

Views of the Library: A Regional Study in Selected Missouri and Colorado Libraries



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GOAL: To determine the use of health sciences library (HSL) information and services among clinicians and other health care professionals in four hospitals serving medium (<300,000) and large (>300,000) communities in Colorado and Missouri.

METHODS: Surveys were available between 15 April 2009 and 23 February 2010 depending on the hospital; they contained five "core" questions about library resources and services. Data were analyzed using model-based methods and 95% confidence intervals (CI's) to elucidate differences among answers and respondent groups. Bars having non-overlapping CI's indicate differences. Surveys were intended to elicit perceptions, and made no attempt to link results to outcomes.

RESULTS: 328 subjects were sampled over four hospitals and six respondent categories, including:

- 203 physicians
- 11 residents
- 11 physician assistants
- 12 nurse practitioners
- 60 RNLPNs
- 31 "other" (non-clinical) participants

•Throughout the survey, more physicians and residents than RNLPNs checked answers related to patient care (Figs. 1-6);

•For most respondent groups, "patient care" was the most frequent use of the HSL (Fig. 1);

•For the question "Has information from the health sciences library, its website, or any of its resources ever influenced your management of a patient in any of these ways," "changed how I managed a particular patient" and "confirmed a patient management decision" had the highest responses (Figs. 2, 3);

•For the question "if you have handled patient care differently because of information from the health sciences library, its website, or any of its resources, please specify in which of the following ways," "choice of therapy" and "choice of tests" had the highest responses (Figs. 4, 5);

•Over 20% of combined respondents answered that information from the health sciences library resulted in reduced patient length of stay (Fig. 6).

DISCUSSION: When compared to similar studies such as the Rochester study (Marshall 1992), our results showed comparable or greater influence of libraries on patient care. In the Rochester study, 50.5% of all physicians surveyed reported change in patient care via choice of tests compared to 78.3% in our survey. In the Rochester study, 19.2% of all physicians indicated a reduced length of stay compared to 27.1% in our survey.

CONCLUSIONS: Our study supports and extends previous findings about the value and relevance of health sciences library resources and services to clinical health providers. We found that health care providers at the surveyed hospitals made extensive use of health sciences library resources and that library resources influenced everything from support for presentations to choice of therapy, tests, advice, and clinical diagnosis.

Literature cited: Marshall JG. The impact of the hospital library on clinical decision making: the Rochester study. Bull. Med. Libr. Assoc. 1992; 80(2):169-178.

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