

***Journal of Hospital Librarianship*. Haworth Press, Inc.**

Editor: Carole E. Gilbert. ISSN: 1532 3269

The *Journal of Hospital Librarianship* is the only journal dedicated to hospital librarianship. It was first published in 2001 and enjoys a measure of success with a subscriber base of more than 400 individuals and institutions, particularly in the United States where hospital libraries are commonplace. A hospital library is essentially a library located within a hospital environment and serves medical, nursing and paramedical staff by assisting with patient care in terms of diagnosis, treatment and management. This journal fulfils a vital support function for hospital librarians, who have had little opportunity to address their problems and challenges. The main reason for this is that, their work environments result in them usually being usually “one-person” libraries.

In the South African context, hospital libraries are limited to KwaZulu-Natal, for e.g., Addington Hospital Medical Library and Greys Hospital Medical Library, and therefore one would assume that this journal would have a limited appeal nationally. However, this reviewer has found that the content, while focusing primarily on the hospital library environment, covers global issues that concern medical librarians in academic and other settings. This journal focuses

mainly on the administrative and technical aspects of managing hospital libraries, as well as providing well-researched tools and resources for the healthcare professional.

The *Journal of Hospital Librarianship* is divided into Feature Articles, Consumer Health Connections, International Libraries, Research, Specialty of the House, Technology, Patchwork and Reviews. The content is well written, relevant, and the topics addressed are current and pertinent to the struggles and issues faced by medical librarians. Practical, thought-provoking suggestions and solutions are offered for problems particular to the hospital work environment, such as providing email facilities for patients and their families and how to design and set-up a hospital library web page.

The reviewer has used the contents of Vol.1 No. 2, 2001 to illustrate the relevance of this journal for hospital and medical librarians. The Feature articles in this issue are quite diverse, with papers ranging from "Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) and the Hospital Librarian" to partnerships between medical libraries and ethnic minorities, such as the American Indians. EBM is the current buzzword amongst health information professionals and the article showcased is an example of the high standard of articles published in this journal, as it is thorough and concise in its exploration of this topic, and how the hospital librarian can utilize his/her expertise and resources to support EBM (Evidence-based medicine and the hospital librarian, Connie Schardt; 1).

The reviewer particularly liked the Specialty of the House (Marketing advice for the small, one-person library, Linda Masek; 73), which provides a vehicle for cost-cutting, practical and challenging new ideas and services, especially at a time when one has to qualify one's relevance to the marketplace and justify expenses. This paper focused on marketing the hospital library to staff and patients to increase library usage. The author, being the sole library staff member, was tasked to market and publicise the library and its services and thereby qualify its existence. A daunting endeavour for any one-person library, however success was achieved by implementing many innovative ideas, for e.g., the library and its services were promoted at orientations and other hospital functions and an aggressive advertising campaign was initiated to market the libraries services and products. For any marketing plan, an aggressive campaign is required to set in motion one's goals and objectives, and the information professional has to be creative and dynamic in achieving these goals. Taking into account a zero budget and lack of "people" resources (a situation quite familiar to hospital librarians), a survey was conducted and results implemented through educational programs, i.e., training on Ovid and PubMed, publicising through the organisation's website, handouts, noticeboards, etc. The vital ingredient for a successful library-marketing program is focusing on the client's needs and how to best fulfil them. As most library professionals have been or are in similar scenarios, this paper has highlighted methods that can be utilised to keep the services offered viable.

Another highlight of this journal focused on developing a hospital library web page, although a step-by-step guide it is not, it instead provides information on and directs one to the best tools and websites available to begin the process (The Hospital Library Web Page: A primer, Alexia Estabrook; 81). The "patchwork" section (Evidence-based health care on a budget: Free (and easy) Internet resources, Kay Wagner; 89) is another gem to sample as it sparkles with a wealth of free Internet and other resource mediums to access for the healthcare worker. Health information professionals will also find news snippets, and reviews on the latest technologies and innovations in the library field.

I would definitely recommend this timely and exciting journal to all health sciences librarians.

Monica Moodley

Principal Librarian, Wentworth Hospital Medical Library, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa