

Poster Session

## **Journal Subscriptions: Through the Agents or not? Cost-Benefit Calculation and New Perspectives versus the Electronic Format**

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The Library of the Istituto Superiore di Sanità – ISS (National Institute of Health) is the most important biomedical library in Italy. In its function the ISS Library collections cover multidisciplinary areas (from health physics to pharmacology, veterinary sciences, environmental sciences and so on). Nowadays, journal titles held by the Library are about 9000, the current ones are about 2250 of which the foreign journal subscriptions at the moment (leaving out materials as advances, progress etc.) amount to 1330. Since the first beginning these journals have been made subscribed by the Library through the agents. An analysis of the cost-benefit calculation is given in order to understand from experience if this kind of acquisition is convenient. There will be a presentation of statistical data over the last three years concerning the journals prices fixed by the publishers compared to the costs of the intermediaries. At the same time the efficiency and the effectiveness of the services offered by the agents are illustrated and evaluated. Finally it will be analyzed if the present situation can be challenged by the electronic format which seems to be a compelling alternative in forcing down subscription costs (consortia and /or special agreements with the publishers).