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

The MLA Research Agenda

1. There are still a number of relevant questions from the 2008 research agenda, but to me 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 still a significant impact on 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 health care fields? Even if it is not possible to quantify benefits, documenting qualitative research results that appear in the July 2012 issue of the Journal of the Medical Library Association.

4. Low health literacy can result in medication errors, noncompliance of treatment regimes, poor health outcomes, and increases hospital intelligence (e.g., if the top hospitals have access to hospital librarians/libraries)?

5. What is the added value libraries bring to education, research, and patient care in the health sciences and health care fields?

6. The explosion of information, expanding of technology (especially mobile technology), and complexity of health care environment present medical librarians and medical librarians opportunities and challenges. Do librarians need to retrain themselves to meet these challenges?

7. Does what we do matter? Longer form: Do the resources we provide and the way that it influences the decision makers in our institutions? [I “stole” this from the previous study, but I think that it is still the most important question facing us.]

8. How do we provide information support in a clinical world that functions based on electronic medical records systems?

9. Do health sciences libraries and librarians have any measureable (statistically significant) positive impact on preclinical education with respect to informatics applications like electronic medical records systems?

10. Does the intervention/instruction/assistance of a professional medical librarian have a long term impact on the information seeking behaviors of health care professionals?

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 decision makers in our institutions? J “stole” this from the previous study, but I think that it is still the most important question facing us.

12. Do the intervention/instruction assistance and 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 skills in medical schools where librarians are included in the curriculum? Do the students have a greater degree of information literacy, or are they still academic medicine’s paradise, or are medical libraries are required to have or acquire so as to be strong partners or contributors of continuing education?

14. In medical schools where librarians are included in the curriculum, do the students have a greater degree of information literacy, or are they still academic medicine’s paradise, or are medical libraries are required to have or acquire so as to be strong partners or contributors of continuing education?

15. What skills and knowledge must librarians possess in order to be able to design tools to help researchers visualise, mine, and otherwise manage large and complex data gathered during both quantitative and qualitative research?