The History of Medical Librarianship

Network of the National Library of Medicine
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How it started.

• Webinar on the History of the Rochester Study
• 16 pages of commentary
Where it’s going.

• *A History of Medical Libraries and Medical Librarianship* by Michael and Jennie Kronenfeld

• Moodle course February-April 2023
The journal articles


Change in federal requirements

- Federal legislation required hospitals to maintain a medical library in 1966
- Requirement eliminated in 1986
- Reduce the burden of federal regulations
- NY State eliminated requirement in 1988
Do libraries improve patient care?

• Rochester Regional Library Council
• Upstate New York and Ontario Chapter
• Joanne Gard Marshall, faculty at University of Toronto
• Chicago study: Contribution of hospital library information services to clinical care: a study in eight hospitals
Study design

• Physicians asked to request information from library
• Subsequent questionnaire to measure the impact on patient care
• Aspects of care (diagnosis, testing, advice to patients)
Large-scale, multisite study

- Web-based survey
- Telephone interviews
- 16,122 respondents
- Changing roles:
  - Managing e-resources
  - User instruction
  - Specialized searches
  - Quality improvement
End-users and less leeway

• 1990s: Doctors relied more on librarians to do their searches (rather than end-user searching). Print resources were the norm. The early 2000s brought electronic journals and end-user searching. Students, residents, doctors were beginning to do their own searching and thinking they didn't need librarians as much.

• I also wonder if physicians have less leeway in how they treat patients post-EBM [evidence-based medicine] movement and managed care and value-based purchasing.
Lack of visibility vs. going virtual

• Comes back to the lack of visibility. It's more difficult now to draw a direct line between information provided and patient outcomes. With fewer libraries and less librarian involvement, healthcare providers don't have a sense of how much they've been helped by us.

• I totally virtualized a little over 10 years ago. This frees me to visit many of our nursing units on a regular basis. Few do live consults, but it keeps my name out there.
Users shifting away from clinicians

• It's been long since docs were my most frequent flyers. Was actually allied health for a time, until the hospital began requiring new grad nurses and nurses bucking for promotion to do EBP [evidence-based practice] projects. Also get lots of article requests from pharmacists, though they and nurse researchers seem to be the most competent self-searchers.

• We now offer our services free to the behavioral health professionals in our communities. We are building a clientele there.
Quality and future patients

• I think one big change since the 1990s is shown in our chat today. We used to focus more on what clinicians valued /needed. Now we have to **focus more on the C-suite** since they control the purse strings.

• I refer to most of my work as being for **future patients** - through teaching, research, and policy/procedure development - than current patients.
Mindfulness approach

- *Remind me*: I thought it was interesting that some doc was quoted as saying that the Library/librarians helped *refresh* their memory of details/facts.

- *Library as place*: Our nurses and others look to our library not only for scholarly use, but to *de-stress*. Our census has been super busy lately, and lots of healthcare folks have come in just to calm down.
Book Discussion

• One book, three months, 4 continuing education credits
• Thought-provoking history
• $125.00 or $45.00 (ebook)
• WorldCat entry

https://www.worldcat.org/title/1199056363
Ford’s Theater

• After Lincoln’s assassination, the government purchased the building to house the Army’s medical records, library, and museum.

• Time of dramatic growth in the library of the Surgeon General.

• Collection would become the “National Medical Library.”
Edith Kathleen Jones

• Librarian at McLean Hospital (psychiatric).

• Published in 1913, as part of the American Library Association promotion of bibliotherapy.

• Called for professionally trained medical librarians with the ability to read German, French, and Scandinavian languages.