

**Report from the Health Libraries  
Group Conference 2010  
The Lowry, Salford Quays, Manchester  
19<sup>th</sup> July 2010 – 20<sup>th</sup> July 2010**

**Jane Shelley**

**Assistant Librarian,**

**University Library, Queens Building,**

**Anglia Ruskin University,**

**Bishop Hall Lane,**

**Chelmsford, Essex**

**CM1 1SQ**

**[jane.shelley@anglia.ac.uk](mailto:jane.shelley@anglia.ac.uk)**

**Gillian Siddall**

**Academic Librarian for the School of Health,**

**University of Northampton, Park Campus,**

**Boughton Green Road,**

**Northampton, NN2 7AL.**

**[gillian.siddall@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:gillian.siddall@northampton.ac.uk)**

**Bethan Carter**  
**Clinical Librarian,**

**York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust,**

**Wigginton Road, York**  
**YO31 8HE**

**[bethan.carter@york.nhs.uk](mailto:bethan.carter@york.nhs.uk)**

The 2010 Health Libraries Group (HLG) conference focused on “Keeping information centre stage amid changing scenery”. The HLG Conference is held every two years for information professionals in the health sector supporting nurses, medics and allied health professionals. The two day conference was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> July in The Lowry Centre, Salford Quays in Manchester. The Lowry is an amazing venue with the key sessions being held in the theatre. The building is open to the public and includes an exhibition of the work of L.S. Lowry. There were a variety of talks and sessions of interest. The conference highlighted key developments in the health sector with key speakers from different parts of the sector – academic and NHS. Below follows an overview of some of the key talks from the conference.

**Jane Shelley, chair of Libraries for Nursing offers her insights on a couple of key talks.**

Two of the best talks were on topics not directly about librarians or library and information work. Professor Tony Warne, head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Salford University gave a very philosophical talk on the origins of thought and how we think and learn. He expanded on how learning comes from knowing and not knowing and how we fill the gap between the two. He also talked about the fact that we often cannot identify what we do not know – what he referred to as the ‘not known’. In addition he had some interesting images on his PowerPoint slides – take a look via the link to the HLG conference website below.

Dr. Sanjay Agrawal, a Consultant Respiratory Intensivist gave a very interesting talk on disaster planning based on his role as a member of the swine flu pandemic planning group. This involved many meetings including one where he learnt that a new graveyard to cater for the possible increased number of deaths was to be sited opposite his own house. He also covered the problem of balancing the need to plan for the worst case scenario and either not doing enough so people might suffer, against doing too much and being accused of ‘crying wolf’.

**Gillian Siddall, an Academic Librarian supporting nurses and allied health professionals discusses two of the talks from the conference that sparked her interest.**

These talks highlighted the wider impact of the role of information professionals in supporting those working in the health sector. Paul Stevenson offered a very interesting insight into how best to measure the impact of a training session. The title of his session “ $B=f(P,E,T)$  Evaluating educational interventions” caused some slight trepidation for me when I decided the session might offer a new way of evaluating my sessions. Stevenson synthesised a number of models which looked at work-based learning, diffusion of innovation, to form a holistic evaluation of training. He used Lewin’s equation  $B=f(P,$

$E)$  and included the aspects of Learner, Environment and Training (L,E,T) to offer an evaluation that focused on more than just the learner. This included dialogue with the line manager of the people undertaking training to see if they have had opportunities to implement changes which led to results such as journal clubs and bringing the library into the wards.

Stevenson’s evaluation model looks at the integrated whole allowing it to assess how the training impacts on the wider

organisation and therefore understand the wider impact of the training. It results in a better understanding of barriers and looks to resolve them and offers an increased profile for library services within the organisation.

An insightful talk by Sara Clarke and Zoe Thomas, from the Royal Free Hospital, looked at “Health Librarians: developing professional competence through a Legitimate Peripheral Participation model”. They looked at how to map and recognise the competencies of health librarians in order to develop a competency framework. They noted that the majority of LIS courses are not designed to prepare and train health librarians; as a result information professionals have to learn on the job. Thomas and Clarke investigated whether a general certificate would recognise this work based learning as information professionals developed the specialist competencies needed for their role. Staff competency was assessed in three core areas: literature searching; training and teaching; and knowledge of the health domain and terminology. This is a process that they will pilot at the Royal Free Hospital. The framework was a very interesting idea, as was how information professionals can “prove” they have the skills for the job.

The talks at the HLG Conference raised interesting points and insights into the health sector. Below are some of the

key messages from the conference that might be useful to try and put into practice in the future:

- ☐ Be proactive and creative; if not we will get left behind  
– within our own organisation and sector
- ☐ Get noticed - add value, prove our worth
- ☐ Partnership working and collaboration will become increasingly important
- ☐ Active learning and information seeking behaviour are important elements in the searching process
- ☐ It is not necessarily what we do but the way we do it that is important
- ☐ Some end users are becoming experienced searchers and library interfaces are improving - librarians have less of an advantage, but we can still help improve the searching experience for many
- ☐ Develop outreach - get out of the office or library and make use of new technology e.g. podcasts, tutorials etc.

- Make use of every opportunity to market the library service – don't be afraid to stick your neck out.

It is important to find ways to justify the existence of library and information centres within the wider health sector during NHS cutbacks especially given the high cost of professional staff.

Therefore the conference helps to remind us of the diversity of our role and sparked the ideas to provide us with the means to illustrate the value of the library service.

**Bethan Carter, Clinical Librarian at the York Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust offers her perspective on the HLG Conference.**

Although many of the talks I attended were interesting, thought provoking and useful I am focussing on two that had practical applications to my work. Tatjana Petrinic from the University of Oxford presented a session on 'The value of medical and surgical grand rounds: the outreach librarian's perspective'. This focussed on the usefulness of a librarian attending hospital grand rounds, both as a mechanism for improving knowledge of clinical terminology and as a way of raising her profile with clinical teams. Her conclusion was that attendance at grand rounds did both very effectively and in addition it allowed her to

develop an insight into local politics and an understanding of the clinical networks in her workplace which meant she could focus her services towards specific interests. These are areas which can sometimes seem a little remote to the library team and it was encouraging to see how effective this approach might be for people in roles where integration into the clinical team defines how successful your service might be. Tatjana raised the interesting point that although no-one had ever attended before, and there was a perception that library staff were not welcome at grand rounds, no-one had ever tested this and it was not actually true!

Another piece about developing your service and presence into new areas was Michelle Maden's session on 'Supporting healthcare libraries to deliver critical appraisal training.' This described research examining the attitudes of UK healthcare librarians towards involvement in critical appraisal skills training, the extent to which critical appraisal training is currently being delivered by healthcare librarians and the barriers faced by them in delivering this training. Whilst the results were not particularly surprising in that they confirmed my personal understanding of the situation Michelle concluded with a list of the tools that people wanted and highlighted her project, the CATNIP wiki, which provides 'support and resources for librarians looking to deliver clinical appraisal skills training'. It includes links to resources and checklists and examples of exercises.

**Useful links:**

More details and presentations can be found on the HLG

website at:

<http://www.cilip.org.uk/get-involved/special-interest-groups/health/events/conferences/Pages/conference-2010.aspx>

The Lowry <http://www.thelowry.com/>

Prof. Tony Warne's blog:

<http://tonywarne.blogspot.com/> CATNiP

<http://catnipnw.pbworks.com>

(All sites last accessed 7<sup>th</sup> December)