Addressing the MLA Research Agenda Questions: Where Are We Now?

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Addressing the MLA Research Agenda Questions: Where Are We Now?

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MLA Research Section, Research Agenda Committee

December 2012
Recruiting for a Systematic Review Project
An announcement by the Committee that appears in the December 23 (2) 2012 issue of the MLA Focus electronic newsletter solicits volunteers to join one of 15 teams conducting systematic reviews on each of the top-ranked research questions.

204 volunteers
• 66% US,
• 18% Canada,
• 13% Europe.

January 2013
Spring 2013
Teams Formed
Leads selected and teams formed based on experience and willingness.

Thank you to the systematic review project’s Team Leaders!
1. Laure Perrier
2. Priscilla Stephenson
3. Margaret Foster
4. Mary Lou Klem
5. Alleen McCrillis
6. PF Anderson
7. Lindsay Alock Glynn
8. Brenda Linares
9. Margaret Henderson
10. Anne Maddox
11. Myrian Grondin
12. Kaitryn Campbell
13. Assako N. Holyoke
14. Linda Slater
15. Catherine Boden

2008
First Delphi Study
During 2008 the Committee conducts its first Delphi study to identify and rank the top research questions. The Committee polled both MLA leaders and members of the Research Section and identified 62 research questions that are distill down to 12 top-ranked questions. The Delphi study results appear in the July 2009 issue of the Journal of the Medical Library Association.

2011
Second Delphi Study
The Committee conducts a second Delphi study to identify and rank research questions during 2011. The Committee asks 581 MLA leaders about their most important research question. The subsequent 140 research questions are then sent to 298 authors of published research articles in the top health sciences library journals. The 108 researchers participating in the Delphi method select their top 35 research questions. The same MLA leaders who generated questions in the first round then winnow those 35 questions down to 15 top-ranked research questions. This second Delphi study appears in the July 2012 issue of the Journal of the Medical Library Association.

The MLA Research Agenda

1. There are still a number of relevant questions from the 2008 research agenda, but to the team this is most critical: “What is the quantifiable evidence that the presence of a librarian, not just information resources, improves patient outcomes, increases research dollars, improves student outcomes (e.g., better board scores), or improves hospital intelligence (e.g., if the top hospitals have access to hospital librarians/libraries)?”
2. Is there a significant difference in patient outcomes (or research output or educational outcomes) between institutions with and without libraries?
3. What is the added value libraries bring to education, research, and patient care in the health sciences and healthcare fields? Even if it is not possible to quantify benefits, documenting qualitative research results vigorously enough to store the system’s assessors and researchers would be of great value.
4. Few health literacy can result in medication errors, noncompliance of treatment regimens, poor health outcomes, and even death. What is the role of the medical librarian with health care providers, community organizations, local public libraries and members of the public to improve health literacy among entire communities?
5. What are the information needs of practicing physicians and other health care workers? The 1985 article is still heavily cited but was published way back in 1985. The information environment has changed dramatically. We need to update that study in line of new educational strategies, resources, technology and social networks.
6. The explosion of information, expanding of technology (especially mobile technology), and complexity of healthcare environment present medical librarians and medical librarians opportunities and challenges. Do we take up the opportunities and challenges, what kind of staff sets or information structure do medical librarians on medical libraries are required to have in order to be able to continue effectiveness to the changing environment?
7. Does what we do matter? Longer form: Do the resources we provide increase research dollars, improve student outcomes (e.g., better board scores), or improves hospital intelligence (e.g., if the top hospitals have access to hospital librarians/libraries)?
8. How do we provide information support in a clinical world that functions based on electronic medical records systems and other similar informatics platforms and tools. What is the library’s role, if any, in providing preclinical education with respect to informatics applications like electronic medical records systems?
9. On health sciences libraries and libraries have any measurable (statistically significant) positive impacts on consumer health, the outcomes of medical care, the productivity of biomedical researchers and the knowledge obtained by graduates of biomedical and health sciences training programs, and at what total costs? 10. How best to objectively document library/librarian impact on the ‘bottom line’ (time, money saved, shorter length of stay, ROI for expensive electronic resources, support training programs/Magnet status, funded research support, etc.)
11. As a profession, how do we measure our impact in our environment—be it clinical or academic—in such a way that it influences the decision makers in our institutions? If “scale” this from the previous study, but I think that it is still the most important question facing us.
12. Does the information Jah蜿籍's usefulness and if professional medical librarians have a long term impact on the information seeking behaviors of health care professionals?
13. What are the most effective instructional methods for teaching informatics/knowledge management/EBP within health sciences curricula?
14. In medical schools where librarians are included in the curriculum, do the students have a greater degree of information literacy than students in schools where librarians are not part of the curriculum?
15. What skills and knowledge must librarians possess in order to be able to design tools to help researchers evaluate, manage and share complex data generated during both quantitative and qualitative research?

Systematic Review Project
Appraising the Best Available Evidence

Guiding principles and guidelines of the project:
• Teams work autonomously and set their own meeting schedules.
• Define and refine questions.
• Form subgroups as needed.
• Search strategies are to be peer-reviewed and fully documented.
• Follow PRISMA guidelines.
• Identify best studies and gaps in the knowledge base.
• “Rely any impulse toward perfectionism.”

Expected Outcomes:
• Publishable manuscripts of use to health sciences librarian colleagues and researchers.
• A central register of high-quality articles in health sciences librarianship.
• Expected project completion: July 2014.