What do Medical Librarians Do?

Here are brief introductions to some local medical librarians and the work they do.

Amrita Burdick, MA, MLS, MA Ed, Clinical Medical Librarian

As a clinical medical librarian at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, I go on rounds with medical student teams when they take care of patients in the hospital. We were the first place in the nation to have this program, and it is a fun job. I listen carefully to patient care questions the team has, and do computer searches to locate information. I also teach the medical students how to find information and help researchers with tricky information topics. It means a lot to see the information I find put to good use for patient care, and to see students learn to become good physicians.

Marilyn J. De Geus, MA, MLS
Director of the Library-Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences

I am the Library Director of the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences and have the responsibility of hiring and supervising the people that work in the library. Taking care of the library budget on a yearly basis is a duty I take very seriously, as I do not want to spend more than what the budget allows. I develop the library collection of print and non-print materials, which includes a special Osteopathic Medicine collection, making sure I provide the materials the faculty and students need for studying, teaching, and research. Reaching out to faculty and students, letting them know what the library offers in both resources and services, is another exciting responsibility. I teach Medical Informatics classes to the medical students on how to locate information, how to access the many electronic resources that are available for their use. I, also, work with the curriculum planners to integrate the library’s wide spectrum of resources with the curriculum on a year to year basis. Medical librarianship is a very rewarding career, as it makes you feel very special in having played a part in educating students to become the very best physicians they can be.

Dick Kammer, MA, MLS – Health Information Access Specialist (Librarian)

As a single-person library director at Olathe Medical Center, I have a chance to not only provide standard reference and document delivery services, but to learn the interests and concerns of the physicians, nurses and allied healthcare providers in my hospital. This means that I can provide both requested information and timely, authoritative information that coincides with their interests and current needs, even though no specific question was ever asked. I provide information that they didn’t know they wanted to know, and therefore assist their patients to a greater extent than otherwise possible. Remember, Information Touches Life.

This link at the Medical Library Association website will take you to information about a career as a medical librarian

http://www.mlanet.org/career/career_explore.html
I manage the libraries at Children’s Mercy Hospital. One library is for doctors, nurses, and other hospital staff, and the other is for patients and their families. I have one librarian and one technician on my staff. I buy and catalog the books, journals, videos and electronic resources. I answer reference questions and teach other people how to find answers to their health questions. I negotiate contracts and pay bills. I build web pages to provide information about children and medicine for our hospital staff and for patient families. I provide journal articles and other information to the medical teams so they can provide good care using the best knowledge available. I like helping the doctors and nurses and medical researchers, but I also like helping the children and their families.

Jan Foster, Librarian
Carondelet Health
St. Joseph Medical Center/St Mary’s Medical Center

Most of my work as a hospital librarian is for the doctors, nurses and others who help our patients. They usually want me to find information about diseases and how to treat them. Occasionally, someone tells me that they changed a patient’s treatment because of information I found, which makes me feel great. I helped someone get better!

Brenda Pfannenstiel, MALS, MA, AHIP
Children’s Mercy Hospitals & Clinics

Dawn McInnis - Rare Book Librarian
I work at the Clendening History of Medicine Library – University of Kansas Medical Center. As a “one person” library, I get to do reference, purchase and catalog books, maintain our web presence, and as a bonus, I get to give tours of our rare books and artifacts! What I didn’t know I’d also get to do was to become very familiar with security procedures, pest control, and plumbing to protect our rare books! I still get excited every time I show patrons Robert Hooke’s book, “Micrographia”, where they can see the word cell used as a scientific word for the first time. Finding and showing examples that make the history of medicine come alive for our patrons makes being a rare book librarian my dream career!

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