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National Newsletter National Newsletter National Newsletter

July 1994

Getting Serious about Serials

Claims, claims, claims, discounts and claims are the main areas of interest to medical librarians according to Geraldine Barkworth, EBSCO Australia's company representative.

The *Sussing out Serials* meeting at Lidcombe Hospital (NSW) in April, was intended to be a forum for suppliers to present their services but conversation centred upon the usual concerns of medial librarians rather than the high technology and customised services offered by serials subscription agencies.

Issues such as document delivery (EBSCO is about to release its own version featuring the British Library TOC service and the ADONIS database), supplier interfaces with library software, on-line services, EBSCO's own CD-ROM products, customised reporting services, and missing copy banks were of a ap-

parently low priority when compared to getting publishers to honour missing issue claims.

Another area which raised considerable discussion was the benefits of consolidated or airfreight delivery services which are offered by most subscription agencies.

Ms Barkworth reported that, at the end of the day, subscription agencies cannot take responsibility for the final receipt of journal issues, delays in postal services and mis-delivery of mail within institutions, solvency of publishers, nor the ability of publishers to run adequate subscription fulfilment for their publications.

"All subscription agents take pride in their ability to process non-receipt claims quickly, responses from publishers are a very different matter and often require local contact in the country of publication to gain a response."

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President's Column Editor's Desk

Stranded on the Superhighway

The varieties of electronic mail available to libraries continue to proliferate; 18 million customers use the Internet, and the number grows daily.

In the computer industry in general we have seen that as the number of users increases the cost of use to the individual user decreases, at times dramatically.

Electronic mail is cheaper than post for many applications. Certainly a local fax is an economical alternative to sending a letter across town.

We who are responsible for producing the best financial outcomes for our institutions have both a right and a responsibility to use electronic mail, in one form or another, for speed accuracy and economy. Courses are offered by State libraries, library schools and telecommunications companies and I encourage all librarians who have the basic equipment available to use electronic mail whenever they can.

If not, at least make sure that you know about its applications, impact and costs because sometime soon you will need to know about it so you don't get stranded on the "Information Super-highway."

HLS National Executive 1994.

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It's very quiet out there...

Anyone who has had the pleasure of editing an association, club or interest group newsletter will know that it is hard to get contributors.

I will even go out on a limb and say that every editor has written in a editorial at some time words to the effect of "it's your newsletter .. we need your input".

Well, I would hate to break with tradition so I'll repeat the mantra, "contribute ... ohmmm ... contribute ...ohmmm ... contribute ...".

I'll leave it at that, and wait for your input.

Seriously Serials

We are having a look at serials in this issue and, in particular, subscription agents and service expectations.

While these areas are covered in other ALIA Section Newsletters, particularly that of the ASSIG, it occurs to me that health librarians may not be members of that section and may miss out on some valuable information.

Serials are likely to be your largest cost centre next to wages. Because a serials collection is a tangible asset that devalues very quickly if it gets out of control, unlike your monograph collections, serials really do need special attention.

Just imagine how much attention a million dollar photocopier would get at your institution.

Serials are one of those subjects that always comes up when librarians meet. Who are good suppliers, how much my budget has been cut, etc.

If you have had experience of any new or innovative serials service, be it good or bad, let us all know about it. Nothing defamatory please.

National Minimum Standards for Hospital Libraries

Second Edition Update

The Health libraries Section Subcommittee on the National Minimum Standards for Hospital Libraries has completed the final draft of the Standards which has now been sent to the National Executive.

As Chair of the subcommittee I would like to thank my fellow committee members, Judith Weaver (Secretary), Tricia Aguardo, Fay Heikkila, Barbara Mew, Ruth Murray, and Virginia Staggs.

Their original ideas and hard work has resulted in a set of standards which will assist all hospital librarians across Australia.

I would also like to thank all of the State Groups and individuals who have made valuable suggestions and provided constructive criticism.

Paul Davies
Chair, Subcommittee on National
Minimum Standards for Hospital Libraries.

Conference Update

Powhiri anyone?

**NZLIA/ALIA Conference,
Wellington.**

26 - 30 September, 1994

Delegates to the NZLIA/ALIA Conference will be welcomed to Wellington in traditional Maori style on Sunday 25 September. The powhiri ceremony, to be held on Pipitea Marae, a Maori meeting place in central Wellington, enables the local Maori to extend their hospitality to all visitors and is characterised by whaikōero (speeches in Maori), waiata (song) and haka (a feast).

John Dawkins, ex-Treasurer, and Edward Durie, Chief Judge of the Maori Land Court, are the keynote speakers for the plenary session, *Embarking Together*, on Tuesday.

The Wednesday plenary session, *Social trends in the next five years*, will be presented by Sharon Crosby, a journalist, broadcaster and past head of the NZ advisory committee on Core Health Services. Her co-presenter for this session will be Australian journalist Brian Toohey.

Professor Brian Brooks will present the plenary session on Thursday, *Strategies for Co-operation within a Deregulated Society*. Professor Brooks is currently the Director of Executive Programs at the Australian Graduate School of Management.

Early bird registration will cost members A\$300.00, non-members A\$350.00. The standard rate from 31 July will be A\$350.00/A\$400.00. Remember, New Zealand has a GST of 12.5%.

Synergy in Sydney

**Specials, Health and Law 1995.
Positions vacant and positions filled**

At last the Convenor of the Programming Committee has been appointed and the next stage of planning can get started.

Elizabeth Swan from the State Library of NSW is to head the Committee, with Frances Bluhdorn and Rolf Schafer as Health Library Representatives. Frances will also be the Convenor of the Proceedings Committee.

But we still need volunteers for the Programming Committee, a "core" committee that needs your ideas. Frances is keen to get the group together soon so that Health can start brainstorming to be ready for the general conference committee.

Representatives can be from anywhere in the Health Libraries community, including small hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, higher education, community health, consumer affairs and social welfare, as well as from the traditional hospital based libraries. Country representatives are welcome.

To volunteer for this key committee, or just to put your two bobs' worth in, call Frances Bluhdorn on Phone (02) 795 9603, Fax (02) 795 9955, or on ILANET MLN212100 (NMSD).

We look forward to your input.

*Kay Vincent
Health Convenor*

How to help stop the suffering in Rwanda

You can help stop the suffering in Rwanda by supporting Community Aid Abroad's Rwanda Appeal.

The Appeal was launched in May to raise funds for shelter, water and sanitation in the refugee camps of Tanzania, Burundi and Zaire. The funds will be disbursed through Oxfam International offices in each of these countries.

Community Aid Abroad (CAA) is an Australian development aid organisation which operates community based projects in many parts of the world as well as in aboriginal communities in Australia.

CAA also provides funds for emergency relief in countries such as Rwanda, India and anywhere people are in need of immediate assistance.

Please help to support CAA and the international aid efforts for Rwanda through a cash donation.

**You can contact Community Aid Abroad
on 008 034 034,**

**or send your donation to:
Community Aid Abroad Rwanda Appeal,
GPO Box 9920 in your capital city.**

Understanding what subscription agents can - and can't - do for you

As Geraldine Barkworth reported on page one of this issue, it is claims, discounts and delivery services that are still uppermost in librarians minds when thinking about serials. These are the same questions that subscription agents have been fielding for years and, largely, the same answers still apply.

Medical librarians tend to feel that they are poorly served by serials publishers and suppliers. This is simply not the case but the common perception of serials as a "problem" area prevails and, I believe, discourages many from becoming more involved and knowledgeable about their supplier's services, serials publishing in general and, at times, their own collections.

There are few similarities that can be drawn between serials and other information sources. The key point to remember when thinking about serials is don't compare them to books, photocopiers, stationary or widgets.

Few Discounts

Discounts. Put simply, there are none. Expectations of discounts for serials stems, I believe, from the discounts given by booksellers and the fact that many booksellers also supply serials.

But the economics of serials and book publishing and their distribution systems are very different. The discounts given by publishers of periodicals to subscription agents (if any) is often less than a quarter of those allowed by book publishers to booksellers.

Subscription agencies can really only begin to think about discounts for: libraries with very large collections; those libraries that can prepay all or a part of their annual bill; or those that offer a period supply contract.

Claims

Medical libraries are really not so poorly served by publishers. If you are in doubt about this take a trip down to your local public library. Compare the claim rates to the serials vote as well as the actual user demand for each individual issue.

The main income source for STM publishers is from prepaid subscriptions to libraries and, by and large, these publishers are extremely reliable.

But even given the usual reliability of STM publishers, any library that reviews their serials records for claims only every three months or so, or only when an issue is noticed missing by users, is wasting its time.

That library may as well not bother to chase up missing issues at all; and blaming a subscription agent for non-receipt when the library has no systematic or real-

istic claiming procedure in place is simply avoiding its share of the blame. Subscription agencies can do little if they do not know about a problem until it's too late.

Naturally all agencies will try their best to claim missing issues from publishers regardless of when you claim, but the success rate falls dramatically after the first month. If you are in doubt about whether to claim or not, *do*. Your agent will tell you if you are claiming too regularly.

Also, don't expect to receive your claimed issue tomorrow. It can and usually does take months for overseas titles to get to you, weeks for local titles. There is no problem with the system. This is just how long it takes.

The myth of consolidation

The commonly held belief that consolidation services will solve all of your serials headaches is false.

Many agencies offer consolidation services and most work well and economically. These services can speed up supply dramatically, improve the reliability of problem titles, reduce the cost of some titles through local buying in the country of origin, as well as ensure that you receive special issues and editions that may not be offered to international subscribers.

It is critical point, however, to find out exactly how the consolidation system works down to the fine details. Are issues ordered and received in other countries or locally? Are claims made upon initial receipt or by a second process? With air freight consolidation is the price of freight built in to your overall charge or charged separately? What is the capitalisation of the consolidation service and who are the overseas partners, if any? In complex delivery systems such as these every minute detail will have its effect on overall performance. Time consuming as it may be, you cannot afford to ignore them.

Consolidation services will not replace your serials section nor some of the recording, checking and following-up. They will help, but the library is still responsible for keeping tabs on their collection and giving meaningful feedback to the agency.

There are no quick fixes to serials "problems" nor any guarantees that what works with one collection will work in another location. The key to regaining control of your serials collection is to listen to your suppliers, understand how it all fits together, and, importantly, never turn your back on it.

Grahame Manns
Editor, *HLS National Newsletter*

Periodical price projections for 1995

Australian libraries could expect to pay about 3.5% to 5.5% more for European journals and from 3% to 5% more for US published journals in 1995 according to early economic indicators.

Although the major international publishers have not yet set their 1995 prices, European journals have traditionally seen price increases of 10% each year while US based, research oriented publications have shown an 11% annual increase.

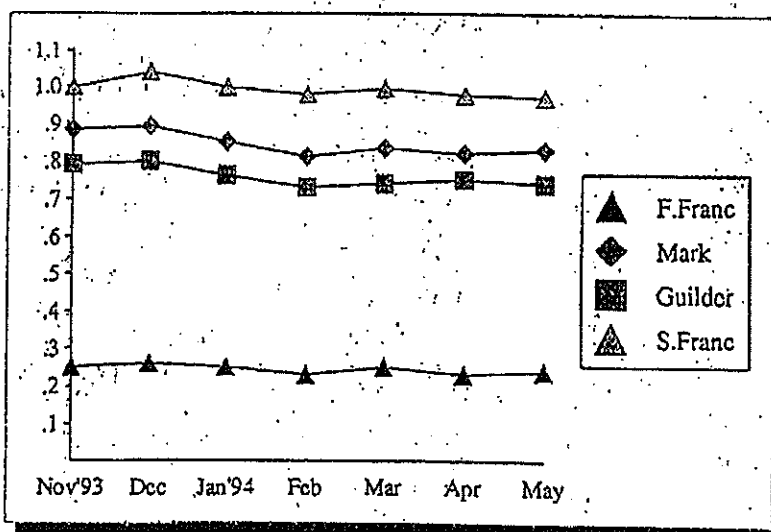
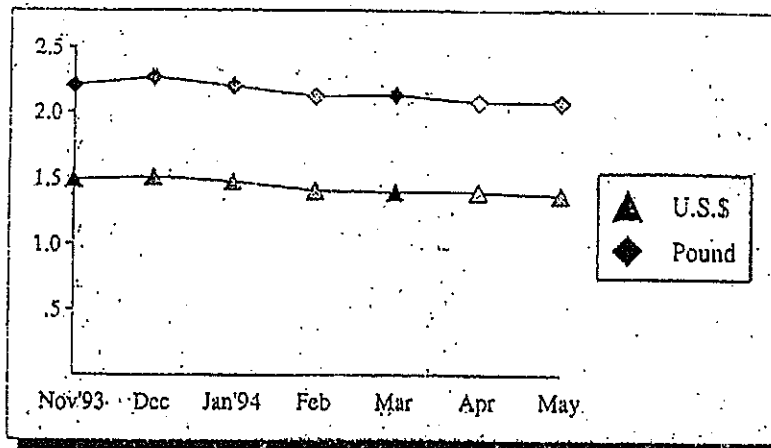
As always, the key to what you will pay at the end of the day will be the value of the Australian dollar during October and November when most agencies will be invoicing.

As of mid-May the Australian dollar was about 4.2% stronger against the major European currencies (Sterling, D Mark, Swiss Franc, Guilder), and around 6.5% stronger against the US\$ than it was last November.

This means that if Australian libraries were invoiced now publisher price increases would be offset by as much as 6.5%. Naturally this will depend upon individual libraries collection profiles but it is recommended that librarians allow for at least an 11% increase in the price of their overseas periodicals.

The charts below show the fairly positive performance of the Pacific Peso (better known as the A\$) since the end of 1993 which will help librarians keep their serials expenditure to budget in 1995. However, anything can happen between now and renewal time and it might be a good time to talk to your agent about prepayment or other ways of locking in the current high value of the A\$.

(Price projection and charts courtesy of EBSCO Australia Subscription Services)



Serials Management with Inmagic Plus

Inmagic Plus is used by special, law and health librarians in Australia and around the world to assist with the usual, and the unusual, aspects of library management.

Inmagic Plus is a text based product which combines the power of a full text retrieval system as well as the features traditional database.

This means that information can be sorted and controlled via various fields (author, title, subject, etc.) as with any database, but also that the number of fields and the length of those fields are unlimited. The only constraint on the size of your records and databases is the amount of space you have on your hard disk.

To make setting up Inmagic Plus easier, librarians can use the Library Guide. The Library Guide is a diskette which contains pre-formatted database structures and report formats such as spine labels, order forms, and catalogue cards. The diskette also has a complete user manual as well as tips and guidelines for users.

The Library Guide can partially installed allowing users to use only those parts that are of interest to them or to fully installed and modified to your own requirements.

The serials component of the Library Guide is divided into the SERMAN database, controlling the bibliographic and financial aspects of the collection, and the CHECKIN database which, as the name implies, looks after your day to day receipt records.

Whether you design your own database or use the Library Guide, automated library systems will help save time and money managing your serials. Inmagic Plus can order and claim missing issues from publishers or suppliers, check in and circulate new issues, track holdings, estimate costs and keep budgets, produce circulation slips, and manage your renewals.

When setting up an automated system to manage your serials there are many ways that you can save time and money. If your suppliers can supply data on diskette or tape this information can be converted into the Inmagic format and downloaded into your database.

A number of suppliers can supply their clients with full MARC format data, notably GLOBE and EBSCO Australia, who deliver full MARC format, and also have their own interfaces with Inmagic. This can save considerable time and effort when establishing your database or handling your annual renewals and these services are usually provided by suppliers to their clients free of charge.

While the amount of time spent on daily check in of serials issues will not change. However, the amount of time you spend on every other aspect of serials control will be reduced, except, maybe, for arguing with your administrators.

For more details about automated serials management call Helen Jones at Trimagic Software on (02) 413 1799.

Shock horror: new library opens!

The Library of Holistic Health

Ever wanted to open your own library? Joanna Carroll and Glenda Pryor did, and received a grant from ALIA's ASSIG to produce their own publication, *The Directory of Holistic Serials 1993*.

Both Carroll and Pryor are working librarians who run the library of holistic health in their spare time. They have a small, but growing, collection of serials and as well as some monographs. The library is located in bustling Wentworth Falls in the Blue Mountains near Sydney.

The library's biggest task to date has been producing the Directory which, Carroll and Pryor admit, is incomplete, despite using resources such as APIP, ABN, Ulrichs, NUCOS, and abstracting services like APAIS, Australian Medical Index and the British Complementary Medicine Index.

The aim is to eventually provide an abstracting and indexing service in holistic health as well as build a collection of AV materials for loan. They also aim to record the medical knowledge of indigenous peoples throughout Australia and the Pacific.

The Library has the support of many Sydney based holistic health practices and colleges but do not have any ongoing financial support to fully develop the potential of its collection. At present it does not even have a fax machine.

If your library is discarding any backruns of serials, monographs or other materials The Library of Holistic Health would love to hear about it before it reaches the recycling bin. The Library can be reached by writing to either of the Librarians, 7 Walmar Crescent, Wentworth Falls NSW 2782.

Outsourcing for hospital libraries

Roslyn Jackson, ISA Australia

The current "in" word in management is **OUTSOURCING ... but the concept is not new for hospitals. Hospitals have used outsourcing as an economical and effective method of running their organisations for decades.**

The philosophy behind outsourcing, according to Rory Graham, is that "organisations should concentrate on their 'core' business." Contracting out services such as catering and laundry are typical activities for hospitals, allowing them to concentrate on the provision of medical services.

Hospital librarians who use subscription agents to order their serials are also in the forefront of outsourcing. John Cox at the 8th NASIG Conference claims that "eighty percent of the subscription business goes through subscription agencies" and this shows that librarians are already aware of the need to outsource specific library tasks. Richard Rowe is still concerned that "information professionals [who] continue to focus on collecting and storing books as their primary mission, ...are in danger of being relegated to the sidelines in the information marketplace."

Librarians are going one step further - they are outsourcing the accessioning, claiming and preparation of serials for shelving. This is a process that has been variously called "accessioning", "check in", or "consolidation" by subscription agents.

The outsourcing of accessioning of serials is relatively new in Australia ISA Australia began its service in 1989 and was, for most of the time since then, the only agent servicing Australian clients that offered the service on all titles, regardless of country of origin. Swets offered the service much earlier and others, such as EBSCO and FAXON offer the service for European and North American titles only. [Co-Op Subscriptions began their limited consolidation service in 1990, ALPS began a consolidation service for all titles in 1989 but ceased trading in 1991. EBSCO's service dates back to the mid 1970's. ed.]

One reason why Australia was a latecomer to the outsourcing of accessioning was that it was only offered as a method of "air speeding" titles from overseas which proved expensive. When ISA Australia tried to introduce a more economical surface mail service in the early 1980's, this also proved to be unpopular because of budgetary constraints. Librarians had to keep acquisition costs separate from the

cost of wages and other running costs. Outsourcing added to acquisition costs and saved more than that on wages - but the savings were not allowed to offset the extra costs, even though the overall savings were substantial.

Accessioning, labelling, taping and claiming are one complete job - the serials arrive and are processed ready for shelving or routing. These jobs lend themselves to outsourcing - it is not a matter of professionalism or control as to where they are performed. Librarians are able to clearly define their requirements and make the necessary arrangements with the subscription agent and, under global budgetting, redeploy staff.

There is a fear that outsourcing will mean downsizing. In practice, the only time this has occurred is then management had a prior need for down-sizing and outsourcing was one of the methods to allow this decision to be implemented. ISA Australia is not aware of any introduction of outsourcing that has resulted in staff reduction, unless downsizing has been a previous management demand. In all cases, the staff released have been trained in new jobs, often with an upgrade.

Accessioning outsourcing has also led to more complete serials collections. This is because a faster claim system operates by recognising earlier that an issue has been missed with an earlier, more effective claim to the publisher. Also, while a single issue may go missing in the mail, whole boxes of serials delivered to the library from the accessioneer are less likely to disappear.

Outsourcing accessioning can also give benefits like decreasing the amount of paperwork related to renewals, and avoiding the need to increase or decrease staff numbers with serials workflows.

The only downside is the occasional delay by some publishers in reacting to changes of address. This problem can be overcome by appropriate action by the library and the agent. There is also the need to monitor the collection to see that no gaps appear.

Hospital librarians are more aware than most of the outsourcing that has been effective in their organisations. Hospitals now concentrate on the provision of medical services. Similarly, librarians can now concentrate on the provision of information services.

From the literature

AFES V B Biomedical journal title changes: reasons, trends and impact. *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*. 81(1) Jan 1993 48-53.

Study was conducted to document the impact of biomedical journal title changes on medical libraries and to increase awareness of the reasons titles are changed. The study consists of two parts: a survey of academic health science libraries in the US and Canada, and an analysis of title changes for two years. The survey response was 83%. The majority of respondents commented on the difficulty of identifying and processing title changes, often resulting in a delay or loss of information. Analysis revealed that a third of title changes were not justified by the journal. There is a need to standardize title change reporting by publishers. One such established by the national Information Standards Organization requires publishers to conform to standardized notification practices. Librarians are urged to ensure that the standard is adhered to by publishers.

PRESTON N Can virtue be regulated? an examination of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission proposals for a code of conduct for public officials in Queensland. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*. 51 (4) Dec 1992 410-415.

Having in mind that the NSW Dept Health has a code of ethics that nobody reads this paper is timely. It reviews the proposed code and accompanying ethics regime under consideration. It discusses how ethics can enhance good government and canvasses the need to educate officials within an ethics regime. Considered nurturing virtue in the public sector while discussing the place of a code in ethical theory. Written from a professional ethicist's point of view, the paper is one of the most lucid written on the subject.

BAKER N Annals of scholarship, discards. *New Yorker* 4 April 1994 64-86.

America's great libraries are scrapping the card catalogue in favour of the more accessible on-line system, and many librarians are toasting the demise of the musty dog-eared file card and the bookish image it projects. But are they also destroying their most important and irreplaceable contribution to scholarship? Sees the catalogues as artifacts, some of which should be preserved, as ancient lists have been, frozen in time. Very instructive summary of librarian attitudes, written delightfully.

BURDICK A J Citation patterns in the health sciences; implications for serials/monographic fund allocation. *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*. 81(1) Jan 1993 44-47.

Compares citation frequency with current library practice. Internal medicine literature cited an average of 88% serial references and 12% monographs. In an observational study, teaching physicians on internal medicine rounds cited 89.5% serials and 10.5% monographs. By contrast, health science libraries in the study spend 79% of acquisitions budgets for serials and 21% for monographs. An 88:12 budget ratio would be more appropriate reflecting actual use of serials and monographs.

LOWE H J Understanding and using the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) vocabulary to perform literature searches. *JAMA* 271 (14) April 13 1994 1103-1108.

Reviews the structure and use of MeSH, directed to the non-expert, and outlines how MeSH may help solve a number of common difficulties when searching MEDLINE. The increasing importance of MEDLINE as an information resource and the trend towards individuals performing their own bibliographical searches makes it crucial that health care professionals become familiar with MeSH. This paper is a credit to non librarian authors and every terminal should have a copy beside it.

OKUMA H Selecting CD-ROM databases for nursing students: a comparison of MEDLINE and CINAHL. *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*. 82(1) Jan 1994 25-35.

From 8 topics study compared search results for number retrieved, unique or overlapping records, relevance and appropriateness. Develops quantifiable tools. Although CINAHL is preferable for nursing students, MEDLINE has more unique citations.

TSAFRIR J Dangers of acronymophilia. [letter] *Radiology* 189 (3) Dec 1993 924.

In a literature search for serum thymic factor the author used the acronym STF. This yielded 21 other acronyms including slow twitch fibres. Now that many users are performing their own searches, a watchful librarian hovering on the sidelines can only warn that one man's STF is not necessarily another man's STF and beg you all to *Slowly Type in Full*.

*Ian Stubbin, Group Librarian
Eastern Sydney Area Health Service*

New Publications

***Could it be HIV? The clinical recognition of HIV infection.* Graeme Stewart, ed.**

76 pp Kingsgrove, Australasian Medical publishing Co., 1993 ISBN 8-5557-0318

This publication is a compilation from a series of special articles which appeared earlier in the Medical Journal of Australia from January to March, 1993. The book contains 26 chapters covering the recognition of HIV infection following clinical presentation written by doctors with extensive experience in HIV medicine and produced by the Australian Society for HIV Medicine. The book contains photographs, colour illustrations and a large number of case histories.

This is a major Australia work in health sciences and is recommended for all health libraries.

Already recognised as prescribed reading for all Australian GPs by the Commonwealth DHHLGCS, it has also been praised for its clarity and illustrations by overseas doctors. The reviewer in the International Journal of STD and AIDS thoroughly recommends this "super" book to all.

The book can be purchased from AMPS for A\$20.00 and enquiries for bulk purchases can be made to Prof. Graeme Stewart at the Department of Immunology at Westmead Hospital, NSW (fax 02 633 3889).

A kit of 200 slides is also available from Prof Stewart covering all of the photographs, tables, figures and case histories covered in the book and are sold on a cost recovery basis.

Linda Mulheron Westmead Hospital Library.

***Allergies and other environmental illnesses: a practice handbook for doctors.* by Dr Robert McEvoy**

A new release from The Environmental Allergy Centre in WA is a setp-by-step approach written for Australian conditions in plain English and is aimed at GPs.

Covering areas such as the role of diet, occupational asthma, sick building syndrome and preven-

tion, the book has been well received by practitioners around the country.

The book runs to 260 pages, costs \$49.50 (p&p included) and is available from the Environmental Allergy Centre, PO Box 250, Mt Lawley WA 6050 (Tel: 09 370 2024) or from your bookseller.

Directory of Hardware and Software use in Health and Special Libraries in South Australia

No-one who has had the task of automating a library would say that the choice of systems and software is an easy decision. It is one which will have a major impact upon your entire organisation, both financially and in terms of your ability to provide quality information services.

Which software is best for a health library? Which vendor provides the most comprehensive training and support? What system configuration will best serve future needs? Where do I start?

A new publication from South Australia aims to help by listing software use in more than 100 South Australian special libraries. Researched and produced by Justine Kwan and Elizabeth Byrne, final year library science students, and sponsored by the SA Health Libraries Section, the *Directory* is a cheap and effective way to get in contact with current users of a wide range of electronic library services.

The *Directory* not only covers automation software but also lists what type of equipment libraries are using, word processing and spreadsheet packages used, modems and communications software, details of networking, AARNet and Internet use, on-line services used, CD-ROM equipment and databases, as well as contact names and phone numbers for each library.

The *directory* is available to ALIA Members for only \$5.00, non-member \$7.00, and can be ordered from Sue Rockliffe at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, 28 Woodville Road, Woodville South, SA 5011, phone (08) 345 0222 fax: (08) 243 6806. (Orders with payment only.)



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