



# Bringing the Library to the Clinician

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## New Library Service for Clinicians

In October 2005, the Zalk Veterinary Medical Library at the University of Missouri-Columbia introduced a clinical librarian service for faculty, interns, and residents of the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH). The clinical librarian performs literature searches and participates in selected rounds and journal clubs. Being a visible presence at the VMTH pushes the boundaries of traditional library services, in effect adding an information specialist to the clinical team.

## Goals of the Clinical Librarian Service

- ❖ Save clinicians' time
- ❖ Teach clinicians effective search strategies
- ❖ Introduce clinicians to new information resources
- ❖ Learn about clinicians' information needs
- ❖ Increase awareness of evidence-based veterinary medicine

## Services Provided

- ❖ Research on questions arising from rounds
- ❖ Training on PubMed, CAB, EndNote
- ❖ Individual consultations on literature searches
- ❖ Background literature searches for publication preparation
- ❖ Updates on information resources



Consulting with a client.

## Questions Asked

From October 2005 – September 2006, the clinical librarian responded to 145 information requests from 32 individuals.

Types of questions include:

- ❖ Access questions: Does the library have...?
- ❖ Evidence for treatments: What are the latest studies on...?
- ❖ Support of possible research: Has anyone published on...?

## Informal Feedback

**"You saved me hours!"** –Small Animal Resident

"This is great! ...[I]t could have been months (or years) before I got around to investigating this important clinical item." –Small Animal Faculty

"This is a good example of why we need you guys—the professionals—helping us with this. The search process is clearly quite complex." –Equine Faculty



**PubMed:** Over 16 million citations to the biomedical literature. Clinicians and researchers can save searches and receive updates via the MyNCBI feature.

**CAB Abstracts:** International coverage of the veterinary literature. Because several important clinical titles are not indexed in PubMed, clinicians also need to know how to efficiently search CAB.



**EndNote:** Bibliographic manager that allows clinicians and researchers to organize references and easily create bibliographies.

## Evaluating the Service

In April and May, 2006, two outside researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with nine members of the VMTH.

Comments indicated that the service has been well received and that the clinical librarian has helped clinicians:

- ❖ Improve searching skills
- ❖ Refine searches thus making them more precise
- ❖ Retrieve articles **more efficiently**
- ❖ Access references **more quickly**
- ❖ Find good references for both clinical and research questions
- ❖ Find more primary research

Suggestions for improvement and additional services included:

Instructional session with residents and graduate students at the beginning of the year on database searching techniques and appropriate databases to introduce new clinicians to the librarian.

An awareness service about "hot topics" such as Avian flu or herbal medicine so that clinicians would have medical articles about topics of interest to the public.

## Conclusions

In its first year, the clinical librarian service has served to create positive partnerships between the VMTH and the Library.

Librarians can play a critical role in educating clinicians on ways to harness the power of information.

Most importantly, by getting out of the library and into the clinics, librarians can learn a tremendous amount about how clinicians use and manage information and can customize services accordingly.

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VMTH: Clydesdale Hall