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2010-05-23

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Repository Citation

Goldstein HM, Martin ER. (2010). Value of Hospital Libraries Study. National Network of Libraries of Medicine New England Region (NNLM NER) Repository. <https://doi.org/10.13028/ynjc-1287>. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/ner/6>

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Value of Hospital Libraries Study, New England Region

H. Mark Goldstein, MSLIS, AHIP & Elaine R. Martin, DA

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ❖ What are predominant views of hospital administrators on library services provided in their institutions?
- ❖ How do administrators view role of the hospital librarian?
- ❖ How do administrators make decisions about what services to provide and how to fund them?
- ❖ What are predominant views of hospital librarians on value placed on their libraries?

METHODS

- Survey Questions (8)
- Administrator Interviews (22)
- Focus Groups (2)
- Focus Group Questions (9)
- Transcriptions (2)
- Analysis & Report (1)

INTRODUCTION

Study conducted in 2008 to determine value of hospital libraries in New England region. Twenty-one (21) hospital librarians participated; equal representation found both in location (by state) and institution size (by licensed beds).

Fall/Winter
2007
MAR conducts
value study

Spring
2008
Calls to repeat study

Summer/Fall
2008
NER conducts
value study



RESULTS

Both sets of focus group participants saw value in study, but tone of each group was very different:

Focus Group 1 – positive; upbeat; quick paced; most knew interviewees (possible bias)

Focus Group 2 – disappointed; not very positive; most did not know interviewees.

COMBINED THEMES

- ❖ What people say about the library influences administrator's funding decisions & perceptions.
- ❖ Statistics matter.
- ❖ Administrators have difficulty measuring library value beyond the numbers.
- ❖ Administrators see value of librarians serving on committees, as well as in education, but not in helping with decision making.
- ❖ Administrators cite lack of specific examples (except MAGNET status) of librarian's direct role in education and patient care.

CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ Severe economic climate since 2008 (i.e., hospital library closings) may have affected study results.
- ❖ More studies need to be conducted.
- ❖ Hospital librarians need to find ways to "know" the business they're in, by expanding services beyond traditional offering (e.g., CME, patient education & health literacy, research grants, EHR & Health IT, EPP & Risk Analysis, Quality Assurance, etc.)