

ACTIVITIES OF MEDICAL STAFF AND THE ROLE OF THE MEDICAL RESEARCH LIBRARY (MRL) IN THE ERA OF NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

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The Medical Research Library of Latvia has developed many facilities for using new information technologies. MRL collects, organizes and disseminates scientific and other information in medicine and related fields to advance progress in medicine and public health in Latvia.

In order to study the degree of application of electronic information technologies by medical staff, a questionnaire was conducted during December 98 – January 99. This questionnaire was completed at the library, and at medical establishments in Riga and other districts. 598 medical specialists (including scientists, physicians, hospital nurses and medical students) were asked to fill in the form (concerning age, profession, residence and possibility to use electronic technologies in the process of information receiving).

Our investigation shows, for example, that about 36% of the interviewed medical specialists of Riga are knowledgeable of new information technologies and can use them, whereas in other districts of Latvia the respective percentage is only 15%. We noticed great interest among medical staff in foreign journals available in CD-ROM and on-line databases. Many specialists search regularly in the Internet. Unfortunately, new information technologies are currently available only for medical staff in Riga.

The analysis allows us to make conclusions about the kind of assistance we can offer to the medical staff of different districts using the information facilities of the main library and its nine branches.

The library plans its activities to make up for a deficiency in scientific information. We offer bibliographical service: literature lists on any medical theme of interest (edited on the basis of Library catalogues, CD-ROM and on-line databases etc.); monthly information lists of new acquisitions; quarterly information lists of new acquisitions in different medical fields; annual list of subscribed periodicals. Interlibrary Exchange is at users' disposal.