

The Menu – not to eat but good to digest. - How to improve hospital staff information literacy

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Abstract: The Medical library at the Karolinska University Hospital wanted to find a new way to reach the hospital staff to improve their information literacy. The library created a “Menu” with several “dishes” – different topics with a specified length of time, ranging from 15 minutes to 45. The wards and clinics could choose the topics that interested them and invite us to their clinic meetings and other staff-meetings. We also saw this Menu as a good way to market our library resources as well as our own professional skills.

Objective: We teach hospital staff to search Medical information through various databases and online resources, on a regular basis. However, we felt we couldn't reach everyone and we also felt hospital staff have little knowledge of library staff being a BRIDGE, between new research and its implementation with the new treatment for the patients. They could find evidence for their daily clinical work or materials for their own research. Better knowledge of how to find new information save time and leads to higher quality of the information retrieved which in turn leads to better patient's care.

The Menu is also a good marketing tool.

Methods: The Menu consists of shorter and longer presentations. In 2009 we had 13 “dishes” or topics, on the Menu. To name some: "Keep updated" (45 minutes), "Find pictures and use them" (15 minutes), "Introduction to PubMed"(30 minutes).

We send the printed Menus each semester to all clinics and departments of the hospital. The “Menu” is also available on the Library's pages on the intranet.

When a clinic contacts us we always ask them what they want us to focus on. We have discovered on some occasions that their and our approaches differ in terms of the content of our dishes. Sometime they want a mix of 2-3 topics into one. At the end of each semester, we will analyse the “Menu”, remove a topic with little or no demand. We add a new topic on proposal from the medical or the library staff.

Results The most requested dishes were "Keep updated" and "Find the right search terms/" "Introduction to PubMed". Starting year 2008, we had 15 mini-seminars (dishes) and 2009 we had 52. Amongst professionals who invited us to their meetings were for example physicians, nurses, physiotherapists and different research groups.

Conclusions: This method has proved being very useful for improving the hospital staff information literacy. We offer different kind of topics that our users probably don't know they can request. We visit the hospital staff at their workplace or clinic and therefore save their time. They appreciate that they can choose the topic and decide the length of time for each presentation. We estimate the best results are achieved when the clinic choose their own topics relevant to their own fields of interest. We found this to be an excellent way to reach more staff and marketing our resources. The Menu also proved to be an excellent way to market our competence.