear to be much more popular in academic institutions than in community hospitals.

See Spotlight, page 6

Spotlight, from page 5

Perhaps that is because most community hospitals cannot afford them! It would be interesting to repeat this survey in three to five years to ascertain if this preference has changed.

That approximately 500 persons indicated the need for professionally-trained medical librarians was a nice surprise, especially since that question was open-ended with no choices given.

Conclusions

Clinicians at ambulatory sites do not appear to be as interested in electronic resources as do their academic counterparts. They still want print books and journals and library staff to do their searches. It appears that libraries at a central hospital site are doing a good job at providing information to these off-site professionals. Still there is a need for formalized information at ambulatory sites and librarians to provide it.

Bibliography

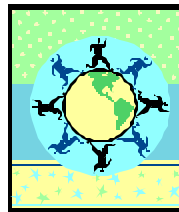
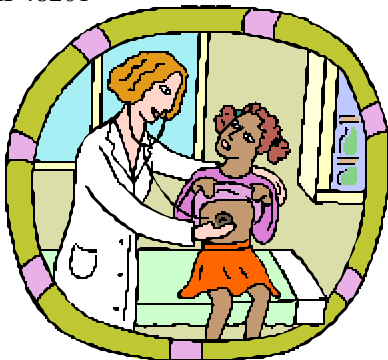
1. ADAMS D, ET AL. Hospital library customer survey: a needs assessment tool. *National Network* 1994 Nov;19(2):4,24-27.

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International
Research Reviews

edited by Jon Eldredge, Ph.D.
(Jeldredge@salud.unm.edu)

submitted by Andrew Booth,
Chair of LINC Health Panel,
Research Working Party,
United Kingdom
(A.Booth@sheffield.ac.uk)

The Research in the Workplace Award was set up by the LINC (Library and Information Co-operation Council) Health Panel to encourage the development of practitioner-led research. A sum of over £2,000 was made available this year for a single research project by the Health Libraries Group, IFM (Information for the Management of Health care, UMSLG (University Medical Librarians Group) and UHSL (University Health Sciences Libraries) Group with support from Libraries for Nursing. In this the first year of the Award, nine entries were received and judged by a panel comprised of Andrew Booth, John Van Loo and Christine Urquhart. Of these proposals, three covered nursing, two addressed patient information, two were for literature searching, one concerned IT and one was for community health. Geographically, three came from Oxford; while one each was received from Trent, London, North West, South and West, Scotland, and Wales. The results were announced immediately prior to the Bishop Lefanu Memorial Lecture at the Eastman Dental Institute, on November 1, 1999. This event is held annually by the Health Libraries Group and alternates between a presentation by a health librarian and one by a subject expert in the field.

1st Place: Michelle Kirkwood and Anne Wilson from Glasgow Royal Infirmary - *A Delphi study to determine research priorities and the corresponding evidence base in North Glasgow hospitals.*

2nd Place: Valerie Trinder, Anne Jones and Sarah Cohen from Plymouth Hospitals Trust - *A Self Assessment Tool on Literature Searching Skills for Health Professionals.*

3rd Place: Eve Hollis, Steve Ashwell and Team from Oxford Region - *VaMP: Virtual Meetings Project.*

4th Place: Maureen Forrest, Donald Mackay and Team from Cairns Library, Oxford - *Informing the Community: a study to identify the current and future information needs and resource requirements of community health workers in Oxfordshire.*



Chapter Research Committee News

SCC members recognized for research

submitted by Jon Eldredge, Ph.D.,
Chair, SCC Research Committee
(Jeldredge@salud.unm.edu)

The third annual SCC Research Award judging process produced two award winners and a special commendation. All contributed papers and posters at SCC annual meetings are automatically eligible to compete for the SCC Research Award. The judges review submitted abstracts prior to the annual meeting to identify research-oriented contributed papers and posters. The judges initially screen out any papers and posters that provide only information or report on not yet completed research projects. The judges then evaluate the remaining entries on the following criteria for the maximum number of points in parentheses: Design (20), Reliability (20), Presentation (20), and Validity (40). Interested colleagues can obtain a copy of the judging form from the author. The remainder of this article summarizes the winning entries.

SCC Research Award

INTERLIBRARY LOAN AVAILABILITY OF NURSING JOURNALS IN A FIVE STATE (AR, LA, NM, OK, & TX) REGION. Michelynn McKnight.

This case control study compared the holdings of nursing journals in a five-state region to a list of key nursing journals

developed by Margaret "Peg" Allen. This project produced the surprising results that the vast majority of these key nursing journals are held by at least one library in the five state region.

SCC Research Award

GETTING THE NEWS OUT. Sharon Giles and Gary Clopton.

These two librarians at the UT Southwestern Medical Center Library in Dallas developed a model e-mail service for promoting library resources to staff and patrons. The e-mail alert service has shown very rapid growth in the number of its subscribers and has received positive evaluations from users in a recent survey. This prototype could be easily transferred to other libraries.

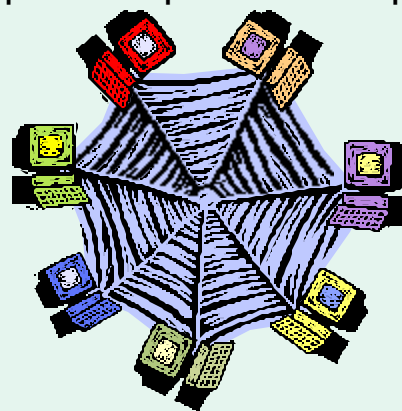
Special Commendation

MEDLINE, SCIENCE CITATION INDEX, AND ABSTRACTS, OH MY! FOLLOWING THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD TO FACULTY PUBLICATIONS. David Duggar, Bob Wood and Kerri Christopher.

This poster reported on a historical research project at the LSU Shreveport Medical Center Library. This history traced the origins of an annual bibliography produced by the library since 1984, which tracks all medical center faculty publications.

A new editorial board is forming to assist with the Research Section's Web site development. The function of this group will be to review content and design features for our home page. The group will consist of two or three members who will work in conjunction with the Web Site Editor to identify new material and its placement on the site. This could be an opportunity for you to work on a Web site and to become actively involved in the Research Section. If you would like to volunteer for appointment to this group, please contact Kristin Stoklosa, Web Site Editor at 301-594-6275 or kristin_stoklosa@nih.gov.

Help develop our home page



<http://hubnet2.buffalo.edu/mla/>

RESEARCH PROCESS PANEL:

EXPERT ADVICE FOR TAKING THE PAIN OUT OF RESEARCH, PART II*

Winning presentations:
how can you present your results?

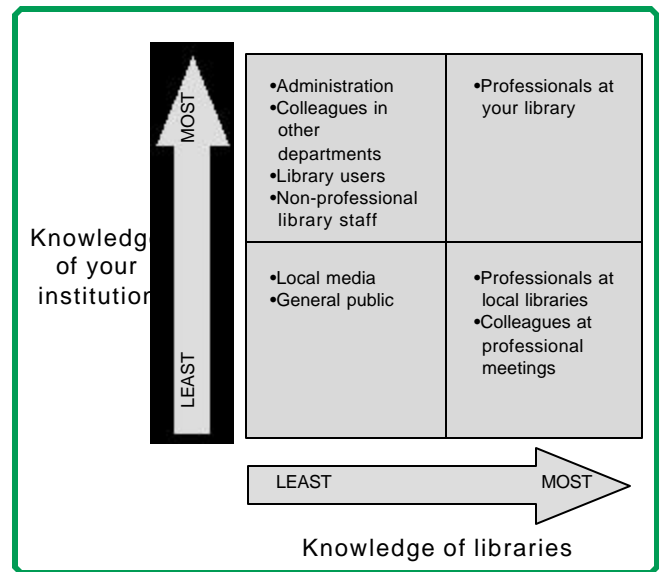


by Joyce E. B. Backus, Ph.D.
Senior Systems Librarian, Public Services Division, National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, MD

Introduction

Once you have followed the guidelines for authoritative, solid research, don't fall down on effective presentation. Remembering the research question is as important in presenting your results as in the earlier steps in the research process. Some aspects of presenting the results should vary depending on your audience, but answering the research question should remain central to your presentation. Also, be sure to preserve the integrity of the entire project by presenting error-free data that is readable and appropriate to the medium you are using.

**Editor's Note: This panel session was sponsored by the Research, Medical Informatics, and Hospital Libraries Sections of MLA and was presented at MLA '99 in Chicago. Gary Byrd, Ph.D. served as Moderator, with speakers P. Zoë Stavri, Ph.D., Jocelyn A. Rankin, Ph.D., Nancy Woelfl, Ph.D., and Joyce Backus. Part I was published in the Summer 1999 issue of Hypothesis, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 5-8. It included Gary's "Introduction" and the presentations of Zoë and Jocelyn. Part II, published here, includes Joyce's contribution and Gary's "Closing Remarks." Look for Nancy's presentation "Appropriate Analysis: How Can You Make Sense of Your Data?" in the next issue of Hypothesis.*



Audience

As this chart illustrates, your audience will vary in their knowledge of libraries and of your institution. Your data presentation should reflect the expected level of knowledge of the audience. For example, at a professional library conference, expect the audience to have basic knowledge of library concepts and terminology, but provide background information on your institution. In contrast, for non-library colleagues at your institution, avoid library jargon and define terms that may be unfamiliar outside the profession. In both cases, if you know your audience, they will not be distracted with unfamiliar concepts or insulted with elementary explanations. Whether in print or in person, your audience will appreciate your attention to their level of knowledge and listen to the message.

Send a clear message

Communicate your message as clearly and directly as possible. Although you may have uncovered many interesting findings during your research, focus on the research question and not related issues. Be sure to have someone uninvolved with your project listen to the presentation or read the written report to weed out any confusing messages.

Charts, graphs, and tables

Whether in print or in computer or slide media, make sure that your charts, graphs, and tables are clear and accurate. Be sure that all columns, rows, and units are appropriately labeled. When in doubt, include the label even where the content is obvious to you.

Keep in mind that the default settings in charting and graphing software such as Microsoft® Excel or PowerPoint are often not ideal and you will have to adjust them. All fonts should be large enough so that viewers do not need to work too hard to gain the message behind your graph, chart, or table. Don't let tiny fonts or lack of labels distract the audience from your message. Make all text clear and large enough to read easily.

If you have complicated or detailed graphics, print may be the only media appropriate for displaying all the data. Don't try to fit information into a slide that can only be shown completely or meaningfully in print. Overly detailed slides will frustrate the audience and obscure your message. In the case of very detailed slides, simplify the graphics to a slide summary, divide them into a series of slides, or distribute a paper copy that completely conveys your data message.

Accuracy

Errors can creep into a presentation at any point from the initial keyboarding of the figures to the final touches made to the presentation. Be sure to double-check all presentation graphics and tables for accuracy. If you apply as much care in the final step of presenting the data as in all other research steps, then the research remains authentic to the audience. Inaccuracies in the presentation of results can undermine the entire presentation. Always take time to check the keyboarding and arithmetic before your audience does.

Conclusion

Presenting your data is the reward for research well done. Follow these simple guidelines of being aware of your audience, presenting clear, accurate results, and using appropriate media and the final presentation step in the research process will be as satisfying as the very first step.



Closing remarks



by Gary Byrd, Ph.D., AHIP
Director, Health Sciences
Library, University at
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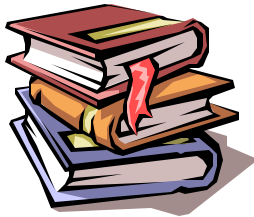
The following are some key points to summarize the expert advice offered during this research process panel session:

◆Dr. Stavri reminded us that the first step in doing research is to have a researchable question. Without a carefully formulated research question, no amount of systematic data collection will provide useful research results.

◆Dr. Rankin pointed out that a research methodology must be tied to the research question to make sure we are collecting appropriate data and using a good systematic approach. She also strongly advised us to pilot test our methodology and not to be afraid to try new methods.

◆Dr. Woelfl encouraged us to ask for technical advice from experts within our institutions when using statistics to analyze our research data. She also said that librarians wanting to do good research must be willing to engage in the systematic study of statistics.

◆Finally, Ms. Backus offered excellent advice on putting together presentations of our research results. She advised us to tailor the presentation to the audience level, to use readable charts and graphs, to use data to support the research question, and to always double check the data used in a presentation.



Literature Review

prepared by

Ruth E. Fenske, Ph.D.

LABEAUSE J, ET AL. GaIN study on health professionals' search requests and continuing education needs. *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*. 1999 Sum;18(2):81-89.

Eight of 92 members of the Georgia Interactive Network for Medical Information collected 1041 MEDLINE requests from health care professionals for specific subject clinical requests for six months. Each request was assigned an ICD-9 code. Copies of institution specific reports and a list of the ten most frequently requested topics for the group as a whole were sent to CE educators at each hospital. The educators were then asked how useful the reports were in identifying CE needs for health professionals in their institution.

Sixteen surveys, presumedly one for physicians and one for non-physicians, were sent to eight CE educators. Ten were returned. Only three of ten said the reports were very helpful; the other seven thought the reports were somewhat helpful. Although the majority felt the reports were comparable to other methods used to determine CE needs, only one third said they would use the reports in future offerings.

The authors acknowledge that the study involved only a small group of institutions. CE educators agreed that the reports were most useful in confirming needs, rather than in identifying needed topics. They felt that MEDLINE requests identified one-time information needs. However, they did concede the top ten lists agreed with the major diagnoses across the state.

The reports were discontinued, but the authors feel the reports increased the visibility of the librarian and pointed out the value of cooperation between librarians and CE educators.

TRAVICA B. Organizational aspects of the virtual library: a survey of academic libraries. *Library & Information Science Research*. 1999; 21(2):173-203.

The author believes virtual libraries can be viewed from both a technological and an organizational perspective. Most research concerns technological issues; his concerns organizational issues.

He reviews the literature on virtual libraries, noting "terminological-conceptual" disagreements. He proposes four general models of the virtual library (the subsystem model, the inter-organizational model, the system model, and the disintermediation model), which represent a low to high progression of organizational innovation. The literature of change in academic libraries is also reviewed.

Surveys were mailed to 300 randomly selected academic (university, college, and junior college) library directors. Response rate was 68.3%. The survey was designed to assess the organizational dimensions of structure, culture, strategy, politics, management skills, information technology, and inter-organizational relationships. There was an open-ended question about their opinion of the virtual library and one about five-year plans. Content analysis was applied to the open-ended questions. Another question listed things an academic library might do in the next five years and asked the directors to rank them from one (unimportant) to five (extremely important). Copies of the questionnaire and the structure for the content analysis are provided.

The findings, discussion, and conclusion emphasize that the directors tend to view virtual libraries from the technological, rather than the organizational, perspective. The implication is that academic library directors are a conservative lot and that they simply do not see the connections between the organizational issues and the technology. Considering that he does not define virtual library and he admits the literature of virtual libraries does not agree on fundamental concepts, it is not surprising the respondents did not move into his domain. In my opinion, either his conceptual model is faulty or his operationalization of his concepts is faulty.

WEEDMAN J. Conversation and community: the potential of electronic conferences for creating intellectual proximity in distributed learning environments. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*. 1999;50(10):907-928.

After an extensive literature review of research on distance education, computer-mediated communication, learning outcomes, reflective thinking, community, and professional socialization, the author tells us she is studying what "may be the analog of the informal communication, studied in scholars, scientists, and professionals of various kinds." In this case, conversation took place on a computer-mediated conference initiated by students. Approximately nine months of conference transcripts from 1987 and nine months from 1989 were analyzed. Content analysis was applied to 4599 postings from the two time periods,

using a coding dictionary derived from the literature of professional socialization. Number of postings in each category is given in the appendix. The most frequently discussed area was the current school environment.

Questions were asked about students' use of the conference, their perception of the conference as a communication environment, the relation of the conference community to the face-to-face community, and what role the conference played in the professional school experience. Half of the students signed on at least once a week. Most perceived the conference as an informal group conversation. Seventy percent believed the conference gave them interaction with people they would not have known otherwise. The major reason (90%) for using the conference was to be in touch with the school. All in all, the conference was quite useful for creating community, and it supported and extended the intellectual work of the school. Although these students were all on one campus and had chances for face-to-face interactions in classes, at convocations, at meetings of student groups, and at social events, they still were enthusiastic about the conference. The author believes these data have relevance to the distance learning environment.

BUTTLAR L. Information sources in library and information science doctoral research. *Library & Information Science Research*. 1999; 21(2):227-245.

JOSWICK KE. Article publication patterns of academic librarians: an Illinois case study. *College & Research Libraries*. 1999 Jul;60(4):340-349.

These two studies are of interest because they mention the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association* in the results. Joswick found that among 210 articles published by practicing academic librarians in Illinois between 1995 and January, 1999, 22 were published in the *Bulletin*. This was second only to *Illinois Libraries*. The primary source of information about what articles had been published was the citation databases of the Institute for Scientific Information and a special manual scan of *Illinois Libraries*. The author refers to the "exceptional research and publication activity of health science librarians in Illinois." No doubt that is fueled by the fact that most, if not all, academic health sciences librarians in Illinois have faculty status. However, many other academic librarians in Illinois also have faculty status, making it plausible to say that academic health sciences librarians in Illinois may be publishing articles at a higher rate than other academic librarians in Illinois.

Buttlar found that of 3683 citations to journal articles in 61 library and information science dissertations, 85

were to the *Bulletin*. Considering that 815 different journal titles were cited in the dissertations, the *Bulletin* did well, indeed. Only *College & Research Libraries*, *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, *Library Journal*, and *Library Trends* yield more citations in this group of dissertations. Her sample may be biased in that only dissertations available on interlibrary-loan, free of charge, from the originating institution were used. She notes that she was able to examine bibliographies from 47% of the dissertations listed in *Dissertation Abstracts International* (for July, 1994 to March, 1997) as being written at schools having ALA-accredited programs. In so far as excluded programs (e.g. Indiana and Syracuse) might tend to emphasize particular subject areas, her results would not be representative of the population as a whole. Nevertheless, it is impressive to see that the *Bulletin* ranked so high on this list.

BUDD JM. Increases in faculty publishing activity: an analysis of ARL and ACRL institutions. *College & Research Libraries*. 1999 Jul;60(4):308-315.

HART RL. Scholarly publication by university librarians: a study at Penn State. *College & Research Libraries*. 1999 Sep;60(5):454-462.

WELLER AC, HURD JM, WIBERLEY SE JR. Publication patterns of U.S. academic librarians from 1993 to 1997. *College & Research Libraries*. 1999 Jul;60(4):352-362.

Budd looks at publishing among university faculty in general and Hart, Weller et al, and Joswick, as cited above, look at publication patterns among academic librarians. Using Institute for Scientific Information data to identify citations to articles, Budd found that in 1995 to 1997 both mean number of publications per institution and per capita publications had increased over 1991 to 1993. ACRL institutions are smaller universities with less emphasis on research. For ACRL institutions, numbers are lower but there is also a significant increase in both numbers for this group of institutions. When rank order correlations are done between mean number of publications and per capita publications, and volumes in libraries and doctorates awarded, for ARL institutions there is some correlation between total publications and volumes in libraries and doctorates awarded and less between per capita publications and library volumes and doctorates. For ACRL institutions, there is weak correlation between total publications and the figures and almost no correlation between per capita publications and library volumes and doctorates awarded.

See Literature, page 12

Literature, from page 11

Turning to academic librarians, Hart surveyed librarians at Penn State in the fall of 1998 about their attitudes toward publication and demographics, and he collected data on publications by examining each respondent's vita. Response rate was 76%. Ninety-five percent said the expectation for research and publishing by Penn State librarians had increased over the last 15 to 20 years. Eight-three percent were currently engaged in research leading to publication. Average hours per month spent on research was 19.8. He presents evidence that both quality and quantity of publication has increased since 1990. Although referenced in the text, the citation for footnote number 21 is not included in the author's bibliography.

Joswick presents evidence that the percent of female academic librarian authors in Illinois approaches the percent of female librarians nation-wide. She documents a growing trend for collaboration, especially among women. She found that only thirteen percent of academic librarians in Illinois had published an article during the period of her study.

Weller, Hurd, and Wiberley studied publication by practicing academic librarians in peer-reviewed library

and information science journals from 1993 to 1997. All issues of 32 journals published in the time period were examined and 1579 peer-reviewed articles with at least one academic librarian as author were found.



This is 43.6% of the total peer-reviewed articles found. A total of 1515 academic librarians had published at least one peer-reviewed article in these 32 journals. Almost 80% had published only one article in the five-year period. Although academic librarians are contributing a substantial proportion in the core list of refereed journals in library and information science, the fact that most librarians published only one article in five years probably indicates academic librarians are doing one shot studies, rather than having a personal research agenda which results in a publication of a series of (presumably) better and better articles on their research topic. However, by virtue of the fact that three of these four articles are directly related to each other and that each of the four articles here reviewed a number of related studies, perhaps there is a thread of research in the area of publication patterns among academic librarians. It would be interesting to see if there are threads of research in the literature produced by health sciences librarians.

HYPOTHESIS. The Newsletter of the Research Section of MLA

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