What public health teachers know about their library services and what are their needs and expectations towards a scientific library

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Introduction:
Library services are become increasingly sophisticated, with new resources and technologies deployed, and new ways of addressing user needs being developed. In this environment it is even more necessary to ensure that these services are meeting real user needs, supported by evidence where possible, and not purely based on assumptions or prior service history. The central role of information literacy in supporting teaching and learning is generally accepted, however providing effective services to meet these needs requires a common understanding between academic and library staff concerning roles and outcomes. In order to fully exploit the increasing knowledge base, and to realize the full benefits of access to both resources and expertise, awareness of the services on offer needs to be raised. This study, carried out in Poland, was set out to learn more about academic staff expectations regarding information literacy skills, and their awareness of the library's role, in order to apply the findings in practice.

The acquisition of appropriate information competences (knowledge and skills), which are the part of art of studying in general, enable students to learn more independently. Information competences enable also academic teachers to use activating methods such as problem based learning, methods which create more learning positive environment for students. Equipping students with information competences supports teaching and whole learning process. Opposite, lack of information competences is certainly an obstacle in the acomplishment of the educational goals and does not serve the improvement the quality of the educational process.

Background: The Institute of Public Health Library has developed a range of services for their users, but little is known as to whether these services are adequately used by the academic teachers and whether these services meet their needs and expectations?

There are two libraries which are supposed to serve the teachers of the IPH JU: The Library of the Institute of Public Health JU situated in the same building, which provides individual face to face user training on demand, and The Medical Library of JU situated 10 km from the Institute of Public Health, which provides on-line services, and also group and individual face to face user training on demand.

Study design:
The study was conducted in 2004 among the academic teachers of the Institute of Public Health of Jagiellonian University (purposeful convenient sample, n. 30) and carried out in three phases: 1) developing the questionnaire necessary to identify the needs and preferences of public health teachers with respect to their students' information competencies
2) investigation into existing library services 3) confrontation of the needs and expectations of the teachers with present library services, to identify possible gaps and mismatches.

The study questions were: Are academic teachers interested in enhancing the information skills of their students? Are they aware of the library services that are available for their

students and for themselves? Do they know what they can expect from information specialists/librarians when it comes to preparing their students for studying?

Methodology: Semi-structured interviews recorded, transcribed and text-analyzed. Analysis of present Medical Library and Institute of Public Health Library sources and services.

Results:
1. Most academic teachers understand the concept of students' information competencies and their value and application to their teaching. All interviewed teachers use activating methods in their teaching and want their students to be equipped with information competencies from the beginning of their studies (first, second year). The majority of teachers do not want to teach information competencies themselves in the course of their subject (module).
2. The top five information competencies (following the ACRL standard) most valued by academic staff in their students are; the ability to read text with understanding; the ability to assess the credibility of information; the ability to search for publications and other information on a task related topic; the ability to write assignments on the task related topic in a pre-determined form; the ability to synthesize information from different sources.
3. Academic teachers at IPH are not fully aware of the existing wide range of library sources and services. They do not know that most of the major databases are accessible on-line from their and their students desks. Most of them are not aware of the various support they can expect from library services and the library staff, other than very traditional (lending books, searching). There is a gap between teachers expectations of, and present information competencies training. There is no sufficient communication between library staff and academic staff in regard to adjusting IC training to meet teachers demands.

Discussion/conclusion:

The pilot study has shown that medical academic libraries should more actively inform users about their sources and services, and bring their services, especially training services, to their users more directly. Library computerized services are not sufficiently used by academic teachers because the development of marketing and educational activities are not parallel to the development of computerized library services

Continuous measurement of the use of library services and sources, and monitoring of the needs of library users has to take place if library sources and services are to be sufficiently used. Certain actions (library services and sources awareness training, better communication between librarians and academic teachers, and more intensive marketing of library services) should follow these measurements in order to adjust services to user needs.
There is a need for medical schools' librarians to become more active in academic discussion concerning educational programs in order to introduce information competences training as an obvious part of any health/medicine related curricula.