

MEDICAL LIBRARIANS' GROUP. (Victorian Branch) Newsletter, November 1973.

Minutes of the meeting held November 14th.

Apologies were received from Mrs Helen Cotsell, Mrs Margaret Finger, Miss Jean Foreman, Miss Anne McLean, Miss Heather McDonald, Miss Marjorie Pinder, and a welcome was extended to some visitors. Among them were Mrs Pam Hill and Mrs Beryl Miles, from Geelong, and David Oswell from Nicholas.

Mention was made of our last regular meeting, on 14th August, at which our guest speaker was Mr. I.A. Walshe, Supervisor of Victoria Hospital Sector, no. 1. On Mr. Walshe's instigation we intend to write to the three supervisors of the key sectors in Victoria, (no. 1, 3 & 5) on an official basis offering advice and the services of panel of consultants on the establishment and maintenance of a hospital library. We would also like to offer to match a country hospital against a city hospital for help with I.L.L. procedures, etc.

Mr. Walshe also made some other suggestions, among them being the compilation of lists of suggested basic books and journals for a small medical library. The latter list is almost completed, and we feel we should tackle the former in the early new year. He suggested we contact the Mayfield Centre, which covers information about paramedical careers and training available in Victoria, regarding the insertion of information about medical librarianship in the Centre's publication. He also mentioned the possibility of a display relating to our work which we could erect at the Centre.

Based on Mr. Walshe's feelings about help we could give from our experience, we were interested to see a manual on medical libraries in small hospitals which was published by the University of California. On reading it through, though, we feel that by using this as a guide, we may well be able to do better ourselves. This could be another project for 1974, the preliminary work perhaps being done by a small sub-committee co-opted for the purpose.

The Medical Superintendent of the Wimmera Hospital at Horsham has contacted Mrs Baillie for advice on their future library development. Mrs Baillie has replied offering to organize one week's intensive training for the library assistant in Melbourne. It is envisaged that the training should be hospital orientated rather than university.

The conveners were approached by the medical records librarian at Moe over a similar problem. We replied emphasizing the importance of professional guidance, and again offering to train the appointed assistant. We have had no reply to this letter, but as Mrs Baillie is due to speak to the Sector Board on 3rd Dec., we feel that they may be waiting until after her visit to reply.

Mrs Baillie and Mrs Baker are due to visit Geelong hospital shortly, as Geelong is to become a Monash University hospital, to discuss library provision and services. They will also investigate the possibility of a scholarship in medical librarianship as proposed by the Hospital and Charities Commission.

The Medical Librarians' Group Directory has reached the final stages. We intend to have about 2,500 copies of the designed page printed. About 50 of these will be circulated to each library for completion of their own specific detail. The printing is expected to cost in the region of \$65-70. With this cost in mind, we are hoping that individual libraries will bear the cost of some form of cover, wither plastic or cardboard.

Hospital librarians have at last been granted a pay rise. They are now aligned to the same scale as radiographers, physiotherapists, medical illustrators, etc. It is thought that strong support from various hospital administrators gave weight to our claims, deferring at least for the moment, the need for a work value study.

A special meeting was called on September 25, to discuss the STISEC report. Mrs Baillie chaired the meeting, which proved most stimulating. Mrs Baillie asked members to forward their thoughts on STISEC to her to complete her submission to the AACOBS committee. She was very pleased with the response, but found the compilation of ideas and suggestions a very difficult task indeed. The final submission draft is due to be presented at the AACOBS meeting at La Trobe Univ., on 28th November.

We feel that some contact with inter-state groups should be made regularly. Rather than send our Newsletter to the various conveners, we feel that a precise form of our activities should be sent to the Special Libraries News for publication. The conveners have sent them a note of activities to date this year.

Mrs Marion Roch and Mrs Val Strantzen, librarians from the Austin and Repatriation General Hospital respectively, have been inveigled into taking over the position of co-conveners from Jan. 1974. The retiring conveners wish them good luck for their term of office. Meetings are proposed for 12th February, 14th May, 13th August and 12th November. Some suggestions for meetings next year include a speaker from the Melbourne Medical Postgraduate Committee, and possibly Miss Carmel McQuire who would talk to us about the information needs of medical research workers. We feel that work on the suggested booklist should be initiated at our first meeting next year, with the possibility of finalizing it at a workshop type meeting later in the year.

The bank balance of the M.L.G. stands at \$140.68.

Miss Harrison then spoke briefly on the meeting of medical librarians in Perth, which was held at the conclusion of the Conference. Although Miss Harrison has thoughts of circulating the minutes of the meeting, or at least publishing them in Special Libraries News, some of the following points are of interest. A.C.T., N.S.W. have both established active branches of the Medical Librarians' Group. S.A. has had problems in starting due to personnel changes. Unfortunately, no representative from Queensland was present, but there was one from Papua New Guinea, Margaret Saville. It is anticipated that 1974 should see Australia-wide coverage. The suggestion was made that each group should produce a list of all their member libraries, to be later cumulated at a national level. Mention was made of the STISEC Report, and the compilation of a union list of periodicals. The librarian from the Commonwealth Department of Health has produced a union list of periodical in A.C.T. Recommendation was strongly made for each library to correct their own listing of journal titles, even if this was only done in an unpublished form, such as the C.M.L.O. union list. A long discussion was held on the role of the National Library in the field of medicine. It was felt that much could be gained by either librarians travelling to Canberra, or speakers talking to individual groups, to see and hear about the work of the National Library in liaison with the National Library of Medicine. There are hopes that eventually the National Library will hold all journals covered by the services they provide, e.g., all journals covered by MEDLARS. Mention was made of I.L.L. difficulties - this being one of the main criticisms of the STISEC Report where the I.L.L. would be based on the delivery of photocopies. W.A. in particular have such delays with the postal service from the Eastern states that immediate use is often made of the National Lending Library at Boston Spa for material not held in W.A. It was thought that affiliation with the Medical Library Association (U.S.A.) should be on a national rather than state level.

Mrs Baillie then gave a most interesting talk on MEDLARS from the point of view of the user - the paper she presented at the Perth Conference.

She based her paper on a letter circulated to approximately 50 librarians of likely users about all aspects of use. The basic use made of MEDLARS from short staffed hospital libraries tended to be for comparatively easy searches, whilst those from the larger reference orientated libraries tended to be confirmatory in nature.

MEDLARS did seem to have an increased effect on the I.L.L. work load of any library using it, but this would be a natural outcome of any new service. It would presumably be balanced by the time saved in manual reference work. It was definitely felt to provide a better overall service, whether it was used as the basic service, or as an alternative to more traditional methods. Criticisms of MEDLARS were based mainly on the time lag involved, the complexity of the forms used, and the unavailability of the print-out on cards.

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The Current Awareness Service was highly praised by users. The discussion over search coverage showed a great need for librarians to know more about the mechanics of MEDLARS - preferably by on the spot tuition in Canberra.

The prospect of charging for the service at some future date was raised, and with this in mind, it was felt that arguments should be prepared in advance for the case in favour of continued free access. To date, no cost-benefit study has been made, but obviously this would need to be carried out first, should the question of charging ever be raised.

Mrs Baillie's final point was that some system of staff grading should be established within the MEDLARS section of the National Library, so that promotion could exist within the service, rather than run the risk of officers with long experience being promoted out of the service.

Miss Harrison then spoke briefly of the main points outlined in the paper she presented - Special libraries in the 1980's. She based a good deal of her thoughts on the 1972 Annual Report of the National Library of Medicine, and gave a resume of the expected services to be provided by N.L.M. in 1974; some of them, such as MEDLINE, are to be introduced in Australia in the near future. She mentioned a number of problems we may face in the 1980's with the change-over of health care administration, and the possible increase in the use of paramedical professions.

The question had been posed of the role of the large centralized teaching hospitals, and whether or not they are to be the pattern for the future. She concluded her talk with a mention of some services provided by N.L.M. which are not directly related to medicine, i.e., Biomedical Information Communication Systems; the manufacture and use of audio-visual material; and satellite T.V. for transmission of televised medical care.

Both Mrs Baillie's and Miss Harrison's papers will be published in the next issue of Special Libraries News.

Miss Amy Bush proposed a vote of thanks to both speakers, and the evening concluded with a wine and cheese supper.