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Impact of COVID 19 on Library Services in US Pharmacy Programs

Comments

Presented at the 2021 American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP) Annual Meeting.

This scholarship is part of the [Chapman University COVID-19 Archives](#).

Impact of COVID-19 on Library Services in US Pharmacy Programs

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many academic libraries closing physical spaces and the reduction of personnel due to quarantine measures. The potential reduction in library services could have a negative impact on research by pharmacy faculty.

Hypothesis

We hypothesized that the COVID-19 pandemic led to a decrease in library services offered to researchers.

Methods

Study Population

- Librarians who are liaisons and support pharmacy schools.
- Pharmacy faculty and staff from U.S. pharmacy schools.

Study Design

- An 11-question cross-sectional online survey was sent to pharmacy faculty and librarians.
- Questions consisted of:
 - Demographic information
 - Impact on research
 - Impact on library services provided/received
- The survey was sent and made available during March and April 2021 to the Medical Library Association (MLA), MLA Pharmacy and Drug Information Caucus (PDI), and ACCP Drug Information Practice and Research Network (PRN) listservs.
 - Over 2,100 potential participants from the three listservs.

Results

Table 1. Demographics of Survey Respondents (N=39)

Position*	Librarian	31 (58.5%)
	Faculty	13 (24.5%)
	Pharmacist	9 (9.4%)
	Other	4 (7.6 %)
Membership*	MLA	21 (29.6%)
	AACP	9 (12.7%)
	ACCP	7 (9.9%)
	ASHP	5 (7%)
	APhA	29 (40.8%)
	Department*	Pharmacy Practice
Pharmaceutical Sciences		0
Library		28 (71.8%)
Other		2 (5.1%)
Institution	Public	19 (48.7%)
	Private	20 (51.3%)

Table 2. Impact to Research

Impact Of Library Services Affecting Research	Yes, it negatively affected my research	5 (13.5%)
	No, it has not affected my research	27 (73%)
	I'm not sure	5 (13.5%)
How Research Was Negatively Affected*	Reduced or no retrieval of literature	21 (29.6%)
	Reduced or no literature search	9 (12.7%)
	Reduced or no systematic reviews	7 (9.9%)
	Reduced or no instruction on search strategies	5 (7%)
	Reduced access to journals or research materials	29 (40.8%)
	Increased delay of library services	6 (46.2%)

Table 3. Impact to Library Services

Library Services Provided*	Retrieve Journal Articles	31 (26%)
	Perform Literature Searches	31 (26%)
	Perform Systematic Reviews	21 (17.7%)
Services Impacted By COVID-19	Provide Instruction on Search Strategies	36 (30.3%)
	Yes, they were affected	29 (76.3%)
	I'm not sure	6 (7.9%)
Librarians Furloughed Or Reduction Of Library Staff	No, they were not affected	3 (15.8%)
	Yes, furloughed or reduced	13 (34.2%)
	No, not furloughed or reduced	22 (57.9%)
Steps Taken To Address COVID-19 Impact On Library Services*	I'm not sure	3 (3.9%)
	Increased online resources/services	19 (48.7%)
	Curbside pickup of research materials	20 (51.3%)
	Utilizing students more	2 (3.7%)
	Self-checkout options	2 (3.7%)
	No changes have been made	8 (14.8%)
	Other	6 (11.1%)

* Respondents could select multiple categories so numbers may not equal 39.

Results/Discussion

- 39 surveys were completed and analyzed.
- Most of the surveys were completed by librarians (58%), while only 9 pharmacists responded (9.4%).
- Common services provided by librarians included literature searches, systematic reviews, article retrieval, and instruction.
- COVID-19 affected library services at most (76%) institutions, although many institutions (58%) did not have to reduce library staffing.
- Most respondents (73%) did not feel that COVID-19 negatively impacted their ability to conduct research.
- For those who felt that their research was negatively impacted, the delay in library services was the most common reason.
- Most respondents reported their research efforts were not negatively affected due to the presence of online resources and services, which increased at several institutions during the pandemic.

Conclusion

While COVID-19 affected many aspects of pharmacy education, the effects on library services appeared to have little negative impact on faculty's ability to conduct research. The impact on research may have been lessened by libraries offering curbside pickup and increasing online resources and services to adapt to COVID-19. The results of this study are limited by the low response rate, the low number of non-librarians who completed the survey, and the possibility that multiple respondents were from the same institution, which could have skewed the results.