

The Integration of Librarians in Health Research Teams: The Researchers' Perspective*

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Abstract

Introduction

Librarians have adopted various strategies that reflect their professional relevance, incorporating their specific knowledge into teaching and learning initiatives, but also into research. Close collaboration in health research projects, conducted by both teachers and health professionals, is a developing objective. The scientific literature has little explored the pattern of collaboration between the academic and the librarian on research topics other than the library or information science. Medical literature is the exception, where the librarian collaborates regularly in the preparation and publication of review articles, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses. To a lesser extent, the health librarian has also collaborated on other, equally important tasks in the research process, such as preparing documentation for funding, writing manuscripts, or collecting and analyzing data.

Aim of the study

To reflect on the perspective that researchers have of librarians' competencies to integrate health research teams.

Methods

The methodology used is based on two moments: the literature review and the interview about the researchers' perspective. The interview is semi-structured, it took place together with a selective sample of researchers and its results were analyzed qualitatively.

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Results

The literature review listed a set of skills that researchers define as essential for the integration of librarians in health research teams: the elaboration of preliminary information searches for a better definition of the scope under study; the selection of databases according to contents, search terms and search platform/interface; the translation of the research question into main concepts; the development of the search string; the documentation of procedures and research results; the optimization of results and references management; the contribution for the writing of the final manuscript; the procedures related to the curatorship of research data; the scrutiny related to intellectual property; the documentation for publication; the publication guidance for journals, i.e., where to publish according to the research scope, funding criteria and journal visibility; the identification of predatory publishers; the dissemination of the published article; the identification of funding sources for research; and, finally, having a solid knowledge of the English language and communication skills. The results point to a collaboration culture and a valuable partnership between researchers and librarians when facing major health challenges.

Conclusions

Librarians and researchers can ensure a collaborative culture in health research teams. With the skills inherent in their profession and the investment to gathering new knowledge, librarians can be a prerequisite for involvement and successful participation in the health research team.

Keywords: Research Partner, Research Team, Librarianship, Culture Collaboration, Health Sciences.

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