

Finding our Value: Developing a Survey that Shows Our Impact

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PURPOSE

- Present a replicable model of assessing the impact of library services on user behavior and identifying which services are valued most in an academic medical setting.
- This will enable Welch Medical Library administrators to compare their results against similar institutions.

DESIGN

- The Assessment Committee worked in conjunction with the Library Director and the School of Medicine's Vice Dean of Education to identify areas where library services impact the work of faculty, researchers and clinicians.
- Examples of previous library assessment tools were compiled from the literature and used to design a new survey tool tailored to the Johns Hopkins Medicine setting.

- Four models were identified and used as a framework:

Grefsheim, S. F., Whitmore, S. C., Rapp, B. A., Rankin, J. A., Robison, R. R., & Canto, C. C. (2010). *The informationist: Building evidence for an emerging health profession*. Journal of the Medical Library Association, 98(2), 147-156.

Grefsheim, S. F., & Rankin, J. A. (2007). *Information needs and information seeking in a biomedical research setting: A study of scientists and science administrators*. Journal of the Medical Library Association, 95(4), 426-434.

Marshall, JG (Primary Investigator). *Value of Library and Information Services in Patient Care Study*. A Partnership of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, Middle Atlantic Region and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. <http://nmlm.gov/mar/about/value.html>

Association of College and Research Libraries. *Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report*. Researched by Megan Oakleaf. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2010 <http://www.acrl.org/value>

METHODS

- The survey consisted of 22 questions broken down into 4 areas: 1) information need and resources used, 2) use of embedded librarian service and perceived benefits of this service, 3) perceived behavioral outcomes and benefits to work as a result of the information received, and 4) confidence in the adequacy of literature searches.
- Respondents were also asked to rate 12 library services on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being of greatest value.
- Conditional branching was used to tailor survey items to survey-takers in order to capture data about specific categories of information need. Categories were education, administration, research, and clinical information use.
- The survey was distributed to faculty, fellows, and housestaff/residents in the Schools of Medicine and Public Health via email distribution lists and the School of Nursing through an intranet site.



Sample of Survey Questions

7. Did you use the services of a Welch Medical Library informationist?

1. Have you ever used the Welch Medical Library resources (either by phone, online, or in-person)?

9. Would you recommend the informationist service to others?

10. What are the benefits of using an informationist service? (Select all that apply)

3. Which of the following categories best describes your most recent inquiry/need for information from the Welch Medical Library?

4. What type of information did you need to answer your question? (Select all that apply)

16. What aspect of your work benefited from this information? (Select all that apply)

18. How frequently are you able to answer questions that you think could be answered by a search of the published literature?

20. What resources do you use? (Select all that apply)

21. How satisfied are you with your ability to obtain answers?

22. Rate the value of the following current and potential library services. Please use the ten-point scale below, with "1" meaning not valuable and "10" meaning very valuable.

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FINDINGS

- The response rate was 10.8% based on 809 completed surveys out of a possible 7,490.
- The use of survey questions from previous studies allowed the Library to compare responses to those from other institutions.
- Exact comparisons to other institutions were not possible for every survey item because of differences in the populations studied.
- Although prior library assessment surveys were used as a guide, it was important to use only the questions that would help us measure the impact of our daily work and also be most persuasive to administrators.
- The involvement of the Vice Dean of Education contributed to the identification of outcomes of interest to University administrators.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

- The survey design allowed the Assessment Committee to collect important data about the value and impact of library services and resources from faculty, fellows, and housestaff/residents.
- The use of survey items from previously published studies allowed for comparisons to peer institutions. These comparisons could be communicated by the Library Director to University administrators.
- Areas of improvement for future assessments include removing obstacles to marketing and distributing surveys and determining the best times to survey a very busy population.