

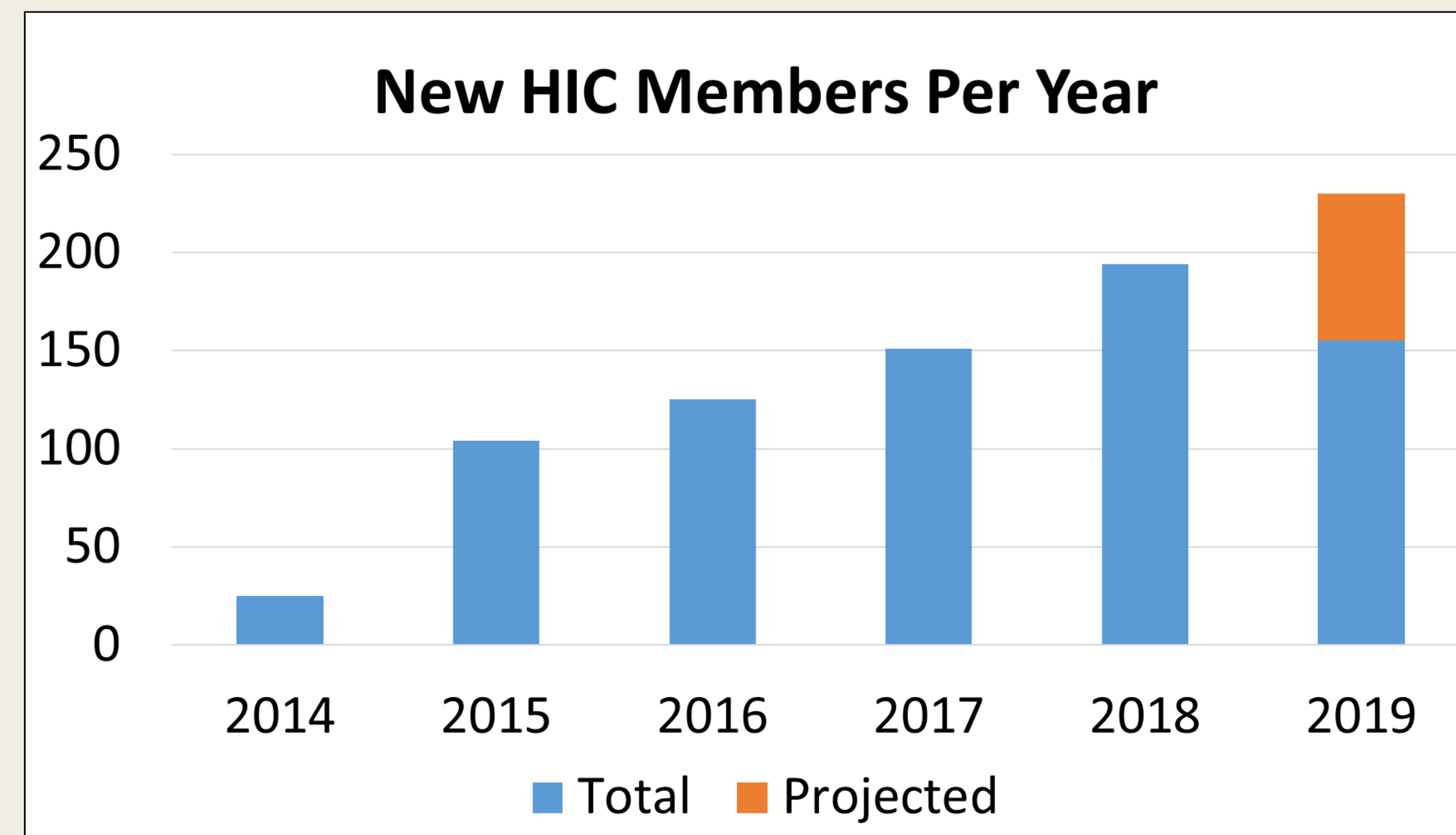
Leisurely Reshaping a Consumer Health Book Collection

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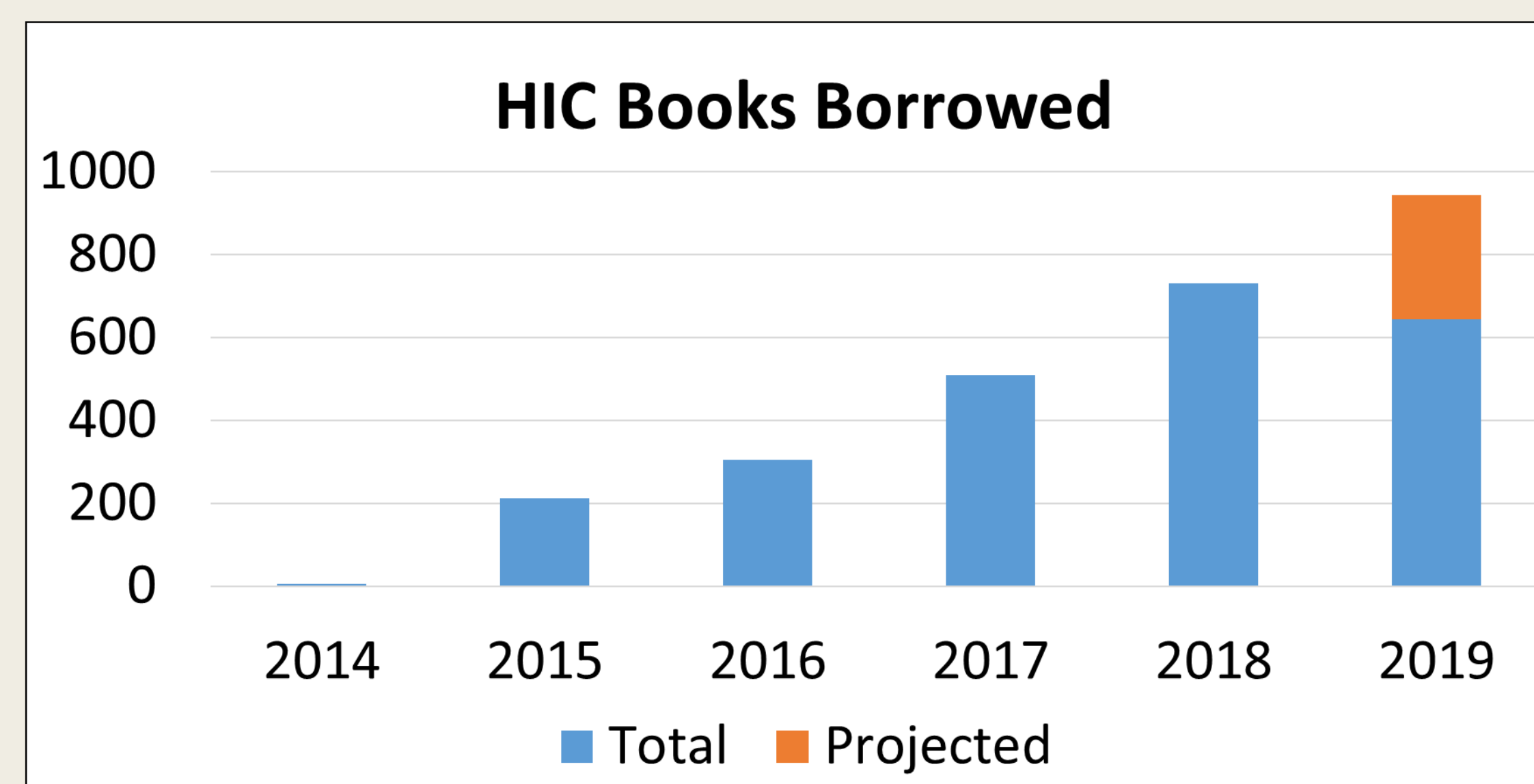
Objective: To discover whether adding leisure books, according to a carefully designed collection development policy, to a hospital library's consumer health collection (CHC) would lead to an increase in usage of the CHC collection, an increased number of monthly subscriptions for membership in the Health Information Center (HIC), and a change in the subject of materials circulated.



Methods: The collection development policy, specifically for the Leisure Reading Collection (LRC), included bestselling titles within 3 years, award winning fiction, and classics. Librarians also set criteria with clear parameters related to gifts, donations, and collection maintenance. Twenty-four books were selected for the leisure collection in July 2018. After the addition of the LRC, the new circulation numbers were compared to previous data. Staff also measured the number of new applications for monthly membership in the Health Information Center by consumers. The subject content of materials most used prior to the addition of the LRC were compared to the most popular titles post LRC.



Results: There has been a 44% increase in books checked out from 2017 to 2018. Monthly memberships have also increased, averaging 18 new members per month compared to 15. The CHC titles most frequently checked out prior to the initiation of the LRC were related to diet and nutrition. After the LRC, the most popular CHC titles were related to nutrition and stress/anxiety. Library staff informally observed the increased use of the LRC by hospital staff. Staff came to the library to check out books for their patients from the LRC. Staff also offered gifts of materials that the collection policy excluded (alternative donation sites were offered.) Attempts to quantify the number of staff using the materials through use of circulation statistics failed due to system limitations. Further research is planned to measure staff participation.



Conclusion: With the addition of leisure reading books, the library provided a more valuable and comprehensive collection to its patron base. Changes in the subject material of circulated items, as a result of the LRC were small but worthy of consideration. This addition to the HIC collection has led to a rise in new members, an increase in circulation statistics, and has expanded staff interest in the HIC.



References:

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