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# Hospital Administrator Perceptions of the Library

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# Hospital Administrator Perceptions of the Library

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# Background

- Value Study conducted in NN/LM, MAR (Fall/Winter 2007)
- NER RAC Hospital Library Subcommittee meeting with decision to repeat the study in NER (Spring 2008)
- Call for participation (Spring 2008)
- NER study conducted (Fall 2008)

# Participant Characteristics

| Distribution | State |
|:---:|:---:|
| 4 | CT |
| 5 | MA |
| 3 | ME |
| 4 | NH |
| 3 | RI |
| 2 | VT |

# Hospital Bed Size

| Range | Count |
|-------|-------|
| <100 | 5 |
| 100-199 | 6 |
| 200-299 | 6 |
| 300-399 | 0 |
| >400 | 4 |

# Study Purpose

- The purpose of this study is two-fold: 1) to investigate the views of hospital administrators about librarians and library services in their institutions and how they make decisions around what services are provided and funded in their hospital; and 2) to explore the views of health sciences librarians, informed by interviews with hospital administrators on the value of the hospital library.

# Methodology

- Qualitative study
- Librarian interviews of hospital administrators
- Focus groups with librarian interviewers
- Analysis of common themes
- Initial report to RAC Hospital Library Subcommittee
- MAHSLIN presentation and next steps discussion

# Interview Questions

- How are competing budgetary needs ranked and prioritized? Do key individuals have a louder voice?

- How much budgetary decision-making is driven by compliance/regulation? Can you provide an example?

- Are there one or two specific things the library offers that are especially useful to this organization?

# Questions (continued)

- Are there one or two specific services or resources that are especially useful to you personally at work? When you need information for your work, what is your usual approach to finding answers?

- Is there a challenge or opportunity for our organization where the library could be involved? (Examples: performance improvement initiatives, or length of stay, or patient satisfaction)

- Does your organization involve your librarians in strategic planning and/or hospital-wide, mission-critical committees? If not, why not?  What might make the librarian more central? What would enhance the librarian's value to such committees?

# Questions (continued)

- What would convince you that the library is an essential resource, worthy of appropriate funding? Can you think of specific measures of library value that would be convincing to you?

- Is there anything else you would want to say about libraries and librarians that would help assess the value of these resources

# Focus Group Questions

- The script was divided into two sections. The first section included questions to be answered from the point of view of the hospital administrator interviewed. Questions focused on their perceptions of the library and how to measure its value.

- The second section included questions to be answered from the point of view of the librarian/interviewer. These questions focused on the librarian's perception of the interview and the reaction to it.

- There were 9 questions in all.

# Data Collection

- Transcribed textual data were reviewed through a continuous process of comparing data segments to other data segments, looking for similarities, differences, and themes.

- A list of common themes and subthemes for each focus group was constructed.

- Then, a list of common themes across both focus groups was constructed.

# Focus Group 1: Themes

■ Theme 1: Demonstration of value, worthy of funding

     ■ Quantitative statistics

     ■ Outcomes

     ■ Medical staff verbal support

# Focus Group 1

- Theme 2: Why library is valuable

  - Library supports education
  - Library supports nurses (magnet status)
  - Library support of EBM and research

# Focus Group 1

- Theme 3: How library could show value & doesn't presently

    - Press-Ganey (assist with best practices)
    - Show information effects patient outcomes or improve processes
    - Show library saves administrator time which equals money

# Focus Group 1

- Theme 4: How administrators measure value

  - Reporting structure
  - Juxtaposition of library space
  - Quantitative numbers
  - Involvement in community
  - Response to administrator questions

# Focus Group 1

- Theme 5: What administrators value about library
  - Literature searches
  - Online resources
  - Committee work
  - Benchmarking
  - Helping employees going back to school/students
  - Library as place
  - ILL service

# Focus Group 1

- Theme 6: Tone of interview

  - Positive
  - Upbeat
  - Quick; not a lot of thought
  - Disappointing in lack of depth of the interview
  - For the most part, librarians new interviewees

# Focus Group 1

- Theme 7: Key points
  - Library is valuable
  - Go outside the library (committees, community)
  - Target administrators
  - Library as physical place important
  - Statistics (numbers) important
  - Library support for education important

# Focus Group 1

- Theme 8: Surprises

  - Administrator knew my role on committees and/or suggested I be on one
  - Administrator asked for lit search
  - Administrator saw role of library in EMR and offered suggestions

# Focus Group 1

- Theme 9: Follow-up

  - Administrator appointed librarian to committee
  - Administrator requested information (lit search)
  - Administrator suggested other contacts
  - More recognition in the hall

# Focus Group 1

- Theme 10: Librarian value of experience

  - Confidence building
  - Opened lines of communication
  - Teachable moment
  - Cache of being in NLM study

# Focus Group 2

- Theme 1: Demonstration of value, worthy of funding
  - Regulations, compliance, safety, and direct patient care drive funding
  - IS is valued and library is part of IS
  - Listen to what people say about the library (anecdotes); library as "dissatisfier"
  - Statistics; data

# Focus Group 2

- Theme 2: Why library is valuable

    - Library saves people time; time equals money
    - Supports education and community outreach
    - Library doesn't consume a lot of resources

# Focus Group 2

- Theme 3: How library could show value and doesn't


- Most administrators in this group could not offer suggestions

- One administrator suggested librarian serve on Patient Safety or Patient Satisfaction Committees

# Focus Group 2

- Theme 4: How administrators measure value

    - Revenue generating services are looked at more favorably

    - Library didn't consume many resources and was bargain

    - They measure value in "dollars and cents"

# Focus Group 2

- Theme 5: What administrators value

  - Administrators did not talk about the value of the library in education or patient care
  - Administrators did not mention specific resources
  - One administrator goes to the library to read the newspaper
  - Statistics--usage
  - Serving the public

# Focus Group 2

- Theme 6: Tone of interview

    - Disappointing
    - "…she valued the library despite what the future may hold."
    - For the most part, librarians did not know interviewees; some were rescheduled more than once
    - Not as positive as Focus Group 1

# Focus Group 2

- Theme 7: Key points

  - Keep a log of anecdotes (showing how information affected patient outcomes)
  - Numbers matter ("I'm not going to give up counting things.")
  - Go out of the library; Sell yourself
  - Regulations drive funding decisions

# Focus Group 2

- Theme 8: Surprises

  - Administrator could not see value of library in strategic planning
  - Despite support for library, administrator could not see how library could help him/her

# Focus Group 2

- Theme 9: Follow-up

  - Administrators wanted to hear results of study
  - One wanted to attend librarian focus group
  - Administrator came to library open house
  - Librarian was asked to provide info for monthly report

# Focus Group 2

- Theme 9: Follow-up continued

    - RI library regulation challenged
    - Librarians expressed concern about additional roles (i.e. going outside the library and not having the resources to deliver); but one was going to follow-up about serving on a Patient Safety committee

# Focus Group 2

- Theme 10: Librarian value of experience

  - Opportunity to educate administrator about library
  - Opportunity to change perceptions about library

# Discussion

- Tone of focus groups somewhat different
- First group participants knew each other; did that insert bias or effect more positive comments about the library?
- Both groups of librarians saw value in participating in the study

# Common Themes

- What people say about the library influences administrator funding decisions and perceptions of the library
- Statistics matter
- Administrators saw value of librarians serving on committees
- Although administrators could see value of library in education, they could not see library helping them in their decision making
- Administrators had difficulty in measuring value of library beyond the numbers
- Lack of specific examples by administrators regarding library value roles in education and patient care except for helping nurses with magnet status

# Summary

- "I just think that hospital administrators don't realize all the skills that librarians have…"

- "I'm pleased this opportunity came about because I probably wouldn't have tried to get a half hour of her time…"

- "I think this has provided a wonderful opportunity to meet with folks we don't ordinarily interact with…good or bad…"

# Next Steps

- MAR Follow-up study to be piloted this summer; development of "toolkit" for replicating the study

- How do MAHSLIN/NER hospital librarians want to follow-up?

- Other issues for discussion—impact of economy on this study—influence on future of hospital libraries in the region