

Editorial

The LINC Health Panel's accreditation scheme will be known to many readers of this Newsletter. What is less well known, however, is the experience of the staff whose library has recently passed through the accreditation process. At the Under One Umbrella conference in July this year, it was wonderful to hear Val Trinder's paper describing the scheme followed by Steve Sharp's presentation of a candidate's view of the accreditation process. Reflecting on the whole experience, Steve commented that the parallel between the accreditation process and the practice of evidence based medicine is striking. His paper appears in this Newsletter on page 6.

The theme of "evidence-LINCed practice" is continued by Andrew Booth, Chair of the LINC Health Panel Research Working Party. On page 2. Andrew describes how the Working Party developed into a collaborative group of several health care librarians interested in work-based research. See page 3 for further information about the LINC Health Panel Research in the Workplace Award.

Also in this issue (on page 9), Kevin Hall looks at the National Research Register, which has had a chequered history but is now showing signs of providing real benefit to the health information profession.

In the September issue, I announced that meeting reports would be published in this Newsletter from March 2000. I am delighted that my appeal for copy has met with such a prompt response: we have a number of meeting reports in the pipeline and have decided to publish the first two ahead of schedule!

Margaret E S Forrest
Editor

Contents

Group News	2
LINC Accreditation	6
NRR	9
Internet Sites	10
Book Review	17
Meeting Reports	18
Current Literature	20
Diary of Events	27

Group News

Health Libraries Review

We would like to thank all those who returned completed readership survey forms. Taking into account the many interesting views and suggestions made for improvement, two major changes were agreed at the last Editorial Advisory Board. From March 2000 there will be a new format and cover, followed in 2001 by a new title "Health Information and Libraries Journal". We believe that these changes will broaden the readership and draw contributions from a wider range of perspectives. We would be interested to hear your views on these changes.

I am sure that we all recognise the importance of continuing professional development, but to what extent do we think of this in terms of going on the odd training day when something takes our fancy, rather than adopting a systematic approach to lifelong learning? The December issue of HLR, which is guest edited by David Stewart and Anne Brice, takes a global view of this important topic. There are two articles from Australia; the first, by Ann Ritchie and Paul Genoni, discusses the benefits of mentoring, the second, by Gabby Fennessy, who recently returned to Australia, outlines approaches to CPD within the Australian health library sector. Kathryn Nesbit, from New York, gives an account of the MLA's Centennial Distance Learning Program. Nearer to home, Kate Wood talks about the role of the Library Association in lifelong learning for librarians and Graham Walton looks at the IMPEL project in the Electronic Libraries programme (eLib) and what this has to offer to the health sector.

Two articles in the "Innovation on the Internet" series discuss the revolution in biomedical journal publishing which is being driven by the escalating development of the Internet.

Penny Bonnett

Evidence-LINCed Practice

"What is the Health Libraries Group doing about research?" (1) This was the question we posed last year in Health Libraries Review. In similar vein to the BBC advertisement we then itemised a programme of activities including "Research for the Uninitiated" study days, Library-LORE: a feasibility study on systematic reviews, and other plans inspired by the Research Policy of the Medical Library Association(2). This was followed by a mini-series of three articles on Evidence Based Librarianship showcased in the Library Association Record(3),(4),(5). The HLG Research Working Party had got off to auspicious beginnings.

However, research is a collaborative activity, the implementation of research findings even more so. There is always going to be a limit on what a small working party, reporting to just one constituency in health information, is able to achieve. At the same time the Library and Information Co-operation Council (LINC) Health Panel was beginning to give the health information sector a cohesion hitherto impossible. Several other groups, most notably the Regional Librarians Group (RLG) and Libraries for Nursing (LfN), already had initiatives to address the dearth of practitioner-based research; other groups such as IFM Healthcare have health research

Have you got an idea for a small work-based research project?

Do you need some money or other support to enable you to achieve your research?

If your answer to the above is "Yes" then you need the LINC Health Panel

Research in the Workplace Award

£ 2100 award for work-based research	May be used as part of a larger amount
Open to those working in health libraries or information services.	May be used in partnership with a University Department of Information Science
Sponsored by all the leading health information bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health Libraries Group• University Health Sciences Libraries Group• University Medical School Librarians Group• NHS Regional Librarians Group• IFM Healthcare Subgroup• Libraries for Nursing Subgroup	Open to a member of any of the listed health information constituencies provided they are working in a "workplace environment"

For further details contact your local NHS Regional Librarian, or Andrew Booth (Chair of the LINC Health Panel Research Working Party [0114 222 5420; email: A.Booth@sheffield.ac.uk] or download the application form from <http://www.shef.ac.uk/~scharr/lincrwpp/apply.html>

expertise amongst their members but no formal research initiatives. In addition a number of individuals with experience of practitioner- or workplace-based research could make a valuable contribution to the direction of a working party. It was, therefore, a natural (although by no means automatic) progression to constitute a LINC Health Panel Research Working Party. Bruce Madge and Judy Palmer, respective chairs of the HLG and RLG research groups, oversaw a smooth transition. With the other constituencies safely in place, the reins of the reincarnated Research Working Party were handed to Andrew Booth as the new Chair. The inaugural meeting of the Research Working Party (RWP) took place in May 1999. Extracts from the Business Plan for the RWP, soon to be presented formally to the LINC Health Panel, give a foretaste of the key areas for activity:

Research in the Workplace Award

One of the first priorities is to encourage workplace-based research. This coincides with the Library Association's Workplace 99 initiative and stems from the recognition that sources of funding for research in health information are diffuse and that the sums involved hardly justify the efforts required. HLG, RLG, the University Health Librarians Group and the University Medical School Librarians Group, together with IFM Healthcare, pooled varying amounts to make a total of more than stlg 2,000 for a health information practitioner wishing to conduct a work-based research project. Flyers advertising the award were distributed in August with a 1st October closing date. The first LINC Health Panel Research in the Workplace Award winner is to be announced in October/November of this year.

Other activities

Following a series of Research Workshops run by the LA Library and Information Research Group (LIRG), we are currently adapting their curriculum to a specific health context using carefully chosen examples. An expert seminar on Evidence Based Librarianship will facilitate development of a study day to be offered in Spring 2001. A network of academic-practitioner liaison officers will be set up to link health librarians with departments of information studies. Initiatives to develop specific expertise in critical appraisal and systematic reviews in the field of health librarianship are already planned. All these activities and more will be regularly reported through the Health Libraries Review Research column and will be covered on the RWP Web pages:

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/~scharr/lincrwp/home.html>. We have seen the future and it is Evidence-LINCed!

References

- (1) Farmer, J., Booth, A., Madge, B., & Forsythe, E. (1998). What is the Health Libraries Group doing about research? *Health Libraries Review* 15: 139-140.
- (2) Medical Library Association. *Using Scientific Evidence to Improve Information Practice : the Research Policy Statement of the Medical Library Association*. Chicago, Ill: MLA, 1996.
<http://www.mlanet.org/research/science1.html>
- (3) Booth, A., & Haines, M. (1998). Room for a review? *Library Association Record* 100 (8):411-412.
- (4) Booth, A. (1998). Testing the LORE of research. *Library Association Record* 100 (12): 654.

(5) Booth, A., & Farmer, J. (1999). Between the idea and the reality. *Library Association Record* 101 (2): 104.

Andrew Booth
Chair of the LINC Health Panel
Research Working Party

Sub-Group News

Community Care Network

CCN's committee has been as busy as ever! Another successful seminar, **Everyone Needs Books**, was held in Birmingham on 20th October. There have been more calls to rerun the very popular **Spice or Cinders** seminar about housebound services, so watch out for that early next year. We welcome suggestions for seminar topics, so please contact CCN's secretary, Pam Buchan (Open Access, Kent Arts and Libraries, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4AL, Tel: 01622 605221) with your ideas.

Early next year also sees the publication of our directory of public library contacts in access/community care. The draft version has already proved very useful to committee members so should be of great benefit, for example, to anyone seeking a contact with whom to discuss a particular issue. We hope that the directory will really help to strengthen the Network.

However, we also need *your* help to make the Network even more effective. If you know of anyone, perhaps new to this area of work, who would appreciate a bit of support or contact from 'like minded' colleagues, then put them in touch with CCN. A

very good first port of call is Pam Buchan (contact details above).

We really want to raise the profile of CCN in the year 2000 so we have been looking at a strategy to achieve this. Those already involved with CCN know its worth but we are sure that there are others out there who would value being part of the Network if only they knew about it! Perhaps there is a potential new committee member out there who would like to join our present enthusiastic team? As an outgoing committee member I can vouch for the very rewarding personal and professional experience I have had over the past few years - the longest I have been involved with anything, so that's saying something!

Jo McCausland

If anyone would like to consider becoming more actively involved with the Network, please give Jo a ring on 01223 718355 and she will share with you her experience of being involved with CCN.

People

Robert (Bob) Moore recently retired as Librarian of the National Institute for Medical Research, Mill Hill, after over 37 years' service. He is succeeded by **Frank Norman**, previously Deputy Librarian.

Janet Fraser has taken up a new post as Librarian at Dr Gray's Hospital, Elgin, where she will be setting up a multi-disciplinary library to support the Moray area. Janet previously worked at the Robert Gordon's College in Aberdeen.

Katie McGlew, from the University of Strathclyde's BUBL project, has recently been appointed Assistant Librarian of the Health Promotion Library Scotland.

Suzie Alexander has returned to Ovid Technologies Ltd as Director of European Operations after her maternity leave. She is now the proud mother of a son, Nicolai, and once again will be responsible for overseeing Ovid's European office in London. She can be contacted at 0181 748 3777, email suziea@ovid.com. Suzie will report to **Diane Koen**, Ovid's International Director, who will be moving to Ovid's New York office in November. Ovid's Asia Pacific office in Sydney will also report to Diane.

Rossella Proscia has joined Ovid's UK Sales Team and will be looking after all medical and academic sites in Scotland and the Eastern, and Northern & Yorkshire NHS Regions. Rossella has previously worked in Ovid's sales support for six months and been a consultant to the Milan Chamber of Commerce in Italy.

News and Notes

Evidence Based Accreditation: the experience of preparing for and undergoing LINC accreditation

With the emergence of evidence based medicine in the 1990s, the drive towards quality in health libraries has gathered momentum and we are increasingly aware of the need to operate at the highest standards in meeting client needs. Although these standards have been incorporated into

numerous accreditation systems throughout the sector, disparities and inconsistencies between these systems have raised widespread concern about the absence of a national accreditation framework.

In 1995, a working group initiated by the South West region and chaired by the NHS Libraries Advisor was formed to address this problem. The project was later continued by the LINC Health Panel Accreditation Working Group which developed a generic checklist, based on the principles of HSG (97)47, to support accreditation assessment. As the first library in Berkshire to undergo LINC accreditation assessment, our split-site library and information service entered uncharted waters earlier this year, with a six-month team effort prior to the assessment panel's visit in June. The dust had barely settled by the time I spoke for the Health Libraries Group at the LA Umbrella conference a week later, and I would like to repeat here the main points I made about the accreditation experience and highlight some key issues arising at Umbrella. In reflecting on the whole experience, the parallel between the accreditation process and the practice of evidence based medicine is striking; in the same way that health care should only be delivered according to current best practice, so too should libraries deliver information services according to current best LIS practice.

Interpreting the statements and compiling the evidence: the key challenges

The accreditation checklistⁱ and accompanying toolkitⁱⁱ define this best practice and in so doing throw down the gauntlet to all libraries throughout the sector. Indeed, the LINC scheme has been developed as a generic process applicable to every type of

health care library. The checklist statements (itemised standards that must be met for accreditation to be awarded) are therefore understandably road and all-encompassing, a feature that posed a challenge to us from the outset in adapting them to our split-site service.

Having received the checklist in January, interpreting the statements became a difficult and time-consuming process, for the simple reason that interpretation is by its nature subjective. A series of lengthy discussions and debates ensued, with staff meetings becoming accreditation brainstorming sessions. The accreditation toolkit, however, provided clear guidance on the requirements, as did the valuable advice we received from the Health Care Libraries Unit, as we systematically worked through the three subsections - *library management and philosophy, resources, and collections and services*.

Compiling the evidence to present to the panel also proved challenging. Although we focused initially on the three-star statements (the essential requirements for basic level accreditation), it was the less concrete and less measurable statements, such as those relating to quality assurance and client consultation, that posed more of a problem. Despite having clearly defined and documented quality standards that we aim to adhere to, actually monitoring our performance and effectiveness to present as evidence was far more difficult. But this is not an uncommon problem, since few libraries have the time or resources to undertake detailed performance monitoring. Evaluating service effectiveness is clearly an area of concern.

Another issue arising at Umbrella was the need for regional or even national standards to be set for individual libraries to adhere to, so as to ensure consistency in the accreditation process (e.g. in terms of performance monitoring). Val Trinder, a member of the LINC Accreditation Working Group who compiled the toolkit, also proposed the development of a generic user survey to be made available nation-wide. She highlighted the lack of recent user surveys in libraries, and therefore insufficient client consultation, as a key problem. If such a generic survey were to be made available, results could then be collated and compared within the region, and co-operative action taken accordingly.

In the light of the assessment visit, a possible improvement would be the submission of the evidence to the panel in advance, in order to save time on the day of the visit and allow both the panel and the library staff to discuss the key issues in more detail. This may also allow library staff the opportunity to bring to the panel's attention any 'intangible' evidence that could not be presented through the checklist, such as future developments in the pipeline or the crucial area of networking to build closer relations with postgraduate education organisers.

Indeed, the critical issue of collaborative working between LIS and continuing professional education is one of the few weak points in the accreditation checklist. Statement 3.4.3 states:

'there is input from the library to course planning and development, training and development and research and development activities.'

This statement, however, is designated merely a *recommended* rather than *essential* rating, and thereby allows libraries to gain accreditation without demonstrating any existing or future liaison with course organisers. Observations and findings in the GIVTS projectⁱⁱⁱ suggest that accreditation assessment in this area is inadequate. Evidence should be demanded of how the information service is being integrated into the curriculum of continuing education for health professionals.

The Benefits

In spite of its shortcomings, there are several clear benefits to be derived from accreditation and, although some will clearly take time to feed through into the service, they far outweigh the costs. The preparation may have stretched the service and its staff to the limit, but ultimately the process can only further the interests of all stakeholders.

The key benefits could be seen as:-

- a positive force for change - accreditation encourages individuals to stand back from their own individual roles and critically examine the entire service from a client perspective, identifying areas of weakness in the process and remedial action that needs to be taken
- customer focus - accreditation has been a catalyst for closer interaction with our users. We are now looking to gain feedback on a more formal basis by resuming focus group meetings and conducting surveys, possibly by telephone interviews
- motivation and team building - accreditation is an effective motivational tool and an excellent team building exercise. Every member of staff made a contribution to the preparation (e.g. one member of staff

drew up a detailed and intricate plan of the library entirely in her own time) and we are all more aware of the aims and objectives of both the library and the trust

- raised profile - the Panel's report will be sent not only to ourselves and our Directorate Manager, but also to the Trust's Chief Executive, and in so doing will receive the exposure it warrants. We are hoping that it will add weight to our campaign for additional resources
- on-going improvement - accreditation is not a one-off exercise but is intended to be a triennial rolling process; we need to be proactive and identify how we can deliver a quality service in the future, particularly with the advent of clinical governance. Closer collaboration with course organisers to integrate the service into the curriculum of continuing education must therefore become a priority.

Overall, I am sure we are not alone in perceiving accreditation as an essential process for health libraries if we are to provide a knowledge base for evidence based medicine - a process that can and should become part of EBM culture.

References

¹ LINC health panel. *Accreditation of library and information services in the health sector: a checklist to support assessment*. Southampton: LINC Health Panel, 1998.

¹ Trinder V.M. *Accreditation of library and information services in the health sector: implementation guide and toolkit for libraries in NHS Trusts*. Southampton: LINC Health panel, 1998.

¹ Urquhart C.J. et al. "Integrating information services with vocational training: the GIVTS project

experience". *Proceedings of the fourth international symposium on health information management research*. Ed. Dowd, C., Eaglestone, B., Bowns, I. Sheffield: Sheffield University, 1999. 3-12.

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National Research Register Comes of Age

After much debate and assurances about a free national database enabling easy access to reliable information about current research being funded by the NHS, the National Research Register (NRR) has finally arrived.

An expanding database:

With a database of over 20,000 current NHS funded research projects, as well as a growing archive (29,000) of recently completed projects, plus some complementary databases, such as the MRC Clinical Trials Register and Ongoing Reviews Database from York, the NRR can be said to be the most comprehensive register of its kind available to researchers, managers, clinicians and information specialists.

Free public access

In line with the Department of Health's commitment to improving access to research evidence, the NRR is free of charge and accessible to the public. The NRR can be searched via the Internet:

www.doh.gov.uk/research/nrr.htm or via a limited issue CD-ROM, which is available from local R&D Offices of the NHS Executive, to all libraries

supporting health practitioners. Issue 2 for 1999 is due out at the end of September.

Making searching easy

Utilising either product, the searcher has access to a sophisticated search engine, which is similar to that used by the Cochrane Library. Full MeSH search capability is available as well as use of free text and field specific search functions. As with the Cochrane Library, users are able to load and save previous searches they may have undertaken and have the facility to export records in a variety of formats. If you are familiar with the Cochrane Library, you will find searching the NRR straightforward.

As the NRR has expanded so rapidly it is important to note that it has not been possible to MeSH-index all of the records. However, the backlog should be indexed by the end of the year and in the meantime, it is important to combine MeSH and free text searches.

Why access the NRR?

In reality anyone interested in understanding what current research is being undertaken within the NHS, should look at the NRR.

As a register of research in progress, it does have enormous potential to;

- Identify unpublished research; particularly important to systematic reviewers of research;
- provide early warning of research which may lead to important research findings;
- identify and bring together researchers between and across related areas of research;
- help avoid unnecessary duplication in research - a waste of resources as well as potentially unethical;

The NRR provides basic information such as:

- Title of the research;
- Principal research question;
- Methodology;
- Sample group;
- Outcome measure;
- Project start and end dates;
- Lead researcher and submitting organisation;

The NRR is designed to allow searchers to identify quickly the relevance of a particular research project to their area of interest, and to provide contact details in order to obtain further information. Alongside the Cochrane Library and the Centre for Reviews & Dissemination Information Service, the NRR provides a powerful and growing information source for the research community.

For more information

If you want more information about the NRR then you can visit the NRR web site, which provides background and a frequently asked questions section.

www.doh.gov.uk/research/nrr.htm

The R&D Information Manager at your local regional office of the NHS Executive will be able to provide further information. Update Software, who publish the NRR on behalf of DH, may be contacted at Tel: 01865 513902. The NRR team also welcomes feedback on any aspect of the NRR service.

Kevin Hall
NRR Project Manager

Internet Sites of Interest

Community Care Sites

Adapt Trust

Recently launched its website. The Trust exists to "encourage and assist arts and heritage venues create better standards of access especially for disabled people". Provides grant-aid, awards and awareness training as well as an advisory service. Publishes a newsletter.

Website: <http://www.adapttrust.co.uk>

DISinHE

National Clearing House for Disability and Information systems in Higher Education (University of Dundee). Exists to "signpost useful information in the field of disability and information systems". Includes information from a wide variety of sources: people and organisations with a remit for disability in UK Higher Education, other disability organisations and agencies, suppliers of disability related technology, current research programme. Provides a comprehensive list of links to these sources. Overall an important source of information on disability and higher education. One to add to "must check this regularly" list.

Website: <http://www.disinhe.ac.uk>

Films involving Disability

Provides a list of over 2,037 films in two sections - those films which focus on disability and those in which a disability or a disabled actor is a minor element. Categorised by type of disability. Entry includes: title of film, length, brief annotation, main actors.

Website:

<http://www.caravan.demon.co.uk/index.html>

Professionals' Common Room

Site on the NLB's(National Library for the Blind) website intended to "provide an online resource for professionals such as rehabilitation workers and librarians to make contacts, exchange ideas and hopefully find answers to problems". Includes a Question and Answer Service for queries about aspects of visual impairment, services for visually impaired people, or aspects of working with visually impaired people. A Professionals' News service provides up-to-date information including research related to visually impaired people and their information needs taking place nationally and at the National Library for the Blind. It is planned to host a discussion area. Ideas or suggestions via e-mail are invited.

Website:

<http://www.nlbuk.org/common/index.html>

IT Products and Services

Useful site with listings of IT products and services for UK charities and non-profit organisations. Includes equipment to assist with disabilities and free downloadable IT technology guides

Website:

<http://www.itforcharities.freemove.co.uk/index.htm>

Motor Neurone disease (MND and ALS)

MND and ALS are abbreviations for Motor Neurone Disease and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis respectively. MND/ALS is a neurological disease that affects over 350,000 of the world's population, and kills over 100,000 every year. The Scottish MND Association has launched a new website for which it is seeking OMNI accreditation. The Association is also a member of the International Alliance of MND/ALS

Associations which has recently relaunched its website. This describes itself as "the peak body for national organisations who support people living with MND/ALS". It produces a twice-yearly newsletter and a directory of membership associations. Also refers to the International Symposium on MND/ALS organised by the Motor Neurone Disease Association of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. the Symposium has its own web page where you can register your interest in attending, and lodge abstracts for presentation of papers and posters. Information Officer/librarian for the Scottish MND is Sandra Wilson.

Websites: <http://www.scotmnd.org.uk> and <http://www.alsmndalliance.org>

New Opportunities Fund

Created by the '98 National Lottery Act, NOF is responsible for distributing National Lottery grants, throughout the UK, for health, education and environment initiatives. It works with national, regional and local partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors to fund initiatives, fairly and efficiently. There is an emphasis on schemes which relate to "those in society who are most disadvantaged".

NOF will support sustainable projects in the UK that:

- Improve the quality of life for individuals and communities
- Promote social inclusion
- Encourage community involvement
- Complement and enhance relevant national, regional and local strategies and programmes.

Website: <http://www.nof.org.uk/>

Tiresias

This web site is a valuable information resource for professionals who work in the field of visual disabilities. The core section of the site contains technical information and directory information including prices for over 1400 assistive devices currently available with links to suppliers. Other sections provide directories of international agencies, on-going research programmes, sources of funding for research and an international list of current serials relating to visual impairment. Much of this information has previously only been available in print. Tiresias is a developing site and is updated regularly. It is supported by the Department of Health.

website: <http://www.tiresias.org>

Websites that work

New video launched by RNIB in conjunction with the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). Shows how websites can be made accessible to visually impaired people. Aimed at website designers, and any organisation which uses a website. Promotes the concept of "web accessibility - designing a website so it is accessible to all, including disabled people". Anticipates the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, Section 3, which places a legal obligation on organisations to provide information in a way that can be accessed by everyone. Contact: Julie Howell, Digital Information Officer, RNIB, 224 Gt. Portland St., London. W1N 6AA. Tel: 0171 388 1266 Fax: 0171 388 2034 Email: jhowell@rnib.org.uk Net: <http://www.rnib.org.uk>

Peter Craddock

Medical and Health Care Sites

One of the sources on the National Research Register is the Medical Research Council (MRC) Clinical Trials Directory. Should you find that this is not comprehensive (and I've yet to find a research register that is!) fear not - there are other MRC avenues to follow. The MRC is one of the contributors to the mRCT (metaRegister of Controlled Trials) - one of the free resources available through the Current Controlled Trials service. A search of this site will search all the contributors to the mRCT and will include a scan of more than 50 further trials registers. It is to be found at:

<http://www.controlled-trials.com/>

MRC funded research details also make themselves known through the Community of Science (COS) research service. The COS service brings together many research sources including funding, 'find a research colleague' and a number of current research registers. Access the registers at:

<http://fundedresearch.cos.com/>

A source of trials information from over the pond, the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), can be accessed via COS or from the NIH website direct at:

<http://www.nih.gov/health/trials/index.htm>

The NHS R&D Programmes provide an excellent, up-to-date and relevant pool of information. Projects commissioned by the smaller programmes (including cancer, asthma, mother and child health) can be accessed through the DoH website at:

http://www.doh.gov.uk/research/rdnatp_rg.htm

The National Co-ordinating Centre for Health Technology Assessment (NCCHTA) is responsible for providing details of the NHS HTA programme, the largest NHS R&D Programme of funded research to date. Details of current, completed and even possible future research projects are at: <http://www.hta.nhsweb.nhs.uk/>

Another of the major funding councils, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) has a current research database of longstanding. The REGARD database covers the wide range of social sciences research funded by the ESRC and can be found at: <http://www.regard.ac.uk/>

Further along the funding spectrum from the big research councils are the numerous medical research charities, many of which are brought together through the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC). The AMRC website is a useful starting point to find your way to the homepages of many individual charities and trusts at: <http://www.amrc.org.uk>

Finally, (as if you needed *me* to tell you) if you don't find what you are looking for through these links you can always fall back on that old friend, lateral thinking. Many individual organisations now list their own research registers on their individual websites. Take the following questions: 'Who would fund research on this topic?' and 'Who would do research on this topic?' add a pinch of brainstorming, shake or stir and I bet within a few minutes you will have found what you are looking for!

Suzy Paisley

Partnerships in Health Information

(Reg. Charity No.1031674)

Jean Shaw reports on the charity concerned with health science libraries in the world's poorest countries...

Our current concern is with Sierra Leone whose population has suffered as much as that in Kosovo, but you have probably heard less about it. Nance M'jamtu-Sie, Librarian at the College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences, managed to escape to the Gambia after members of her family were killed by the rebels, and she herself narrowly escaped being shot by a firing squad. Despite all this, she is returning to Sierra Leone to carry on with her mission to make health information available to students and health care workers. But it will be a very difficult task, when most of the library has been destroyed and looted. As a first response to this crisis, Phi has arranged a partnership with the University of Wales College of Medicine and we hope to see Nance in the UK before too long.

To carry out projects such as these we need your help. The Trustees are presently covering all the administrative costs through their personal donations. But if "partnership" is to be more than just a word, we need additional funds. For ways in which you can make a tax-effective donation, or if you just wish to make a donation, please contact: Jean G. Shaw, Partnerships in Health Information, The Old Rectory, Shoscombe, Bath BA2 8NB. e-mail: phi@bath.ac.uk

Jean Shaw

Interactive Education at Imperial College

Imperial College's School of Medicine has publicly launched its interactive medical education network, linking 10 London sites. Each lecture theatre at the "Tier One" sites - ranging in capacity from 18 - 375 students is fully equipped with an audio system, cameras and controls which allow the lecturers and students to interact. The lecturer can see the students at remote locations, even home in on them using remotely controlled cameras. Students can press a button at their location which automatically logs their request to ask a question, turns on zoned audio microphones and zooms a camera onto their position. As well as handling live feeds and responses, the system can also be used to pipe visual material - which can range from speaker support slides to X-Rays and medical data, across the IT network.

Compulsory licensing of patents

The role of compulsory licensing of patents in broadening access to essential medicines was to be examined in a meeting held on 26th March 1999 in Geneva, sponsored by Médecins Sans Frontières, Health Action International and the Consumer Project on Technology. Compulsory licensing is a legal mechanism used for both patents and copyrights in a wide range of fields, eg computing, nuclear energy, music recordings and biotechnology. The use of compulsory licensing for HIV/AIDS drugs or other essential medicine is nonetheless controversial. Taking part were to be public health and consumer groups, governments of industrialised and developing countries, pharmaceutical

companies and organisations such as the World Trade Organisation and the World Health Organisation. For further information contact Nathan Ford, MSF, London tel. 0171 713 5600.

Starfire

Glaxo Wellcome is implementing an innovative package which it hopes will revolutionise the way it brings drugs from the development stage to the shelf. Starfire, from US-based Domain Manufacturing, uses knowledge management and workflow techniques to refine manufacturing processes.

Locatorplus

The National Library of Medicine has launched its new Web based catalogue. It allows users with Internet access to search books, journals, audiovisual materials, and manuscripts. Users are able to search using author, subject, title, conference name, keyword and other specific fields, and email search results to themselves. New issue receipts of serials and monographs are also recorded.

There are also available hot links to online journals from many of the records. As well as links to other resources such as Medline, Medline plus, Toxnet and other US medical catalogues. The site is also updated daily. NLM's Locatorplus can be found at

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/locatorplus>

OMNI become BIOME

In September 1999 OMNI became part of BIOME. BIOME covers the health, medicine and life sciences.

OVID On Call

Launched in April 1999, Ovid On Call, the new clinical platform from OVID Technologies, aims to provide quick access to precise, definitive summarised search results with the option of drilling down into the detailed literature. It will feature a specially designed web page that, it is claimed, even those with limited Internet experience will find friendly and easy to navigate and highly effective in delivering fast, accurate answers to clinical questions. For further information visit the OVID web site at <http://www.ovid.com/>

Elsevier databases available through ScienceDirect

Elsevier have announced the availability of several of their databases, in full text, via the Science Direct platform. These include EMBASE and BIOBASE. For further information visit the ScienceDirect web site at <http://www.sciencedirect.com>

Is an International Job Exchange for you?

Donna Flake writes from America...

As Chair of the Job Exchange Committee of the Medical Library Association's International Cooperation Section, I encourage job exchange between medical librarians. If you are interested in a job exchange, please copy and fill out the survey below and send to Donna Flake.

"I am interested in arranging an international medical librarian job exchange.

Name

Address

Telephone

Fax

Email

Brief description of your job

Countries where you want to arrange a job exchange (can say all countries or list specific ones)

Preferred length of exchange.

Are you willing to switch houses?

I cannot participate in an International Job Exchange, but I would be able to provide advice about my city or state or country. Yes ___ No ___

I also would be willing to introduce librarians seeking job exchanges to librarians in my city/state/country who might be able to help. Yes ___ No ___"

Post copied form to:

Donna Flake, Library Director, Coastal AHEC Medical Library, 2131 South 17th Street, PO Box 9025, Wilmington, NC 28402-9025. 910-343-2180

Email: dbf1@med.unc.edu

There is a website for persons seeking job exchanges at <http://www.ahsc.arizona.edu/~lei/ics/job.htm>

Once I have your information, I will update this website.

Donna Flake

New Fact Sheet from Age Concern

Age Concern's new free fact sheet, *Fitness in later life*, can help older people who want to take up exercise or try a new activity. Simple, inexpensive exercise, such as walking, can decrease the risks of age-related disability and heart problems. It can also improve older people's ability to climb stairs, sit down in or stand up from a low chair, balance or kneel.

Age Concern reports that research from the USA and UK has shown that:

- muscle strength in people over 70 improved after training three times a week for 12 weeks
- a walking programme for people in their 70s reversed 22 years of declining lung capacity in 22 weeks
- a 12 week weights programme more than doubled the leg muscle strength of some women aged over 64 years

Age Concern's fact sheet 45, *Fitness in later life*, is available free from: Age Concern information line Tel:0800 009966 or by writing to: Age Concern, Freepost SWB 30375, Ashburton, Devon, TQ13 7ZZ

Caring for someone with diabetes by Marina Lewycka is a recent addition to Age Concern's Carers' Handbook Series. Priced at £6.99 (ISBN 0862422825)) it is available from Age Concern England and can be ordered by calling 0800 00 99 66.

RNID leaflets

Age-related hearing loss looks at a condition many people experience as

they grow older, the causes and what can be done about it. *Basic Sign Language* illustrates more than 100 signs and encourages people who work with sign language users to start to sign. *Look after your ears* is a short guide to healthy ears, including dangers to hearing e.g. noisy work and outside work situations. These leaflets are free for single copies and 30p each for more than one copy. Contact the RNID helpline on: Tel: 0870 60 50 123; Textphone: 0870 33 007; Fax: 0171 296 8021

Directory of Services for Deaf People

This directory, published by the RNID, contains over 4,000 entries and includes a range of information about organisations providing services for deaf and hard of hearing people. Price £35 from: RNID Information Directory, Advance Sales, PO Box 16464, London EC1Y 8TT. Tel: 0870 60 50 123; Textphone: 0870 60 33 007; Fax: 0171 296 8199; E-mail: helpline@rnid.org.uk

Practical Guide for people with learning disabilities

The Department of Health has produced this guide to where people with learning difficulties, their families and enablers can find help and support. Free from: Department of Health faxline 01623 724524

Consumer Health Information Centre

The Consumer Health Information Centre is an advice service which helps people understand more about minor illnesses and general health, including tips on staying healthy and ways to speed up recovery after an illness.

Trained pharmacists deal with queries about symptoms, or about taking a remedy. Contact: Tel: 0845 60 61 611

Disability Discrimination Act

The new code of practice for Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act (ISBN 0112710557) is now available priced £12.99 from: The Stationery Office, PO Box 276, London SW8 5DT. Tel: 0870 600 5522; Fax: 0870 600 5533; or free from www.disability.gov.uk Braille, audio cassette, large print, disk and Welsh formats are available from the DDA Helpline Tel: 0345 622633; Fax: 0345 622644; Textphone: 0345 622611

Contributors:

Penny Bonnett, Andrew Booth, Lisa Cardy, Rachel Coton, Peter Craddock, Donna Flake, Kevin Hall, Bruce Madge, Frank Norman, Suzy Paisley, Hasina Shaikh, Jean Shaw, Steve Sharp, Jane Rowlands.

Book Review

Murphy, A. Statistics from the NHS Regional Librarians Group 1996-97. Loughborough University, Library & Information Statistics Unit, 1998. 356pp. ISBN 1 901 786 07 2. £25.00.

Statistical publications by and large are not particularly exciting to read, and Statistics from the NHS Regional Librarians Group 1996-97 by Alison Murphy is no exception. However, as regional library advisory services would no doubt testify, statistics provide us with the opportunity to show how well we are performing, therefore this publication deserves some attention.

Statistics from the NHS Regional Librarians Group 1996-97 is the second published survey of NHS library activity, and includes well presented information on expenditure, user populations, sources of funding and inter-library lending.

The report is divided into two sections: a summary and analysis, followed by regional data tables. The first section summarises the responses to the NHS Regional Librarians Group 1996-97 survey, which the author says had an 85% response rate (from an estimated 651 libraries 552 responded). The analysis of these responses tends to be fairly rigorous, although Alison Murphy expresses extreme caution about drawing too many conclusions from certain statistics, particularly where funding is concerned.

The second section contains the actual data, and is presented in tables region by region. Setting the data out in this particular way allows the reader to compare and contrast region wide activity, and also compare individual figures to the mean at the foot of some of the tables.

The appendices at the end of the report contain an index of libraries that took part in the survey, a copy of the actual survey and guidance notes for regional statistics co-ordinators. It is interesting to note that in the index of libraries few health authorities are listed. This, I presume, is because at the time of writing relatively few health authorities had established library and information services. Hopefully more will be represented in future.

It would be totally unfair to be critical about the above publication, as a lot of hard work has obviously gone into its production. At £25, however, it certainly isn't cheap, particularly when

considering how often it would be referred to in most NHS libraries. I can only assume the report is aimed at the academic sector and commercial companies seeking to supply to libraries, which I suppose, can afford it.

Simon Wilson
Health Information Manager
Gateshead & South Tyneside
Health Authority

Meeting Reports

Items for inclusion should be sent to Mrs S.V. Howard, Librarian and Information Services Manager, Imperial College School of Medicine, Charing Cross Campus, The Reynolds Building, St Dunstan's Road, London W6 8RP. Tel: 0181 846 7154; fax: 0181 846 7565; e-mail: s.howard@ic.ac.uk

Libraries without walls: the delivery of library services to distant users. Molyvos, Lesvos, Greece, 10th-14th September 1999

This was the third LWW conference organised by CERLIM (the Centre for Research in Library and Information Management, Manchester Metropolitan University). Disregarding the idyllic location on a Greek island and glorious climate, this was a particularly enjoyable and relevant conference. It was small, only around 50 delegates from 13 countries, so that networking was compulsory and relaxed.

The programme covered all aspects of library services to distance or lifelong

learners in both academic and public libraries. Delegates and speakers represented a healthy mix of practitioners and academic researchers, while the majority of papers reported research and development projects. Popular topics included electronic document delivery, design of web pages, cross-sectorial working and support for distance learners in using electronic library resources. It was possible to identify some key issues which cropped up repeatedly:

- The need to focus on the customer
- Staff development concerning awareness of the needs of distance and lifelong learners
- Copyright and licensing
- Information literacy and how to teach it at a distance
- Library role as information broker
- Hybrid libraries
- Quality assurance
- Limitations of technology
- Libraries working together to support the learner

As is frequently the case at conferences, it was reassuring to identify parallel experiences and frustrations in other parts of the world. The conference papers will be published by the Library Association later in the year and should offer a useful addition to the literature in this field. Watch out also for the forthcoming third edition of the *Bibliography of off campus library services*, edited by Alexander (Sandy) Slade from the University of Victoria, British Columbia; Sandy was the conference's keynote speaker.

Gill Needham
Open University Library

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SCONUL Advisory Committee on Health Services. Briefing Meeting on NHS/HE IT Network Connectivity, 16th June 1999. Leeds General Infirmary.

I represented West Midlands at this very interesting briefing meeting. Leeds was chosen as they had made considerable progress in the linking together of the NHS and HE networks. The Chair was Derek Law, University Librarian at Strathclyde University. Peter Kemp, Director of Information Services at Stirling University attended to brief us on the state of the JANET agreement on "acceptable use". He commenced by outlining the current situation:

- HE staff frequently work on NHS premises
- NHS staff are involved in teaching and research
- HE students are frequently on placement within NHS organisations
- Both organisations often have shared library services, governed by the JANET regulations
- Collaborative work frequently means that access is needed to NHSNet from HE premises

He also outlined concerns, such as security of confidential information, and the allocation of costs in shared networks.

The Leeds Experience

Ed Carter of Leeds University and Clement Milne of Leeds Hospital NHS Trust outlined what progress had been made. Firstly, they both stressed that there was no "magic formula" to connectivity, simply collaboration and

a pragmatic approach between the two organisations. The University had persuaded the NHS by stressing the benefits i.e. the potential improvement in quality of care through shared access to information. They had adopted a phased approach to the project: -

Phase 1 Setting up cable links between the University and the two trusts sharing the cable infrastructure across the hospitals.

Phase 2 Utilising spare capacity in the NHS network, paid for by an annual lease system.

Phase 3 Securing network interconnectivity through data routers and a firewall controlled by the NHS, enabling users to access the Internet via NHSNet and download material, but preventing outsiders from gaining access to NHSNet via the trust or university network. Separate cabling was used where possible and where cheap. Each connected PC has a "dual boot" system, offering the user a choice of connecting to either network. User support was offered via the University or Trust helpdesks as appropriate.

Phase 4 Two trusts merged into one, and a virtual circuit was established between hospitals on different sites.

For the future, they were considering further links via NHSNet to the Health Authority, PCG's, Social Services, Community and Mental Health Trusts, and linkage with regional networks, e.g. Yorks/Humberside Metropolitan Area network. They believed that the majority of demand had been in one direction: of NHS staff wishing to use JANET. Only a small number of HE staff were accessing the hospital network, and through it NHSNet.

After lunch there was a lengthy question and answer session, during which a number of key questions were raised. The major discussion points were regarding the definition of the JANET terms of "authorised borrower" and "acceptable use", and the issue of whether license agreements for specific databases would be broken by allowing non-HE users access.

Summing Up

Derek Law outlined several key themes to the day: -

1. It was important that the NHS Trust must lead in establishing connectivity.
2. The JANET regulations are more liberal than previously thought, and Librarians could use this to their advantage in enabling access.
3. It was vital that a framework for collaboration was established.

4. The database licensing issue was vital for librarians, and some statement from UKERNA on this would be very helpful

Action

Two actions on this were proposed and agreed: -

1. Regional groupings should examine moving forward on the licensing issue through acting as a purchasing consortium.
2. SCONUL ACHS should extend the dialogue with the NHS to carry forward the Leeds model for co-operation.

Overall, it was a very stimulating and enjoyable day, with considerable food for thought.

Philip Vaughan
Librarian, Black Country Education and Training Consortium

Current Literature

by John Hewlett, with information from Denise Brady, Margaret Forrest, Richard Marriott & Margaret Valentine.

Additional material is always welcome: please send the full reference to John Hewlett, 8 Railway Street, Langley Park, Co.Durham DH7 9YS; or by e-mail to John.Hewlett@craglea-cdha.demon.co.uk

The aim of this column is to cover the recent printed literature in medical, health and welfare librarianship and information science. Material of general interest such as computing, multimedia and library planning is not usually covered unless there is a specific MHW library/information aspect: such material can be traced in general current awareness bulletins or current awareness columns in specialist journals.

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Frivolous and entertaining

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Library users in transition, using printed materials by visiting the library, and using

electronic methods to access information direct without leaving the office/ward; many

clients make equal use of both methods of access.

Diary

Items for inclusion should be sent to Mrs S.V. Howard, Librarian and Information Services Manager, Imperial College School of Medicine, Charing Cross Campus, The Reynolds Building, St Dunstan's Road, London W6 8RP. Tel: 0181 846 7154; fax: 0181 846 7565; e-mail: s.howard@ic.ac.uk

7 DECEMBER 1999

Using MEDLINE Effectively. Wellcome Trust, 183 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BE. Free. Details: <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/en/1/misinfeve.html>.

Bookings: m.brocklehurst@wellcome.ac.uk. Tel: 0171-611 8507

7-9

Online Information 99. Olympia, London. Contact: Learned Information Europe Ltd. Woodside, Hinksey Hill, Oxford, OX1 5BE. Tel: 01865 388000. Fax: 01865 736354

14

Information Focus for Allied Health (InFAH) AGM and talk on the British Library's Health Care Information Service. British Library, London. Free. Details: Anna Sewerniak, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, 14 Bedford Row, London, WC1R 4ED. Tel: 0171-306 6604. Fax: 0171-306 6611. E-mail: sewerniaka@cspphysio.org.uk

11 JANUARY 2000

Consumer Health: a guide to the key sources of information. Wellcome Trust, 183 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BE. Free. Details: <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/en/1/misinfeve.html>.

Bookings:

m.brocklehurst@wellcome.ac.uk.

Tel: 0171-611 8507

19

LAMIT visit to the Royal College of Surgeons, London. Visit (at 2.30pm) will include the Main library, the Resources Centre, and the Museum. All welcome, but booking essential. Contact: David Sharp, BFI National Library, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 2LN, (Tel 0207-957-8970) email: david.sharp@bfi.org.uk

20

Consumer Health Information and Mental Health: a study day for health professionals who give information to patients with mental health problems. Joint HLG/CHIC Study Day. Department of Health, London. Registration: £60 (inclusive of VAT) HLG/CHIC members; £80 (inclusive of VAT) non-members; plus 10 concessionary places @ £20 for students, unwaged, voluntary staff etc upon proof of status Details: Andrea Lane, BMA Library, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9JP. Tel: 0171-383 6639. Fax: 0171-388 2544. E-mail: alane@bma.org.uk

8 FEBRUARY 2000

Evidence Based Medicine: Searching the literature. Wellcome Trust, 183 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BE. Free.

Details:

<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/en/1/misinfeve.html>.

Bookings:

m.brocklehurst@wellcome.ac.uk.

Tel: 0171-611 8507

7 MARCH 2000

Medical Information on the Internet. Wellcome Trust, 183 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BE. Free. Details: <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/en/1/misinfeve.html>.

Bookings:

m.brocklehurst@wellcome.ac.uk.

Tel: 0171-611 8507

20-22

Libtech 2000. Olympia, London.

Details: <http://www.libtech-international.com/front.html>

4 APRIL 2000

Alternative Medicine: A guide to the key sources of information. Wellcome Trust, 183 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BE. Free.

Details:

<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/en/1/misinfeve.html>.

Bookings:

m.brocklehurst@wellcome.ac.uk.

Tel: 0171-611 8507

6

Medical libraries and publishing in the third millennium. HLG CPD Joint study day with Royal Society of Medicine. St William's College, York. Details: Andrea Lane, BMA Library, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9JP. Tel: 0171-383 6639. Fax: 0171-388 2544. E-mail: alane@bma.org.uk.

5-11 MAY 2000

Demystifying the Dragon: Strategies for 2000 plus. MLA/CHLA 2000 Conference, Vancouver, Canada. Details: www.mlanet.org/am/am2000

9

Using MEDLINE effectively. Wellcome Trust, 183 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BE. Free. Details: <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/en/1/misinfeve.html>.

Bookings:

m.brocklehurst@wellcome.ac.uk.

Tel: 0171-611 8507

6 JUNE 2000

Consumer Health: a guide to the key sources of information. Wellcome Trust, 183 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BE. Free.

Details:

<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/en/1/misinfeve.html>.

Bookings:

m.brocklehurst@wellcome.ac.uk.

Tel: 0171-611 8507

2-5 JULY 2000

8th International Congress on Medical Librarianship. Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre, London. Information: <http://www.icml.org>

11

Evidence Based Medicine: Searching the Literature. Wellcome Trust, 183 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BE. Free.

Details:

<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/en/1/misinfeve.html>.

Bookings:

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Tel: 0171-611 8507

Newsletter Editorial Notes

Library Association Health Libraries Group Newsletter is a supplement to *Health Libraries Review* which is the official journal of the LA HLG. Published quarterly by Blackwell Science, it is available to Group members at the special price of £35.00 (1999). Members requiring the journal should order direct from Blackwell Science, PO Box 88 Oxford OX2 0NE quoting their LA membership number.

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John Hewlett Current Literature
(Northern and Yorkshire Regional Library Advisory Service)
Susan Howard Diary of Events
(Imperial College School of Medicine Library)

Joy Lyall Production (Charing Cross & Westminster Medical School)

2000 Copy Dates

**Please send your contributions to the *Newsletter*
by the following dates:**

10 January (March issue); 20 March (June issue); 12 June (September issue)

ⁱ LINC health panel. *Accreditation of library and information services in the health sector: a checklist to support assessment*. Southampton: LINC Health Panel, 1998.

ⁱⁱ Trinder V.M. *Accreditation of library and information services in the health sector: implementation guide and toolkit for libraries in NHS Trusts*. Southampton: LINC Health panel, 1998.

ⁱⁱⁱ Urquhart C.J. et al. "Integrating information services with vocational training: the GIVTS project experience". *Proceedings of the fourth international symposium on health information management research*. Ed. Dowd, C., Eaglestone, B., Bowns, I.. Sheffield: Sheffield University, 1999. 3-12.