SERVING THE LIBRARY NEEDS OF MEDICAL STAFF AT HOSPITAL KUALA LUMPUR (HKL)

by

NIK ZAKIAH NIK ABDULLAH*

ABSTRAK

Perpustakaan Hospital Kuala Lumpur (HKL) seperti lain-lain perpustakaan khusus menyediakan pelbagai perkhidmatan dan koleksi rujukan dalam bidang perubatan dan kesihatan awam. Jika dahulu perpustakaan dibuka hanya kepada lumpulan profesional hospital sahaja tetapi mulai 1993, perpustakaan dibuka juga kepada golongan bukan profesional hospital. Bagi memenuhi keperluan pengguna yang mementingkan kekinian maklumat dan ketepatan masa mendapatkan, perpustakaan Hospital Kuala Lumpur melanggan kepada pangkalan data MEDLINE dan CD-ROM. Dalam rancangan masa depan, perpustakaan Hospital Kuala Lumpur bercadang akan melanggan kepada pangkalan data yang lebih canggih yang dapat memberi maklumat tekst suci penuh.

INTRODUCTION

Like other departments within the hospital, the library contributes to the hospital’s primary mission of providing patients with the best possible care. The HKL library supports the delivery of patients care by providing physicians, nurses and other health care professionals with the library services to meet their clinical, educational, informational, administrative and research related needs.

Originally, the HKL Library served only the physicians due to limited library space and budget constraints. However, since 1993 our door was swung wide to admit all hospital staffs from hospital attendants to Department Heads. The objective is to change the focus of the library’s coverage form purely medical sciences to health sciences as well.

HOSPITAL STAFF

In any hospitals, there are various categories of users, each having unique information needs. In order to meet the needs of the hospital library users, a librarian needs to determine the needs accurately.

From my observations, the hospital staff can be classed into four categories:

- medical staffs;
- nursing staffs;
- administrative staffs (health care administrators) and;
- allied health staffs (e.g. laboratory technologist, occupational therapist etc)

LIBRARY SERVICES

Like other special libraries we provide standard library services but primarily in the area of medical sciences and health sciences. These services include the provision of reference collection; periodicals and circulation of monographs collection; reference and enquiry services; literature search both manually and computerized; current awareness services such as monthly notification of recently acquired materials, circulation of publishers catalogs in specific fields.
to specific departments for recommendations and photocopy services both locally and internationally through Southeast Asian Medical Information Center (SEAMIC) in Japan.

The HKL Library also share their resources through interlibrary loan. We have close cooperation with Academic Medical University Libraries such as University Hospital Library, UKM Library, those libraries under Ministry of Health, National Heart Institute and other hospital libraries in Malaysia including Sabah and Sarawak.

INFORMATION NEEDS OF MEDICAL STAFF

In serving the library needs of the medical staff, their information needs are frequently tied to the direct care of patient with specific disease and specific treatment. In other words the information are needed in order to apply it to patient care decision-making.

These medical staff can further be classified into:

- clinicians (clinical specialty);
- practitioners (relationship to hospital);
- medical officers (M.O.);
- registrars, and
- houseman (those practicing medicine under supervision of faculty).

Clinicians and practitioners are also know as physicians. These physicians, M.O’s and registrars may request information of a retrospective review of the literature or on a comparative results of treatment with different types of therapy which may relate to patient treatment or health care problems. Information is also needed for educational presentation; for a research project or to keep up with current information in order to update their knowledge or upgrade their professionalism and for life-long education. Since, medical science is an ever changing field, physicians focus on current information.

As for houseman, their information needs resemble those of the clinicians although they may need more basic data to support their diagnosis and treatment decisions. Since they are still learning under supervision, they normally get current information from the physicians through clinical meeting or case presentation that they normally have weekly especially on Saturday.

INFORMATION RESOURCES

There are several basic tools provided by the library for the medical staff:

a) Basic reference sources

To name a few, they are Dorland’s Illustrated Medical Dictionary, Stedmans Medical Dictionary, drug information sources such as Goodman & Gilman’s Pharmacological Basic of Therapeutics, statistical sources provided by Ministry of Health, International Classification of Diseases (ICD), DIMS and other basic and factual reference tools which are often referred by the medical staff.

b) Standard Textbook/Monographs

These textbooks whether general or specialty texts are normally recommended by Heads of Departments in HKL. It covers various disciplines in medicine.

c) Clinical Journals

Each department must have at least one or a maximum of not more than five titles of medical journals depending on the size of the department in terms of manpower especially the number of physicians in each department.
d) **Indexes & Abstracts**

The health sciences index that is commonly referred to in this library is Abridged Index Medicus. It covers approximately more than 120 of the widely used medical journals. Most information searches conducted in this library are a search for journal articles. Before MEDLINE on CD-ROM was introduced, information search for journal articles were done manually through Index Medicus.

However nowadays, our medical staffs are able to perform their own search at this library after we subscribed to MEDLINE database. This database searching tool proves to be popular and very useful information seeking activities for our medical staff. In the future, HKL Library is considering to subscribe to full text databases.

e) **MEDLARS Database**  
**MEDLINE on CD-ROM**

In 1993 HKL Library began to introduce the electronic version of Index Medicus to the medical staff. At the initial stage, request for computerized literature search was channelled through Institute for Medical Research (IMR) Library.