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Victoria Rossetti  
*University of Massachusetts Medical School*

*Et al.*

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# Clinical Support During COVID-19

Victoria Rossetti, Catherine Carr, Leah Honor, Becky Baltich Nelson, Jessica Kilham  
Education and Clinical Services, Lamar Soutter Library, University of Massachusetts Medical School



## Introduction

The Lamar Soutter Library serves UMass Memorial Healthcare and UMass Medical School, which consists of the Schools of Nursing, Medicine, and Biomedical Sciences.

In pursuit of our mission to help our community during the COVID-19 pandemic, we were called upon to provide clinical support in new ways as we also adapted to the “new normal” of working from home, social distancing, and remote interactions.

## What We Experienced

- Level of urgency was much higher for searches done during pandemic, especially around COVID topics
- Difficulty in finding any literature at first, then difficulty wading through so many newly published articles
- Dealing with adjusting to working from home (learning new technology, dealing with family issues)
- The searches we received seemed to reflect a desperate and scary situation across all disciplines
- An increase in requests for literature searches and systematic reviews
- Incoming emails and interactions expressed concern and compassion towards library staff
- A desire for library support to be introduced to new residents and clinical departments



## Clinical Search Requests

Chronic conditions and geriatric mortality

Telehealth for OB/GYN check-ups

Panic attacks in disaster situations among healthcare workers

Wellness activities for hospitalized, quarantined patients

Aerosolized exposure and alternative PPE

Feeding strategies for intubated patients

Evidence supporting early discharge after birth

Safety practices in clinical settings

Psychiatric medication practices in the ER

Effects of COVID-19 on supply and use of blood products

## Adapting to a Pandemic Environment

The Education and Clinical Services department (ECS) typically supports the clinical system by attending clinical rounds, staffing multiple library locations, providing education around information resources, and supporting literature searches.

During COVID-19, many of our usual methods of support were not possible because we could not be there in person, and because educational pursuits were repurposed to answer the call for staffing and training during the pandemic. The need for immediate information and the desire to help meant demands for evidence-based information increased.

To answer the call, ECS librarians had to learn new skills, develop creative approaches, and stay up to date with an ever-changing information landscape.

## Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic was a force for change in the relationship between ECS and the clinical environment we support. In the wake of this upheaval, we have become more creative, more adaptive, and more flexible. We better understand the needs of our clinical community and are more proactive and confident in our approach to working with them.

It was evident that our impact was felt by the response to our offers for new resident orientations. There was almost a 200% increase in the number of sessions between March - September 2020 as compared to the same period in 2019.

The skills we learned, and the relationships formed have changed the way we will approach clinical support going forward.



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