

Chairman's Notes

This was to have been a short diatribe about the "bane of the librarian's existence"¹ the departmental library. I know from talking to colleagues that many health service librarians resist all attempts to set up ward or departmental collections mainly on the basis of not having enough money to provide for the needs of the main library resource and a myriad of tiny collections through the district.

I say this "was" going to be about departmental collections because I was going to base it on a batch of articles that I obtained two years ago when examining service provision in my own district. I thought all these articles had been virulently anti such collections but on rereading them I find that most take a much more cautious approach. Even the "pink book"² says that resources are needed to maintain stocks of bench books in individual departments, and other literature to which continual reference is needed." Kasses³ suggests that "departmental libraries are not going to disappear" and that the best approach should be of co-operation, ensuring that the information held in such collections is made available to the user.

What do you think?

What are your experiences of providing departmental or ward collections?

How are you controlling such collections?

Answers please to the next issue of the newsletter.

References

1. Sawers, Caroline. *The departmental library*. *Medical Library Bulletin of the Thames Regions*, no 33, May 1979, p 3.
2. *Providing a district library service*. King's Fund 1985, p 11.
3. Kasses, Carol D. *Departmental libraries: curse or blessing?* *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, 66, April 1978, pp 177-181.

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