

“Everything You Wanted To Know About Critical Appraisal But Were Too Afraid To Ask”: Evaluation of a Study Day, Organised By Libraries for Nursing

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Libraries for Nursing ran a very successful Study Day at the Royal College of Nursing, London, on the 29th November 2002, on “Everything you wanted to know about critical appraisal but were too afraid to ask”. The day attracted over 50 participants, many of whom are members of Libraries for Nursing and/or Health Libraries Group. The majority of participants are currently working within the NHS or Higher Education and the event aimed to provide help and guidance with regard to critical appraisal and explore its significance to practice.

Rod Ward, Lecturer at the University of Sheffield and also Gateway Leader for NMAP gave a presentation about the quality of health information on the Internet and also attended the full Study Day. He has very kindly written up the following evaluation of the day.

Delegates were welcomed by Rebecca Davies on her last day as the Chair of the Libraries for Nursing group. She set out the purpose and themes for the day along with organisational issues. Later in the day she invited delegates to consider joining the committee of LfN and asked for copy for the group's Bulletin,

which could include for example, descriptions of projects and activities that Librarians are currently undertaking in their areas, which would be of interest to a wider audience.

The first presentation of the day was given by Dr Faith Gibson, Lecturer in Children's Nursing Research at Great Ormond Street Hospital NHS Trust. Faith addressed the topic of facilitating critical appraisal in practice, in which she started with a brief history of some of the key issues and strategy documents relating to nursing and DoH research.

She went on to explore some of the problems still facing nursing in developing a research/evidence based approach and participating fully in clinical governance initiatives. These problems related both to the nature of nursing and the work culture.

Faith then described some of the approaches adopted at Great Ormond Street to enhance the culture of Evidence Based Nursing and gave insights into the approaches that had worked and others which had not produced the desired benefits. Her comment about the use in one organisation of a specialised unit-based librarian provoked some discussion.

She finished with some "steps for success" which although would not be easy, could help to move forward research based practice.

I went next with a presentation about "Quality of health information on the Internet" which was based on work by Lisa Gray and the BIOME Special Advisory Group on Evaluation. The presentation highlighted worries about the poor quality of Internet resources in health and some of the difficulties in evaluating websites and then went through the guidelines used by the BIOME gateways. These guidelines are available at:

<http://biome.ac.uk/guidelines/eval/>

I also gave brief information about the new JISC Resource Guide for Health and Life Sciences which will be available soon at:

<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/resourceguides/hls>

A copy of the full presentation can be found at:

<http://www.rodspac.co.uk/l4n02/l4nnov02/frame.htm>



Jackie Lord, Head of Library and Information at the Royal College of Nursing next gave a short presentation in which she described the modernisation and refurbishment of the RCN Library and its branches and Resource Centres around the country.

Jackie has also recently taken over as Chair of the "Health Libraries Group" of which Libraries for Nursing is a part, and thanked members for completing a recent questionnaire and promising these would be analysed and taken into account in future developments within the organisation.

The final presentation of the morning was by Vickie Orton, Library Projects Coordinator for the RCN who described and demonstrated the new map driven UK Nursing Libraries Website, which is available at:

<http://www.nursing-libraries.org>

Vickie described a little about the history of the site and its intention to enable all UK nurses to find out about their local nursing library and details such as opening times and access restrictions. She encouraged all delegates to visit the site and check their library is included in the directory, and the details are up to date.

Lunchtime provided a good opportunity for networking with old friends and meeting new ones.

An opportunity was also provided for delegates to visit the UK Nursing Libraries web site and explore the refurbished RCN Library - but not to go shopping in John Lewis over the road.

The other exploration was of glass doors (in the toilets) but perhaps this could have been an analogy for the topic of the day in that it was about seeing information but the quality could be clouded.

The more detailed work in the afternoon was led by Dr Alison Weightman, Deputy Director of Library Services at University of Wales College of Medicine who gave a short introduction to critical appraisal for librarians, based on work she had been doing with Health Evidence Bulletins Wales.

Following her overview delegates worked in small groups to examine a systematic review and assess its quality.

For a copy of her handout and links to the forms used see:

http://www.uwcm.ac.uk/support/information_services/libraries/guides/critical_appraisal.htm

Generally this was a useful day, which was well organised, and seemed to address very relevant issues to the attendees.

Olwen Revill, who organised the event outlines below some of the comments made by participants in the evaluation of the Study Day, which overall evaluated very positively.

"Having attended other days on critical appraisal and found them boring and too academic I was pleasantly surprised"

"Another excellent day with much to take forward"

"Nice and basic to help me!"

"Very useful timely and practical session"

"Enjoyed the opportunity to practice skills and hear the theory behind it", "The link to critical appraisal in practice in the clinical setting was particularly good"

"Practical workshops very useful".

Participants also commented on the location of the Study Day, which is very useful when planning future study days, with comments such as:

"RCN good venue for this mixture of presentations and group work and for travelling"

"Location is very central".

We met several new people who have expressed an interest in getting involved with LfN which is great, and comments included:

"Really enjoyed it, very useful! Will come again and would like to get more involved."

Finally, we asked participants for ideas about future study days, and some of the following suggestions were made; E-books for nursing, E-Learning for nurses / teaching methodologies and overview of electronic access in NHS regions. We will of course take these ideas into account when planning for our next training event, which we hope to hold in May 2003.