

## Lightning talks at HLI Conference 2016

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### Abstract

The 2016 HLI conference 'lightning talks' provided a valuable update on activities being undertaken by libraries in the field, as well as interesting insights into various aspects of health librarianship. The talks covered a range of topics, including deals negotiated by the Victorian Health Libraries Consortium (VHLC), news from the Health Libraries Managers' Forum, what it's like to switch from a hospital library to a university library, and a great new project that demonstrates the contribution and value of libraries to their organisations.

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### 1. VHLC: an update

*Adam Clark, Alfred Health*

The Victorian Health Libraries Consortium negotiates with vendors and publishers for collective agreements on database and e-resource subscriptions for member libraries. Adam Clark outlined the aims of the VHLC, how the consortium operates, and its recent activities. Its ultimate purpose is to 'collectively represent the interests of libraries in purchasing... and to provide information on e-resources'. Essentially, the focus of the consortium is on negotiating for lower prices on electronic resources for participating libraries – undoubtedly an essential and important role.

The VHLC was established in 2004 and serves 28 member libraries. Currently, the consortium has 10 deals in operation, covering 1700 journals and over 10,000 ebooks. More than \$1.5 million per annum is negotiated. Some of the agreements negotiated this year include:

- BMJ
- Cambridge Journals
- Ovid EMBASE
- Elsevier ClinicalKey (provided to 18 libraries).

Generally, consortium deals last around two to three years. After this time, renegotiation is usually necessary due to changed circumstances for libraries and publishers.

Adam reported that these deals take a lot of work and negotiations are complex. One of the main challenges is in providing the best service to small regional hospitals. The negotiation process has its own difficulties, including the majority of offers constituting 'big deals', meaning that publishers offer a large array of resources, but at a very high cost.

The VHLC is looking at re-engineering the 'big deal' as part of its strategic planning. Other areas for review within the VHLC's strategic plan include: configuring models for organisation size; engaging with smaller health libraries, regional networks and other states; and improving communication between the VHLC and vendors, and between health libraries and the VHLC.

## **2. Health Libraries Managers Forum, July 2016**

*Jeremy Taylor, St Vincent's Health, Melbourne*

Jeremy Taylor of St Vincent's Health, Melbourne, provided a report on the Health Library Managers Forum held in July. The idea for a managers' forum arose after an earlier VHLC meeting, where there was consensus that it would be beneficial for managers to meet, discuss ideas, and provide peer support.

Some of the issues discussed at the managers' forum included:

- **Budgeting:** Jeremy asked if budgeting is 'friend or foe' for managers. Questions exist over how much input health libraries have into the budgeting process within their organisation, and what library budgets should pay for.
- **Dealing with publishers:** negotiating with publishers is essential but requires skill. Jeremy recommended that libraries 'never take the first offer' and advised that 'every aspect of the deal may be negotiable'.
- **Education:** including partnering with other areas of organisations, sharing information, and partnering with product providers.
- **Value and validation:** how to connect library activity to what is most important in your organisation.

In conclusion, Jeremy prompted library managers to ask themselves what their library service would include in a half-page summary for their organisation's annual report. How would they demonstrate relevance and importance for their organisation? What major 'library achievements' would they hope to share?

## **3. Transitioning from health to academic librarianship**

*Steven Chang, La Trobe University*

Steven Chang's previous role was at Western Health Libraries and he has recently been appointed Senior Research Advisor for the College of Science, Health, and Engineering at La Trobe University Library. The transition from hospital librarianship to university-based librarianship has allowed Steven to analyse and compare the differences between the two environments. He noted that he was speaking from a research-centric perspective because of the focus of his current role. Steven has especially considered specific skills that are required for each role, and whether these skills could be shared between the two library sectors.

Steven undertook a thorough analysis of the different skills and knowledge required within the two environments. At La Trobe, Steven works heavily within the subject areas of speech pathology, psychology, physiotherapy, and public health. By contrast, his role at the hospital library was more clinically focused, with a greater emphasis on: systematic reviews and expert searching, medical terminology, evidenced-based practice, critical appraisal, current awareness services, ward rounds, patient care, accreditation support, health quality standards, embedded librarianship, clinical decision-making support and consortia purchases.

Skills in systematic reviews and expert searching are common to both roles. However, research support at an academic health library requires expertise in managing aspects of the research lifecycle, including: research impact and bibliometrics, institutional repositories, copyright, research output management,

open access, data visualisation, researcher profiles/ORCID, altmetrics, research data management, strategic publishing, digitisation, and data science and analysis.

While health librarianship is a specialised field, its practitioners are often expected to undertake a broad range of tasks, making many of them 'great all-rounders'. Steven spoke of his appreciation for the unique strengths of hospital libraries, particularly the agility and flexibility of smaller health library teams. He also identified an opportunity for a greater degree of knowledge-sharing and cross-pollination of skills between the two sectors through reciprocal or other collaborative arrangements.

Steven's pursuit of professional development opportunities within both roles represents dedication and a commitment to health librarianship. Capitalising on non-traditional PD opportunities afforded informally and formally, Steven says he got up to speed as a health librarian through various channels including online Coursera subjects, #MedLibs Twitter discussions for health librarians, HLWIKI, International Librarians Network, and online mentors. Steven also undertook more traditional options for professional development available through the ALIA Health Librarians network and Health Libraries Inc.

While Steven's analysis highlighted the strength of health librarians, it raised some questions, including:

- What really defines a health librarian?
- Where does health librarianship begin and end?
- Should health librarians be more generalist or more specialist?
- How can health librarians and academic librarians collaborate more closely?

#### **4. The NSQHS Standards Project**

*Ann Ritchie, Barwon Health*

*Michele Gaca, Austin Health*

Ann Ritchie and Michele Gaca introduced the audience to a very interesting and exciting project: the National Safety and Quality in Health Care (NSQHS) Standards Project. HLA and HLI have been awarded a grant of \$5000 from ALIA to undertake work that aims to support hospitals in achieving accreditation to NSQHS Standards. This project is a means to highlight the value of libraries, in addition to providing solid, research-based evidence and externally validated measures to support the accreditation process.

An aim of the project is to shift the perception of libraries as being 'nice to have' to one of being 'essential' within an organisation.

The project's three main components are: Explore, Design and Assess. Through these elements, the project will explore and showcase ways in which health libraries currently assist their organisation to achieve accreditation.

The 'Design' component relates to the creation of expert searches that can be shared across libraries and assist clients in keeping up to date with the latest evidence related to the NSQHS standards. It is intended that the search strategies will be made available as tools and will be customisable to suit particular requirements. At this stage, the databases that will be used for these expert searches are yet to be selected.

The 'Assess' component of the project aims to determine whether resources referenced by the NSQHS Standards documentation and workbooks are available within the libraries and accessible by

organisation staff. The assessment involves comparing resources listed by the NSQHS to library holdings, and identifying gaps that can be addressed.

Progress has already been made with the project. A project officer, Cecily Gilbert, has been appointed. The project has been named Health Libraries for National Standards (HeLiNS). Meanwhile, new draft standards have been released, which are fewer in number but more comprehensive. Ann and Michele encouraged delegates to actively participate in the survey, and to think 'outside the square' when composing answers. Meaningful contributions to the project will help shape the outcome and provide a platform for libraries to confirm their essential value.