

professional development which integrates information and learning in ways that puts the user in the driving seat. Our approach is perhaps summed up most eloquently by Winston Churchill who stated,

'Personally I am always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught'.

This view is, in our experience, what a large proportion of nurses also consider they need and it is our aim to provide the resources and the support to respond to their needs.

Reference

RCN web site: www.rcn.org.uk

Librarian on location: visiting health libraries in Kuala Lumpur

Amanda Quick
Peirson Library
University College Worcester
Henwick Grove
Worcester WR2 6AJ

I recently braved the SARS risk to visit a relative in Kuala Lumpur. A few weeks before that I had the bizarre urge to track down a fellow health librarian and do a little global networking. By the power of Google I made contact with Zainal Ahmad, Medical Librarian at the Hospital Kuala Lumpur, and arranged a meeting. Zainal – part-time mechanic, computer engineer and IFLA member – was kind enough to spend a whole morning taking me on a whistle-stop tour.

The Hospital Kuala Lumpur library (pictured below) was established in 1973, but moved to new premises in 1996. It has a team of 7 staff, and annual budgets of approximately 300,000 RM (around £46,500) for serials and 200,000 RM (£31,000) for books. The library is open from 8.30 till 6.00, but postgraduate medical students are issued with a late key to a study room. The NLM classification system is used, and a web OPAC provides access to catalogue records from 1986 onwards, alongside a manual card catalogue for older stock. As you can see, the library is quiet, spacious and orderly: lunchtimes are the busiest period as users are mainly clinicians.



I asked Zainal what developments he foresaw for his library. He identified a movement from conventional library to virtual library to knowledge management – a concept he admitted was still 'somewhat a blur'. The biggest challenges he encounters in his work are familiar ones: marketing and promotion, raising user awareness, particularly as his customers are reluctant to approach library staff for help. You can find out more about the Hospital Kuala Lumpur Library at <http://www.hkl.gov.my>

The School of Nursing library was a very small room, providing books, some 15 periodicals, and reference copies of module handbooks and sample

assignments. My own subject resources at University College Worcester seem an embarrassment of riches in comparison.

The library of **The National Heart Institute** (Institut Jantung Negara) is a highly specialised library offering access to electronic journals, databases, speedy document supply and other resources to support clinical practice. Stock includes areas such as cardiology, cardiothoracic surgery, cardiac anaesthesia, dietetics and physiotherapy. The Librarian, Faizah Abdul-Aziz, spoke of the challenge she faces in trying to develop increased support for research and to convince staff of the inseparability of the library and research activity. In 1997, a 'Database on Heart Diseases in Southeast Asia' was established, containing the full-text of publications by IJN medical staff, with the objective of raising standards of research and information pooling in the region.

The Institut Jantung Negara also provides a complementary 'Information Resource Centre', staffed partly by volunteers, which can be used by patients and by the public. The collection focuses on works promoting a healthy lifestyle, such as recipe books, guides to alternative medicine and accessible works on various diseases. Multimedia resources supporting health promotion were also available to borrow or view in-house. You can find out more about both libraries at <http://www.ijn.com.my>

While the climate and culture of Malaysia are so different to the U.K., I was struck by many common links with my international colleagues: a common concern for making the most of resources and reaching out to the whole of a potential user community. My hosts (Zainal Ahmad and team, pictured below) were extremely welcoming and I hope there may be an opportunity to reciprocate!