

# Hypothesis

The Newsletter of the Library Research Section of MLA

Spring, 1995

## Section Chair's Message by Nancy Woelfl

University of Nebraska  
McGoggan Library of Medicine

By now, I hope each of you have taken the time to read and reflect on Using Scientific Evidence to Improve Information Practice: The Research Policy Statement of the Medical Library Association. Like Platform for Change, Using Scientific Evidence provides an articulate and visionary statement regarding the role of the health sciences librarian in scientific investigation, as applied to both our own knowledge base and the knowledge bases of other health professions. The power of the Research Task Force statement lies in its vision and in the fact that it is proactive rather than prescriptive. By focusing on roles, goals, and desired outcomes, the Research Task Force has wisely given MLA the flexibility to pursue many different paths to research credibility rather than trying to define a single road for all. The Association must move on this agenda if we are to be viewed as a profession of critical thinkers, individuals who are sought as research partners and collaborators, not only among ourselves but among our fellow health professionals.

### Roles for the Library Research Section

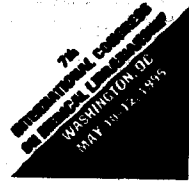
There is much food for thought in the Research Task Force policy statement and I encourage you to read it soon if you have not already done so. As you read, give particular thought to the role

of the Library Research Section in carrying out the action plan described in the document. The document defines a number of specific roles for the Section, including some that are ongoing and familiar. These include expanding the research mentor program and disseminating research results at annual and chapter meetings. The responsibility for other roles and tasks is unassigned but a number seem to be "naturals" for the Section. These include establishing a methodology consultation service, facilitating contacts between potential collaborators, helping document the research activities of health sciences librarians, assessing their impact over time. We must ask ourselves what the section has to offer, what we are prepared to do, and what will best serve MLA. Discussion of this important document will constitute a major agenda item in Washington. I encourage you to come prepared and to enter into a thoughtful and productive dialogue, not only with your section colleagues but with the Research Task Force and fellow Association members.

### Online Membership Profile Database available soon

Erika Love, Chair, Membership Committee is pleased to announce that the Library Research Section Online Membership Profile Database will soon be available to the Section members. The prototype database is currently

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**HEALTH  
INFORMATION  
FOR THE  
GLOBAL  
VILLAGE**

**RESEARCH SECTION  
PROGRAMS - MLA 1995**

Mark your calendars now for three great Research Section programs at MLA '95! Both invited and contributed paper sessions will be offered. The invited speaker program, co-sponsored with the Medical Library Education Section, will be held on Monday, May 8, 1995 from 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. This program is planned to challenge the audience to see roles for research in everyday library practice. Session presenters will be Mary Lynn Rice Lively, seminar leader on qualitative research, and Gertrude Lamb, hospital librarian and seasoned researcher.

Two sessions came out of the overwhelming response received by our Section from the Call for Papers. The Contributed Paper Session, "Research: Foundations for the Future", will be on Monday, May 8 from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. Five reports of excellent current research studies will be given at this session. In addition, the Research Section will have its own sub-section in the general MLA Poster Session. Poster presentations in the MLA Poster Session will be displayed from Sunday, May 7, 1995 until Wednesday noon, May 10. Booths will be staffed during a two hour block on Sunday.

**Conducting Practical Research in  
Your Library: Methods for Everyday  
People**

Co-sponsored with the Medical Library  
Education Section

Monday, May 8, 1994: 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

This session will focus on using research for problem-solving with emphasis on conducting research without being a statistician. The two speakers will present papers and also will lead a group discussion:

**Mary Lynn Rice Lively.** Qualitative Research for Everyday People.

**Gertrude Lamb.** How Anyone Can Conduct Research for Problem Solving.

Mary Lynn Rice Lively is an academic librarian and researcher. She is on the faculty of the University of Texas Graduate School of Library and Information Science. A doctoral candidate specializing in applying qualitative research to library issues, her most recent publication is "Wired warp and woof: an ethnographic study of a networking class" in *Internet Research*, Winter, 1994, 4(4): 20-35.

Gertrude Lamb, an MLA fellow, has had a remarkable career in medical libraries. An MLA Fellow, in 1988 she was recipient of the MLA's highest award, the *Marcia C. Noyes Award*.

**Research: Foundations for the Future**

Contributed Paper Session

Monday, May 8, 1995: 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.

Florence V. *Clinical Evidence: The Medical Literature for Patient Care and Problem Solving.*

Glitz B, Lovas I, Newell P, *Part V: Changing Standards, Changing Services: A Longitudinal Study of Hospital Libraries in the Southwest Region of the NIMLS.*

King DN. *Use of the Literature for Clinical Decision Making.*

Leishman J, Bayne J. *Impact of a Problem-Based Learning Curriculum on the Teaching Hospitals of the University of Toronto: Preliminary Results.*

Tillotson M, Russell LR, Anderson RL, Hartman JA. *Survey of Computer Use in Family Practice: A Study of Computer Experience, Access, and Attitudes of Family Physicians and Residents.*

### Poster Session-Research Section

Sunday, May 7 - Noon, Wednesday, May 10

Dahlen KH, Cogdill KW. First-Year Medical Students' Use of Information Technologies: A Single-Site Descriptive Study.

Dee CR, Rankin JA, Burns C, Fortney L, Harriman J, Marsh S, McCann J, Suter C, Walters G, Warren K. SC/MLA Journal Usage Study.

LaBeause JH, Van De Water N, Carey P, Fielder M, Sorrow B, Woolbright C.  
An Analysis of Search Request Topics: GaIN Study of Health Professionals' Use of Information.

Moore ME, Curtis JA, Agnoli MO. Outcomes of Implementing a Local MEDLINE System: Baseline and Follow-Up Survey of Eligible User Population.

Ross FVT, Anderson PF. Factors in Student Selection and Demand for CAI Programs: Importance of Usability and Interface Issues.

Sabella MN. Are Health Science Librarians Reproducing Enough Research?

### MLA '95 & 7ICML—Health Information for Global Village

This year MLA members have a unique opportunity to attend both the 95th Annual Meeting of the Medical Library Association and the 7th International Congress on Medical Librarianship in Washington DC. The joint theme, "Health Information for the Global Village," used by both meetings, encourages collaboration among the meeting participants as they experience how technology and international communications "shrink" the world.

For MLA '95 dynamic plenary session speakers start each of the three days. The first speaker is Dan Masys, distinguished medical informatician, and will present the Joseph Leiter NLM-

MLA Lecture on Sunday. Monday's speaker is noted Washington broadcast journalist, Cokie Roberts, speaking on how advances in telecommunications affect her ability to convey information to the public and thus influence its perceptions on health care. Tuesday's speaker is Jennifer James, cultural anthropologist and the John P. McGovern Lecturer, and will offer inspirational and practical advice on how we can deal with the changes we face.

Also, for MLA '95 the posters from the Sunday poster presentation will be left up through Wednesday morning so individuals may view at other times during the week. This will provide an opportunity for presenters and others to meet and discuss at mutually agreed upon times.

Lastly, meeting attendees can explore the by-ways of the Internet via the Internet Center featured in the Exhibits area. Stations will be set up to run Mosaic and to do email so individuals can check what's happening at home and see the world.

submitted by Gail Yokote, Associate Chair,  
1995 National Program Committee



**MLA '95/7ICML  
is on the Web!**

Extensive, up-to-date information about the 95th Annual Meeting of the Medical Library Association (MLA '95) and the 7th International Congress on Medical Librarianship (7ICML) will soon be available via the World Wide Web. The "Web" is an Internet-based system that uses hypertext to link information from a wide variety of sources. In 1995, for the first time, MLA will utilize the Web to bring the latest information on MLA '95/7ICML to the health sciences librarianship community.

The MLA '95/7ICML Web should be available sometime in March 1995.

Users will be able to get the current information on the meeting, including registration, program and hotel information. The MLA '95/7ICML Web will also provide access to information on the Washington, D.C. area and the links to web-based health sciences resources. There are also plans to include the abstracts from contributed papers and poster sessions. Information on the MLA '95/7ICML Web will be continually updated, even during the meeting. Those attending the meeting in Washington, D.C. in May will also be able to access it from computers in the Internet Room. Notices about the availability of the MLA '95/7ICML Web will be posted on MEDLIB-L and other listservs. In addition, we hope that a link to it will be incorporated into the home page of your local health sciences library.

The MLA '95/7ICML Web is a team effort. Reflecting the distributed nature of the Internet, the "webmasters" come from all corners of the nation. They are: **Brian Warling**, University of California, San Francisco; **Bob Pisciotta**, University of Kansas; **Christopher Stave**, University of California, San Diego; **Scott Garrison**, Duke University; **Joyce Backus** and **Julia Kochi**, National Library of Medicine. MLA Headquarters staff, particularly **Kimberly Pierceall**, are also important members of the team. And special thanks must go to the Archie R. Dykes Library, University of Kansas Medical Center, for hosting the MLA '95/7ICML Web. For more information, contact Brian Warling at [warling@library.ucsf.edu](mailto:warling@library.ucsf.edu).

submitted by Brian Warling, UC San Francisco

### **Online Membership Database**

(continued from P. 1)

under testing among section officers to solicit their feedback to improve the database. The database allows members to easily enter and update their information online. Availability of this database will be announced via MEDLIB-L listserv. Stay tune!

### **Editor's message:**

Mark your calendars now for the exciting Research Section Programs at MLA'95.

Starting from this issue, interviews with researchers and members research activities will be included. It is our hope that the Newsletter will serve as a vehicle to share researchers experience in their research endeavor and to highlight members research new findings .

I am grateful to those who responded to my call for news items submitted for this issue. Again, I would like to invite you to send me information on your research projects, completed or in progress, that you wish to share with our readers by **April 15**. Special thanks also go to Joan Ash, Dr. Paul Gorman and Leslie Wykoff for sharing their perspectives of their collaborative research venture in this issue .

Lastly, please send me an email request if you wish to receive the Newsletter electronically.

**Interview with Paul N. Gorman, MD, Joan Ash, MLS, MS, MBA and Leslie Wykoff, MLS**

**Editor's note:** The Research Policy Statement of the MLA mentioned that in the inherently complex and multi-disciplinary world of health information, many important research questions demand collaborative study, involving practitioners and academicians and experts from several disciplines. Nancy Woolfl, Section Chair, also encourages members to seek out research collaborators not only among ourselves but among our fellow health professionals.

We have seen a number of articles published in the Bulletin of the Medical Library Association (BMLA) that are collaborative studies by health sciences librarians and physicians. I am very pleased to have Dr. Gorman, Joan and Liskie as our first guests to share their insights of the collaborative experience. Dr. Gorman, Joan and Leslie worked together on a research project entitled "Can primary care physicians' questions be answered using the medical journal literature?". The findings were presented at 1993 MLA annual meeting, and were published in the BMLA 82(2) April 1994:140-146.

**Paul Gorman, MD**, Assistant Director of Medical Education, Providence Medical Center, Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU), is a primary care physician whose research focuses on the information needs and information

seeking behavior of clinicians, and on assessing the impact of new information systems and services.

**Joan Ash, MLS, MS, MBA**, is presently an NLM Fellow in Applied Informatics and formerly IAIMS Coordinator at OHSU. Before that, she was Associate Director of the Libraries at OHSU and held health sciences library positions at the University of Connecticut and Yale. She has three masters degrees and is currently a doctoral student in Systems Science.

**Leslie Wykoff, MLS**, is presently Campus Librarian, Washington State University Vancouver. Formerly Head, Reference and Research Services, Biomedical Information Communication Center, OHSU. Also served as the Research Librarian for the Kaiser Center for Health Research. Received MLS from the University of Pittsburgh.

**Editor:** *What advantages do you see when a health professional works together with a medical librarian as a collaborator on a research project?*

**Joan and Leslie:** Our research entailed taking questions Paul had gathered ~~during interviews in a previous project~~, doing online searches on the topics, sending copies of selected items from the literature to the physician, and having the physician evaluate the ability of these items to answer the question. We were collaborators in the planning, execution, and reporting. Several other librarians were hired to run the searches. Librarians played roles as team members with two different levels of involvement.

From our point of view as collaborators, there were numerous advantages to having a physician on our team: 1) Paul, as a primary care physician himself, and one who had been a rural practitioner in the past, was able to **gain an impressive level of cooperation from other physicians in the field**, 2) It was **stimulating for us to have a different point of view in our discussions, especially interpreting results**, 3) The different point of view let Paul question some of our "sacred cows" and **move us toward a greater understanding of where he and our users are coming from**, 4) There was a synergy during

discussions, as well as a healthy give and take and debate, 5) Paul, wearing his researcher hat, was able to devote more time and energy and leadership to the project than we or the other librarians could at the time, because we had other primary roles, 6) Paul had some grant funds with which to pay the online searchers, 7) **We believe he gained a greater understanding about the way librarians do their work.** For example, as Leslie points out, "the searchers were adamant that they needed to be able to talk to the person who asked the question if it needed further clarification." Finally, 8) **Paul continues to communicate this kind of insight and understanding to his informatics colleagues, thereby almost acting as an inter-preter in an ongoing sense.**

**Paul:** "I really saw how librarians approach their jobs. I was fascinated by the pride they took in the quality of their work. They wanted to give absolutely the best information to those who asked the questions. In collaborating, we had a mix of different interests, skills and perspectives and that mix helps us all to better understand the users' problems. The project worked much better as a collaborative one than if I had done it alone and hired searchers.

This kind of project needs ownership, resources, help, and time. It's important in any team effort like this to have one person spearhead it and really make sure it gets done. We had a small amount of funding from one of my grants. The help came from the collaborators, searchers, and particularly talented office staff. I was fortunate I was able to spend the necessary time to guide the project. The other team members enhanced the understanding of the basic research question, the research design, and the execution of the plan."

**Q:** *What skills could a medical librarian contribute most to a collaborative research project with a health care professional?*

**Joan and Leslie:** Obviously, librarians can assist with the background literature search. In this particular project, online searchers contributed their expertise in seeking answers to questions. In addition, they did quality filtering so that only the most appropriate articles were sent to the requester. This required familiarity with terminology and with judging the worth of published research. We were also able to facilitate the writing and editing of the presentations and articles that resulted from the research.

**Paul:** The searchers brought special skills not only in searching but also in searching to answer clinical questions. In addition to searching skills, librarians contributed a perspective that helped to focus the research question and improve the design of the project.

**Q: What problems did you encounter during the process? How did you solve them?**

**Joan, Leslie, and Paul:** The primary problem was finding time to get together for face to face discussions. It was tremendously helpful that we all work in the same building so we could pass around drafts of what we had written or edited. There were times, though, when we needed to meet and Paul's clinical responsibilities and our reference or information desk schedules made it difficult. Thankfully, electronic mail often came to the rescue.

**Q: What else has come out of your collaborative project?**

This positive experience encouraged us to seek further grant and fellowship funds to continue work on related research. Paul was successful in receiving a FIRST award for five years from NLM, and Joan received a two year NLM Fellowship in Applied Informatics. Leslie Wykoff is now a library director.

Most rewarding had been the knowledge that we accomplished something

worthwhile. We have generated a certain amount of controversy and discussion among our colleagues (see BMLA 83 (1):101, January 1995), which is extremely gratifying because it means we have raised some significant issues.

## **Members Research Activity**

**Alex Dimidroff, Ph.D,** University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, and her colleague (Dietmar Wolfram) received an OCLC Research Grant to investigate different linkage environments in a hyper-text based bibliographic retrieval system. The technical part of the project is almost complete and the user study will begin in about 6 weeks. The user study will look at two things: 1) how users search two different levels of hypertext links and 2) their affective response to the two search environments. The study should be completed during the summer of 1995 and reports of the results published soon thereafter. Congratulations! Alex.

A second project relates to research interests and knowledge of special librarians. I've done a review of the literature to see what kind of research librarians have done (preliminary findings are that health science librarians publish significantly more research articles than any other category of special librarians) and am awaiting responses to a survey I've done. This survey is similar to one done by MLA a few years back, so the results can be compared. Results should be published during 1995.

**JO Dorsch,** University of Illinois at Chicago, (UIC), Library of the Health Sciences (LHS) -Peoria, is currently conducting a Grateful Med Outreach Project in west central Illinois funded by the Greater Midwest Region, NN/NLM. The project follows the work of an initial NLM-funded outreach effort which introduced over 150 rural health professionals to end-user searching. The purposes of the follow-up project are to provide follow-up training and support, reach additional underserved health professionals, offer

tailored training through basic and advanced sessions, evaluate the long-term effects of the initial project, and assess the impact of follow up on sustained use of information resources. Training and two-month trial periods of free searching and document delivery are being provided to rural hospitals, health agencies, and clinics. Preliminary evaluation shows benefits of varied training formats and reexposure and the importance of "readiness" for end-user searching. For further information contact Jo Dorsch at (309) 671-8494, or jod@uic.edu.

**David N King, M.S., Ph.D.**, Special Assistant for Informatics Education, Library and Center for Knowledge Management, UCSF, CA, has been working on a research on the use of the literature for clinical decision making.

A randomized sample of 132 cases in which published information was consulted for case-related decision making was obtained. The cases were explicated using a variant of critical incident technique. Physicians participating in the study were from 43 states and the District of Columbia, represented 29 medical specialties, and ranged in experience from residency to more than 30 years in practice. A four-stage model of the clinical decision making process provided a framework for interpretation and analysis. Criteria were established for determining the effectiveness of information seeking for problem resolution and decision making. The results indicated that more than three-quarters of the incidents were effective and more than one-half were critical. However, about 20% of the incidents were ineffective. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods exemplified in this study provide uniquely rich insights. This study will be presented at the coming MLA meeting in Washington, DC.

**Trudy Landwirth, UIC, LHS - Peoria**, has received two consecutive one-year grants from the Junior League of Peoria Women's Health Awareness Fund of the Peoria Area Community Foundation. Funds were raised at the annual Susan G. Komen "Race for the Cure", the May 1993 Peoria race included over 10,000 entrants and raised over \$100,000.

The initial grant (\$11,430.56), October 1993 - October 1994, purchased 48 books and 42 audiovisual programs which support research, instruction, and service focused on raising awareness of breast health and breast cancer and its care in the Peoria community. The titles advise researchers of recent findings; guide clinicians in diagnosis, mammography, chemotherapy, and other therapies; and assist clinicians in instructing their patients about this disease. The second grant (\$2,500), January 1994 - January 1995, funds a brochure promoting the collection. For further information contact Trudy Landwirth at (309) 671-8488, or U11802@uicvm.bitnet. Congratulations! Trudy!

**Natalie Schoch, Ph.D.** presented two papers at 1994 ASIS meetings:

Schoch, N. Relationship between Citation Frequency and Journal Cost: A Comparison between Pure and Applied Science Disciplines. *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science Annual Meeting 1994*, 31:34-40

The basic result of this study is that there is no relationship between journal use, as measured by citation frequency by campus faculty, and cost of science periodicals.

Schoch, N. and Abels, E.G. Using a Valuable Instrument for Decision Making in the Cancellation of Science Journals in a University Setting. *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science 31:41-50*

Useful pieces of information for decision-making in periodical cancellations and the costs of obtaining this information were identified. Suggestions are made as to what data is most useful in the context of the cost of obtaining it.

**Ann Weller, Ph.D.**, Deputy Director, UIC, LHS, is currently working on a chapter for a book on changes in communication among scientists. The chapter Ann is writing is on the human genome project and how information is being gathered and communicated in non-traditional way-electronically.