

# HYPOTHESIS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RESEARCH SECTION OF MLA

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The Newsletter of the Research  
Section of MLA  
VOLUME 16, Number 1  
Spring 2002

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## Librarian Integration into McMaster's 2001 'How to Teach Evidence-Based Clinical Practice' Workshop

— submitted by Ellen Crumley, Liz Bayley, Neera Bhatnagar

**Objective:** This was a pilot project to integrate health sciences librarians into the 2001 How to Teach Evidence-Based Clinical Practice (EBCP) Workshop at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

**Methods:** Thirteen health sciences librarians were recruited by the coordinators based on their having a solid understanding of evidence-based practice, critical appraisal and searching. The librarians were assigned to one of twelve small groups according to their specialty/preference (e.g., internal medicine - 5, pediatrics - 2, nursing - 1, family medicine - 1, emergency medicine - 3); two librarians were assigned to one of the pediatrics groups. Librarians were given access to laptops, CD-ROMs and projectors for six of the twelve small group sessions. Librarians also were required to teach one 2-hour computer lab session to their small groups and work at least one shift during the open computer lab sessions.

**Results:** Overall, the librarians were well-accepted by participants and their skills were heavily utilized in their small groups and the computer lab. Most librarians created their own roles within their groups, but some took longer to define their role than others. Having to carry, set up and use laptops, projectors & CD-ROMs in the small groups was distracting, time-consuming and generally not looked upon favorably by librarians and participants. This is being reconsidered for 2002. Due to renovations, there was only one computer lab with 15 older computers available for participants' use; there will be two computer labs available in 2002. Librarians were evaluated by their small groups and were invited to participate in the 2002 workshop according to the results of this feedback.



**Business Meeting:  
Sunday 7:30 AM**

**Section Paper Session:  
Wednesday 9:00 AM**

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**HYPOTHESIS. The Newsletter of the Research Section of MLA**

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

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Andrea L. Ball, Editor  
University of Wisconsin—Madison  
Middleton Health Sciences Library  
1305 Linden Drive  
Madison, WI 53706-1593  
VOICE: 608-262-4431  
E-MAIL: [alball@facstaff.wisc.edu](mailto:alball@facstaff.wisc.edu)

Gillian Edwards  
Greenwich Healthcare Trust  
Library & Information Services  
Vanbrugh Hall  
London, United Kingdom SE10 9HE  
VOICE: +44-181-312-6220  
E-MAIL: [gillian@britishlibrary.net](mailto:gillian@britishlibrary.net)

**Editorial Board**

Anne Brice  
Assistant Director and Librarian of the  
Institute of Health Sciences  
Health Care Libraries Unit  
University of Oxford/Institute of  
Health Sciences  
Old Road, Headington  
Oxford, England OX3 7LF  
VOICE: IHS (01865) 226688 or  
HCLU (01865) 221952  
E-MAIL: [anne.brice@ihs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:anne.brice@ihs.ox.ac.uk)

Jon Eldredge, PhD, AHIP  
Health Sciences Center Library  
The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, NM 87131-5686  
VOICE: 505-272-0654  
E-MAIL: [jeldredge@salud.unm.edu](mailto:jeldredge@salud.unm.edu)

Ellen Detlefsen, PhD  
University of Pittsburgh  
School of Information Sciences  
651 IS Building  
135 North Bellefield Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260  
VOICE: (412) 624-9444  
E-MAIL: [ellen@mail.sis.pitt.edu](mailto:ellen@mail.sis.pitt.edu)

Ruth E. Fenske, PhD, AHIP  
Grasselli Library  
John Carroll University  
20700 North Park Blvd.  
University Heights, OH 44118  
VOICE: 216-397-4523  
E-MAIL: [rfenske@jcu.edu](mailto:rfenske@jcu.edu)

Elizabeth (Beth) Schneider, AHIP  
Director of Treadwell Library  
Massachusetts General Hospital  
55 Fruit St.  
Boston, MA 02114-2696  
VOICE: 617-724-2791  
E-MAIL: [eschneider1@partners.org](mailto:eschneider1@partners.org)

Alexandra Dimitroff, PhD, AHIP  
University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee  
School of Library & Info. Science  
PO Box 413  
Milwaukee, WI 53201  
VOICE: 414-229-4707  
E-MAIL: [dimitrof@csd.uwm.edu](mailto:dimitrof@csd.uwm.edu)

Ann C. Weller, AHIP  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
Library of the Health Sciences  
1750 West Polk St.  
Chicago, IL 60612  
VOICE: 312-996-8974  
E-MAIL: [acw@uic.edu](mailto:acw@uic.edu)

Martha F. Earl  
Preston Medical Library  
UT Medical Center at Knoxville  
1924 Alcoa Highway  
Knoxville, TN 37920  
VOICE: 423-544-6616  
E-MAIL: [Mearl@mc.utmc.edu](mailto:Mearl@mc.utmc.edu)

**New email address for  
Anne Brice  
[anne.brice@ihs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:anne.brice@ihs.ox.ac.uk)**

**Officers & Executive Committee  
2001—2002**

Chair  
Leslie Behm [behm@pilot.msu.edu](mailto:behm@pilot.msu.edu)

Chair-Elect  
Alexandra Dimitroff  
[dimitrof@csd.uwm.edu](mailto:dimitrof@csd.uwm.edu)

Immediate Past Chair  
Jon Eldredge [jeldredge@salud.unm.edu](mailto:jeldredge@salud.unm.edu)

Section Council Representative  
Dixie Jones [djones@lsuhc.edu](mailto:djones@lsuhc.edu)

Secretary/Treasurer  
Jo Dorsch [Jod@uic.edu](mailto:Jod@uic.edu)

Newsletter Editor  
Andrea Ball [alball@facstaff.wisc.edu](mailto:alball@facstaff.wisc.edu)

Web Site Editor  
Allan R Barclay  
[abarclay@library.wisc.edu](mailto:abarclay@library.wisc.edu)

Awards Committee Chair  
Bob Wood [RWood@lsumc.edu](mailto:RWood@lsumc.edu)

Bylaws Committee Chair  
Andrea Ball [alball@facstaff.wisc.edu](mailto:alball@facstaff.wisc.edu)

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Kristine Alpi  
[kma2002@med.cornell.edu](mailto:kma2002@med.cornell.edu)

Evidence-Based Librarianship (EBL)  
Implementation Committee Chair  
Jon Eldredge [jeldredge@salud.unm.edu](mailto:jeldredge@salud.unm.edu)

Membership Committee Chair  
Sarah Adcock  
[sadcock@rowland.umsmc.edu](mailto:sadcock@rowland.umsmc.edu)

Nominating Committee Chair  
Diane Hummel  
[Diane.Hummel@spectrum-health.org](mailto:Diane.Hummel@spectrum-health.org)

Program Chair  
Alexandra Dimitroff  
[dimitrof@csd.uwm.edu](mailto:dimitrof@csd.uwm.edu)

Research Resources Committee Chair  
Jana Allcock  
[Allcockjanac@exchange.uams.edu](mailto:Allcockjanac@exchange.uams.edu)

Governmental Relations Cmte. Liaison  
Gary Byrd [gdbyrdd@buffalo.edu](mailto:gdbyrdd@buffalo.edu)

Section Nominee to the MLA  
Nominating Committee  
Ann Weller [acw@uic.edu](mailto:acw@uic.edu)

For additional contact information, see  
MLA Directory or Research Section  
Home Page (<http://research.mlanet.org/>)

## International Research Reviews

— submitted by Anne Brice

In this era of complex hybrid library developments, it is more important than ever that library and information professionals develop robust methods for the evaluation of services. In the United Kingdom, significant investment has been made both within the Higher Education and National Health Service sectors in electronic library developments, and there is a clear need to demonstrate the impact of services on the core business of the relevant organisations, be that in educational provision or health service delivery. The following abstract details a project funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), which will hopefully contribute to our understanding and application of evaluation tools, and support the development of evidence-based librarianship.

### eVALUED – An evaluation model for e-library developments

#### Contributed by:

Becky Hartland-Fox, Research Assistant  
Pete Dalton, CIRT Research Development Manager  
Centre for Information Research (CIRT),  
University of Central England  
Perry Barr, Birmingham, B42 2SU, UK  
**Contact:** Rebecca.Hartland-Fox@uce.ac.uk

#### Project background

eVALUED is a HEFCE funded project, based at the University of Central England. It has been set up to develop a transferable model for e-library evaluation in Higher Education, and to provide dissemination and training in e-library evaluation. The project commenced in September 2001 and will complete in February 2004.

#### Digital Library questionnaire for HEIs

The project will examine good practice in electronic library evaluation. At this stage, we are conducting a questionnaire. This will be sent to all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to find out what Digital Library developments are being made. We are particularly concerned with the issue of evaluation, e.g.:

- what techniques are being employed
- who uses the data collected
- how evaluation can inform decisions
- what evaluation could be conducted given more time, resources, staffing etc.

This data will enable us to gain an accurate picture of digital library evaluation and to inform our subsequent recommendations as to how evaluation can be effectively organised and implemented. We are also hoping that institutions will be prepared to be involved in a follow-up study which will allow us to focus on examples of good practice in more depth.

The printed version of the questionnaire will be available from the end of March and will also be available from

this date to fill out online. The URL will be <http://www.cie.uce.ac.uk/evalued/questionnaire.htm>. It will be sent to HE Library /Learning Resource Centre Managers in printed form.

#### Project outcomes

We intend to provide resources to support library managers and other senior strategic managers in the higher education sector with evaluation and planning of electronic library initiatives and to provide training and awareness in evaluation of electronic library developments.

The project is expected to produce practical initiatives such as:

- a transferable model for evaluation of digital library initiatives
- training workshops in aspects of evaluation (aimed at library managers in the higher education sector)
- a website for project dissemination and resource publication
- a final project report outlining the model of evaluation and other aspects of good practice in digital library evaluation

Further information about eVALUED can be found on the project website and a public mailing list has been set-up.

eVALUED website -  
<http://www.cie.uce.ac.uk/evalued>

Public Mailing List -  
<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/digi-eval.html>

## Research Resources Committee

—submitted by Jana Allcock

Members of the Research Resources Committee are busy at work updating the research bibliography and Resources for Researchers pages found from the web page at <http://research.mlanet.org/>. This annual process ensures that new references are added and others are removed.

This year, the committee is also planning to create a document of suggestions concerning updating the bibliography that can be used in subsequent years as a guide. If you are interested in being on the Research Resources Committee, contact the Committee chair, Jana Allcock ([jallcock@hshsl.umaryland.edu](mailto:jallcock@hshsl.umaryland.edu)).

(Library Integration — Continued from page 1)

**Conclusions:** Based upon feedback from several sources, the 2001 integration of librarians into the EBCP workshop was well-received and viewed as an important perk for participants. Not only did participants learn from the librarians, but the librarians had a valuable opportunity to hone their skills and to learn about how clinicians need, perceive and find information. The librarians' role needs to be more defined.

**Epilogue:** Since the pilot project, the three Librarian Coordinators have been asked to organize this initiative for 2002 as an integral part of the EBCP workshop. A manual for librarians is currently being developed. In order to ensure more equitable access and create a pool of available librarians, librarians were invited to submit applications for the 2002 workshop.

*This abstract is based upon: Ellen Crumley, Liz Bayley, Neera Bhatnagar. Librarian Integration into McMaster's 2001 Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Workshop. BMC 2002, 23(3), 87-89.*

**Acknowledgements:** Thank you to Dr. Gordon Guyatt for encouraging and fostering this project. Many thanks to the thirteen librarians who participated in the project and helped us work on solutions to make the 2002 workshop even better.

**Authors**

Ellen Crumley is the Child Health Research Librarian at the University of Alberta. She is the editor of *Biblioteca Medica Canadiana*, the journal of the Canadian Health Libraries Association (CHLA).

Liz Bayley works at McMaster University, both in the Health Sciences Library and as an Assistant Clinical Professor with the School of Nursing. She was in New Mexico on research leave during the 2001 workshop, so participated virtually.

Neera Bhatnagar also works in the Health Sciences Library at McMaster. She is co-chair of the CHLA/ABSC 2002 conference to be held in Waterloo, Ontario.

All three authors will be co-coordinating the librarian intervention in the "How to Teach Evidence-Based Clinical Practice" in 2002.



## **“Reflective Practice: Qualitative Research Tales from Recovering Positivists”**

**Wednesday 9:00 AM—10:30 AM**

**Sponsored by the Research Section**

These invited speakers will share their expertise using qualitative research methods. These techniques can help you become a reflective practitioner in any health sciences environment.

***Qualitative methods and evaluation***

**Keith W. Cogdill**, PhD, Outreach Librarian, National Network Office, National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, MD

***Research in the round: observations in context***

**Michelynn McKnight**, MM, MS/LIS, AHIP, Head Librarian, Health Sciences Library, Norman Regional Hospital, Norman, OK

***Tales of recovering positivists***

**P. Zoe Stavri**, PhD, MLS, Assistant Professor, Division of Medical Informatics and Outcomes Research, Oregon Health Sciences University, Portland, OR

**Program Chair 2002: Alex Dimitroff**

## Chapter Research Committees Report

— submitted by Martha Earl

When chapter members want to do research and need advice, they can contact the web site of their chapter and their research committee, if the chapter has one. The names and resources available to each chapter with a committee are disclosed as they appeared on the web sites:

### Medical Library Group of Southern California and Arizona

The Research Committee, <http://www.mlgsc.mlanet.org/>, is charged with administering the annual Research Awards Program. The Committee issues calls for research proposals, reviews proposals that are submitted for consideration, and recommends winning proposals. The Committee encourages members to engage in research activities and alerts members to continuing education opportunities that will help to develop research skills. The Committee also works to strengthen ties with the MLA Research Section and other related groups. Chair: Mary Aldous, (619) 553-8425, [aldous@nhrc.navy.mil](mailto:aldous@nhrc.navy.mil)

### Midcontinental Chapter

From the chapter web site, <http://www.kumc.edu/mcmla/MCMLARes.html>, the Research Committee posts committee members' names, chapter research projects, notable quotes (definitely worth perusing), and links to MLA Research Policy and the MLA Research Section web site. Chair, James M. Nyce (2001). Other members include Roxanne Cox Byrd, Deborah Hile, Ann Marie Corry, and Marla Graber.

### Northern California and Nevada Medical Library Group

The Research Task Force will explore a research agenda for NCNMLG, <http://ncnmlg.stanford.edu/>, including possible opportunities for collaboration on research projects by members. Chair: Terry Henner, (702) 784-4889, [thenner@admin.unr.edu](mailto:thenner@admin.unr.edu)

### Philadelphia Regional Chapter

The Philadelphia Regional Chapter/MLA, <http://www.mlaphil.org/>, recognizes in their current strategic plan the practice of research as essential for assuring the critical role of health sciences library and information professionals by carrying out the following: focusing on evidence-based health care; providing opportunities for learning through courses and programs on research and publication skills; providing opportunities for highlighting methods and skills in forums such as Research Days through which members would share ideas and disseminate key research-based information about library/

information science practices, particularly as they relate to outcomes; and considering a Chapter Research Project. Chair Elect (Program Committee Chair), 2001-2002: Eric P. Delozier, Electronic Services Librarian, Library, Penn State Harrisburg, 351 Olmsted Drive, Middletown, PA 17057, (717) 948-6373, [epd103@psu.edu](mailto:epd103@psu.edu)

### South Central Chapter

The Research Committee promotes research by SCC members, publicizes information about research activities and opportunities, and fosters the development of research-related skills. For more information, follow the links on this page, <http://www.sccmla.org/research.html>, or contact Molly Harris, Research Committee Chair. Other members of the Research Committee include Ana Cleveland, Jon Eldredge, Danny Jones, Felicia Little, Shelly McKibbin, and Miriam Muallem.

This chapter provides a variety of services. The South Central Chapter lists annual conference research award winners, 1997-2001, with links to the abstracts. A research mentoring service is available with contacts on the web site. The South Central Chapter has the support and cooperation of South Central Academic Medical Libraries (SCAMeL), a consortium whose geographical area is the same as the one for SCC. Chapter members are encouraged to apply for SCAMeL Research Grants. The application form can be downloaded or printed. Across the five states of the South Central Chapter, librarians are pursuing research, some of it relating specifically to medical libraries. Two of their graduate schools of library science currently publicize their research projects on the web. To reach this information for Louisiana State University, go to [http://adam.slis.lsu.edu/alumni\\_1.htm](http://adam.slis.lsu.edu/alumni_1.htm) and click on the most recent issue of the LSU SLIS ALUMNI Newsletter. Research news is mostly to be found in the section "Faculty and Staff News." For research at the University of North Texas, go to <http://www.unt.edu/slris/research.htm>. There you can select either "Special Projects" or "Faculty Research".

### Southern Chapter

This chapter also provides a wide variety of research support. To heighten awareness of ongoing interests, the Committee Chair writes the Research Spotlight column for Southern Expressions, featuring in 2001 the research interests of Stephen MacCall, Lynn Fortney, and Keith Cogdill. The Committee revised information on the web page, <http://www.uab.edu/lister/scmla/>, including a list of research mentors and NLM funded projects within the region. In addition, the Research Committee awards an annual Research Grant of \$1000. The Committee is

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## Evidence Based Librarianship Implementation Committee Research Results Dissemination Task Force Recommendations

—submitted by Liz Bayley, Addajane Wallace and Anne Brice

The mandate of the Task Force was to:

- recommend methods for improving the timely dissemination of research results to MLA members
- examine the issue of requiring structured abstracts for all contributed papers and poster sessions at MLA and MLA chapter annual meetings
- examine the feasibility of posting, in easily searchable form, such abstracts on MLA and MLA chapter web-sites for at least five years
- recommend incentives to encourage librarians to conduct and report the findings of their research.

Structured abstracts present research in a format that allows the reader to readily determine the objectives, methodology, and results of the research project. An earlier article in *Hypothesis* (Summer 2001) outlined further reasons why structured abstracts are desirable.

Therefore, we recommend that:

- a structured abstract be required for all articles submitted to health library journals, including *Journal of the Medical Library Association* (JMLA), *Bibliotheca Medica Canadiana* (BMC) and *Health Information & Libraries Journal* (HILJ), and for all contributed papers and poster sessions at health library conferences, including MLA and MLA chapter annual meetings, that report research activities;
- the structured abstract include as a minimum: Objective, Methods, Results and Discussion;
- a more detailed structured abstract be recommended for specific research designs.

Similarities between health library research and nursing research lead the authors to recommend that the categories used in Evidence-Based Nursing be used as a basis for detailed structured abstracts. (See examples in Appendix A).

- structured abstracts also be recommended for non-research articles (see examples in Appendix A);
- the required and recommended formats and examples be developed and maintained on the MLA Research Section Web pages.

Studies have shown that many research reports presented at meetings are never published. Posting structured abstracts of meeting presentations would make the research findings available to a wider audience. We therefore recommend that:

- MLA and MLA Chapters post structured abstracts of papers and posters from annual meetings on their Web sites. [For an example, see: <http://www.scmla.org/research.html>]

Many associations publish the abstracts of their meetings in their journal, either incorporated into an issue or as a special issue or supplement. We therefore recommend that:

- JMLA, BMC and HILJ consider publishing the abstracts of papers presented at the annual meetings of their respective associations.

Since both JMLA and HILJ are indexed in MEDLINE and BMC is indexed in CINAHL, it is possible that if abstracts are published in these journals, they may be picked up by the indexing services. However, indexing of this material is uneven and inconsistent from year-to-year<sup>1</sup>, and the papers and posters presented at chapter meetings plus other research would not be included. To make valuable health library research available as widely as possible, we recommend that:

- the Research Section investigate the possibility of setting up a database of health library research structured abstracts, which would be Web accessible and searchable. The database would be built from the structured abstracts of papers and posters presented at association and chapter meetings, but would also have an input form for submission of structured abstracts for research projects which were completed, planned or underway.

The Task Force members had a lively discussion of incentives for encouraging our members to participate in the research process. There are several stages of research where incentives could be suggested, including: increasing the profile and understanding of research; building research skills; identifying areas where research is needed, i.e. making the research more relevant to practice; identifying areas where research has already been done, i.e. carrying out systematic reviews; putting together proposals for research projects, either self-

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(Task Force Recommendations — Continued from page 6)

identified or those identified by members'; carrying out research projects; and publishing the results of research projects. Mentoring, role modeling, leadership, grants, collaboration, institutional support, and awards were all suggested as enabling factors. An examination of the literature on the barriers and opportunities for primary care research shows many similarities to the situation with health library research, in particular the need to take research out of the academic setting and into the practice setting where its findings will be applied<sup>2</sup>. Nature versus nurture was another factor considered by the Task Force members: are researchers born or can they be developed? Many ideas were discussed, but no conclusions were reached. Therefore, before incentives are examined in detail, we recommend that:

- a survey of members be carried out to determine their involvement in research, their interest in participation and their ideas for the encouragement of research activities and the use of research in their settings.

In summary, we recommend that:

1. a structured abstract be required for all articles submitted to health library journals (JMLA, BMC and HILJ) and for all contributed papers and poster sessions at health library conferences (including MLA and MLA chapter annual meetings) that report research activities;
2. the structured abstract include as a minimum: Objective, Methods, Results and Discussion;
3. a more detailed structured abstract be recommended for specific research designs;
4. structured abstracts also be recommended for non-research articles;
5. the required and recommended formats and examples be developed and maintained on the MLA Research Section Web pages;
6. MLA and MLA Chapters post structured abstracts of their meeting papers and posters on their Web sites;
7. JMLA, HILJ and BMC consider publishing the abstracts of papers presented at the annual meetings of their respective associations;
8. the Research Section investigate the possibility of setting up a database of health library research structured abstracts, which would be Web accessible and searchable. The database would be built from the structured abstracts of papers and posters presented at association and chapter meetings, but would also have an input form for submission of structured abstracts for research projects which were completed, planned or underway;

9. a survey of members be carried out to determine their involvement in research, their interest in participation and their ideas for the encouragement of research activities and the use of research in their settings.

References:

1. Eldredge JD. Evidence-Based Librarianship: searching for the needed EBL evidence. Medical Reference Services Quarterly. 19(3):1-18, 2000 Fall.
2. Stange KC. Primary care research: barriers and opportunities. Journal of Family Practice. 42(2):192-8, 1996 Feb.

### Appendix A: Suggested Formats for Structured Abstracts

#### Effectiveness Study:

Question: One sentence clearly stating the precise objective(s) or question(s) addressed in the study.

Design: Short description of the design used for the study.

Setting: Include information on where the study took place, such as the type of institution, e.g. hospital, academic library, and its geographical setting.

Participants: Describe characteristics of the participants such as medical students, nurses, members of the Medical Library Association, including ethnic or other social characteristics when appropriate. Include number of participants and how they were selected.

Intervention(s): Describe the process or intervention used to effect change.

Main Outcome Measure(s): Describe the indicators in terms of characteristics or changes chosen to measure outcomes.

Main Results: Give a precise statement of the major findings of the study; outcomes of the study should be provided and quantified.

Conclusion: All major conclusions supported by data should be given. Note if additional research is recommended.

#### Review:

Question: as above

Data Sources: Source of data/studies, including years.

Study Selection: Inclusion or exclusion criteria used to select the data sources.

Data Extraction: Method used to extract data from the sources selected.

Main Results: as above

Conclusion: as above

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(Task Force Recommendations — Continued from page 7)

**Qualitative Study:**

Question: as above

Setting: as above

Participants: as above

Methods: Describe the data collection methods.

Main findings: Describe the themes/patterns found in the analysis of the data.

Conclusions: as above

**Other types of articles (not research-based):**

These are adapted from the Bibliotheca Medica Canadica (BMC) (<http://www.med.mun.ca/chla/english/help.html>) and Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ) (program descriptions: <http://www.cma.ca/cmaj/vol%2D155/issue%2D8/1069.htm>); case reports: <http://www.cma.ca/cmaj/vol-154/0043e.htm>) to cover articles which are not research-based but are still valuable for our members.

**Program Description:**

Program Objective: State the objective of the program in a single sentence. Include the rationale for the program and its main components.

Setting: as above

Participants: as above

Program: Specify what was offered and how.

Main Results: Preliminary evaluation of the program.

Conclusion: Implication of the program for others.

**Case Report:**

The goal of a case report is to provide a message, raise awareness, show how one strategy was more effective or suitable than another, help the reader recognize and deal with a similar problem, and most of all, should be of interest to the health library audience. A case report of between 250 to 500 words in length should take the form of a structured abstract, using the headings provided below.

Question: In one sentence, describe the question, problem, dilemma, situation, event, objective, or challenge being described by the case report.

Setting: as above

Method: Provide an outline of your strategy and why these tactics were chosen. Include any sources of data.

Main results: Discuss the outcome or result. Provide examples of your findings.

Conclusion: Conclude with a summary of your accomplishment, what lesson can be learned from this case, how you would tackle a similar problem again, potential applications, and recommendations for continuing or future work.

(Chapter Research Committees Report — Continued from page 5)

studying the feasibility of a research project in 2002 in collaboration with Keith Cogdill, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Maryland, College of Information Studies. Keith is completing an MLA sponsored project entitled "Measuring and Communicating the Value of Library and Information Services". The Research Committee project will measure and characterize a sample of health science libraries within the Southern Chapter region utilizing the taxonomy of clinical services developed by Cogdill and his collaborators.

From the web site, members may also access formats for structured abstracts, Research Grant Award application, Research Grant funded project 1999, SC/MLA research activities, committee members, research resources, and links for researchers. Chair: Helvi McCall, Rowland Medical Library, University of Mississippi Medical Center, Jackson, MS, [hmccall@rowland.umsmed.edu](mailto:hmccall@rowland.umsmed.edu).

**UK Research in the Workplace Award**

The 2001 Research in the Workplace Award has been won by **Annette Thain**, Cancer Information Librarian at the North Glasgow University Hospitals NHS Trust, for her work on "**Information needs of managed clinical networks for cancer**".

The Research in the Workplace Award (RIWA) aims to encourage and facilitate research activity in the library and information world by funding small work-based research projects.

The RIWA is a £2,000 award for work-based research and is open to those working in health libraries or information services.

Sponsored by:

Health Libraries Group

IFM Healthcare

Libraries for Nursing

University Health Sciences Libraries Group

University Medical School Librarians Group

See the following site for Annette's slides and for further information regarding the RIWA:

<http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/crd/ifmh/riwa.html>

**Check your URL!**

Several of you have had trouble accessing *Hypothesis* online.

Be sure you are using the correct URL:

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



## L/ISTEN UP: Research News from the Groves of Academe

— submitted by Ellen Detlefsen, DLS

Two colleagues have suggested resources that can help with the sometimes daunting problem of mining the vastness of Dissertation Abstracts:

Kris Alpi (Weill Cornell Medical Library) suggests a "free resource that might be useful to those seeking LIS dissertations: Digital Dissertations (<http://www.lib.umi.com/dissertations/>) - free access to citations and abstracts from the last two years with some free 24-page previews. A simple search on 'library and (health or medical)' brought up several relevant dissertations, including some from nursing schools on patient information libraries."

Jon Erlen at the University of Pittsburgh's Health Sciences Library System (History of Medicine collection) has created a website for his "monthly current awareness service [listing] selected, recent dissertations and theses in the history of medicine and health care according to topic and the month of their discovery in "Dissertation Abstracts." Users may follow publication number links from citations to corresponding records in the "Digital Dissertations" database, where complete citations and abstracts may be viewed, and when available, the entire item may be downloaded for free."

Erlen's topics include

- AIDS (Social and Historical Contexts)
- Alternative Medicine (Social and Historical Contexts)
- Art and Medicine
- Biomedical Ethics
- History of Medicine - prior to 1800
- History of Medicine and Health Care
- Literature/Theater and Medicine
- Nursing History
- Pharmacy/Pharmacology and History
- Philosophy and Medicine
- Psychiatry/Psychology and History
- Public Health/International Health
- Religion and Medicine
- Women's Health and History

To access these topical lists of recent dissertations, go to <http://www.hsls.pitt.edu/services/histmed/dissertations.html>

And, don't forget to "register" your (or your students') current dissertation and thesis projects; the L/ISTEN UP column wants to list these research topics on a regular basis, so that we won't reinvent too many wheels....send a note about the dissertation and/or the thesis project to Ellen Detlefsen at [<ellen@mail.sis.pitt.edu>](mailto:ellen@mail.sis.pitt.edu)

### Debuting Fresh Perspectives

MLA Annual Conference

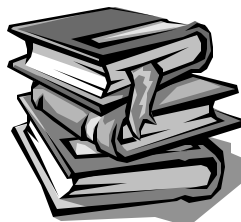
Tuesday, May 21

3:00 PM — 4:30 PM

The Medical Library Education Section is sponsoring a contributed papers session at MLA '02 entitled "Debuting Fresh Perspectives."

Presenters: Masters-level and doctoral-level students and recent graduates who have not presented papers at previous MLA annual meetings.





## Literature Review

—submitted by Ruth Fenske, Ph.D.

**Hernon, Peter and Candy Schwartz. Editorial: The Desire Is Present, but Is the Expertise? Library & Information Science Research. 23(3):209-210, 2001.**

**Riggs, Donald E. Editorial: Getting Research Published. College & Research Libraries. 62(5):392-393, September, 2001.**

Three editors reflect that, although two "how to do research and get published" sessions at the ALA annual meeting were well attended, many attendees knew little about the research process. Hernon and Schwartz recommend taking continuing education courses at library schools. Library associations could do research workshops and offer online tutorials. Working with senior LIS faculty is good, if possible. They did not like the idea of journal editors assigning mentors to aspiring authors, because peer reviewers might not agree with the mentor. Riggs suggests reading Powell's book, joining a mentoring program, and consulting with colleagues. He also offers his own personal assistance.

**Whitmire, Ethelene. A Longitudinal Study of Undergraduates' Academic Library Experiences. Journal of Academic Librarianship 27(5):379-385, September, 2001.**

**Whitmire, Ethelene. The Relationship between Undergraduates' Background Characteristics and College Experiences and Their Academic Library Use. College & Research Libraries. 62(6):528-540, November, 2001.**

Ethelene Whitmire has published two articles on undergraduates' use of the academic library. In the first, she looks at how usage changes during college; in the second, she focuses on factors which influence library use during the college years. The data for both studies were gathered from the National Study of Student Learning; the College Student Experiences Questionnaire; the National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment; and the College Assessment of Academic Proficiency. Subjects were 1046 students attending eighteen colleges in 1992 through 1995, selected from an original random sample of 3840 randomly selected from all freshmen in the eighteen institutions.

In the first study, students were asked in their freshmen, sophomore, and junior years how often they did each of eleven library activities during the current school year. Means and standard deviations for each activity and correlations were done to determine relationships among

library use in the three years. Library use proved to be consistent over the three years. Seven of eleven activities increased during each successive year; interestingly, asking a librarian for help is the only activity that declined and never increased over the three years. Students did show an increase in reading material cited in sources they were using. With the increase in Internet use by students since these data were gathered, one can see that a longitudinal study of students' use of all sources of information would be useful.

In the second study, Whitmire created constructs to represent background characteristics (5 variables), and college experiences (17 variables). Again, descriptive statistics and correlations were calculated and multiple regression was used to determine which background characteristics and college experiences influence library use.

One of the findings was that high school library use was correlated with academic library use, even after three years of college. Juniors who had worked with faculty on a research project used the library more. Science students did not use the library as much as students in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Self-reported critical thinking ability correlated positively with library use. Factors considered in the study explained only one-third of library use among college students.

It would be interesting to do a longitudinal study of undergraduate nursing and allied health students. It would also be interesting to develop a natural history of medical students' use of information and the factors that influence the use. I would suspect that students studying the basic medical sciences would use information in a very different way than those in the clinical years.

**Hood, William W. and Concepción S. Wilson. The Scatter of Documents Over Databases in Different Subject Domains: How Many Databases Are Needed? Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology. 52(14):1242-1252, December, 2001.**

Since many small health sciences libraries have access only to MEDLINE and perhaps, CINAHL, this article should be of interest to us.

Earlier studies of the distribution of bibliographic records on a topic across databases covered only one topic and often did not take duplicates into consideration. Fourteen topics in humanities, social science, and science were searched across 374 non-newspaper databases in *DIALOG*. Searches were limited to the title and abstract field for 1994 through 1998. No subjective assessment of relevance was done. Duplicates were eliminated.

The general result was that to achieve 80% coverage, five to ten databases needed to be searched. Searching only one database often yielded only a small percentage of the relevant citations. For a medical search similar to the

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(Literature Review — Continued from page 10)

type we might do, searching only the most productive database yielded only 20 to 30% of the relevant cites. Another very general medical search yielded 40 to 50% coverage with just one database. For a search on family violence, only 10 to 20% of all relevant cites were retrieved from the most relevant database. Ostensibly those of us using only MEDLINE should be concerned. However, more detailed examinations of the results might show that the most scientifically or clinically useful articles are concentrated in MEDLINE. On the other hand, family violence is highly interdisciplinary and good material is probably well spread out among databases.

This is an interesting study. Since only title and abstract were searched, the possible power of MeSH was not factored into this design.

**Fallis, Don and Martin Frické Indicators of Accuracy of Consumer Health Information on the Internet. Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association. 9(1):73-79, January/February, 2002.**

**Wikgren, Marianne. Health Discussions on the Internet: A Study of Knowledge Communication through Citations. Library & Information Science Research. 23(4):305-317, 2001.**

These articles take two very different approaches to studying consumers' use of health information on the Internet. Fallis and Frické seek to identify indicators of accuracy on sites presenting information on a topic on which there is consensus among experts (treating fever in children). Wikgren looks at references to Web and non-Web sources on the sites (she calls them "citation patterns") on a controversial topic (use of dietary chromium supplementation in diabetes self-management).

Fallis and Frické identified one hundred Web pages on treating fever in children and compared their content with recommended, authoritative sources on treating fever in children. Sites were characterized as more accurate or less accurate, based on theoretic work on the verisimilitude of a piece of information. They then determined whether each site had each of eleven indicators of quality of health information on the Internet, proposed in published guidelines. Eleven 2 X 2 contingency tables were drawn up plotting accurate/inaccurate against presence or absence of the indicator. Chi square was then used to see if there were significant differences between accurate and inaccurate sites. Likelihood ratios were also calculated. Indicators correlated with accuracy were displaying the HONcode logo, having an organization domain, and displaying a copyright. Authority and currency were not correlated with accuracy at all. The authors are careful to point out that just because a site does not have these three indicators does not necessarily mean it is not accurate. In this case, the information has remained stable for a number of years and currency may not be as important as it would be in a rapidly changing area. The authors suggest

further research looking at a wider range of topics, to be sure these results are not unique to the chosen topic.

Wikgren couches her work in the ideas of citation analysis and concludes that citation patterns here do not match traditional models of the dissemination of scientific knowledge to the public. The Internet provides both an interpersonal channel and a mass communication channel to health information. Forty-three sites were located and classified into seven types: official and education information, health clinics or netclinics, commercial sites, health news, professional journals, discussion groups, and private home pages. Two hundred twenty citations, quotes and other references to another source or authority were recorded and analyzed. Official and education sites tended to ignore the issue. Discussion groups had a high rate of citation. However, the majority of the citations were to MEDLINE abstracts, usually without mention of the source journal or author affiliation and without reference to the wisdom of looking at the whole article. Most citations were made to support that participant's line of argument. Commercial companies selling dietary chromium on the Web presented medical research findings in more detail. However, discussion group participants tend to reject all information coming from commercial sources.

She says that in the past, medical information has traditionally gone from scientific texts and databases, to educational and news sources, to interpersonal discussions. In this case, the middle step was skipped. Consumers were going directly to the same sources as medical researchers and health professionals. My thought is that this pattern could be indicative of controversial areas but probably is not indicative of better-established areas of medicine. In better-established areas, more patient education material produced by health care providers and disease related organizations would be available and more news stories would be written.

## Section Election Results

### CONGRATULATIONS!!

**Chair-Elect**  
(2 Year term)  
**Alice Hadley**

**Section Council Representative**  
(3 year term)  
**Jill Crawley-Low**

**Bylaws Amendments**  
Approved

**Research Section Annual Business Meeting**  
MLA 2002—Dallas  
Sunday, May 19  
7:30 AM—9:00 AM  
*Check your conference schedule for location.*



Andrea L. Ball, MLS, Editor  
Middleton Health Sciences Library  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
1305 Linden Drive  
Madison, WI 53706 – 1593