

News and Reviews

Variety is the Spice of Life: Libraries and Information for Evidence

HLG Conference, Waterfront Hall, Belfast, 6-8 September, 2004

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When the HLG conference came to Belfast for the first time in September, it was indeed a delight for local Health Librarians to welcome over 300 colleagues from all across the UK and Ireland - and some from USA and Uganda - to the prestigious setting of the Waterfront Hall. The weather was kind, giving visitors a pleasant impression of our city. Indeed, many expressed a determination to return for a 'proper visit' (i.e. holiday!) and to investigate the possibility of holding more professional events in Ireland.

The theme of the conference, *Variety is the spice of life*, emphasized the wide variety of sectors that librarians and information professionals come from, including the NHS across the 4 countries, the independent sector (including health professional associations and charities), higher education and public library sectors. It also emphasizes the wide variety of roles that librarians undertake.

Key themes

- Devolved services working together – England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Also, with colleagues from the Republic of Ireland.
- Knowledge driven health service meeting the needs of the expert patient

- Evidence based health care to support effective clinical decision making
- Information to support primary care and preventative medicine – leading to new roles, e.g. outreach librarians
- Government health information strategies across the UK and in the Republic of Ireland

There were moments when - standing in the foyer, studying all the options for the parallel and interactive sessions - one could have wished for the Hogwarts 'time-turner' device, which enabled Hermione to attend simultaneous classes!

The conference opened with a welcome from Jackie Lord, Chair of HLG, followed by keynote speeches by Clive Gowdy, Permanent Secretary, DHSSPS and Maggie Haines, President of CILIP. Reassuring listeners that understanding of the Ulster accent improves with every pint of Guinness, Mr Gowdy spoke warmly and appreciatively of the role of librarians and of the 'professional guardianship' which they exercise over the vast and often unreliable resources of the Internet. In encouraging librarians to promote their own skills and services, and to be involved in research, he also recognised their importance in supporting CPD for all those who work within the health service. He mentioned the challenge of technological developments and highlighted the H.O.N.N.I. (Health on the Net Northern Ireland) gateway being developed at Queen's University, Belfast. www.honni.qub.ac.uk

Maggie Haines urged members of the profession to convince managers that they can add value, exercising integrity and expertise, and inspiring trust. She spoke of the professional framework needed to survive, within which librarians will develop their own competencies, analyse user needs, and contribute to the whole organisation in which they work, and develop their society. Key issues are reflective, evidence-based practice; knowledge sharing and management; social inclusion; CPD. In all of these, CILIP and HLG play a supportive and proactive role.

Personally attended meetings included two workshop-style meetings on user education methods and marketing for library services. They were lively and expertly facilitated, with humour (always an important ingredient!). Other parallel sessions dealt with critical appraisal, the FOLIO programme, the work of NICE, the National Core Content project and the soon-to-be-experienced impact of Agenda for Change. Demonstrations were given of Knowledge4Health (the North Bristol Trust portal) and the NHS Scotland e-Library, clinical librarianship, reaching out to primary care and future proofing the profession.

The conference had a high level of local input with all in all 13 local speakers from north and south including the opening keynote speech outlined above from Permanent Secretary Mr Clive Gowdy and the Rt Hon Lord Mayor of Belfast Councillor Tom Ekin who provided the after dinner speech.

Bernard Barrett the Chair of the Irish Health Sciences Libraries Group (IHSLG) and Diarmuid Kennedy, Faculty Librarian, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Royal Victoria Belfast, opened the first plenary session. Bernard Barrett's session on 'Nurturing growth in our sector of the profession: an overview of the IHSLG', stressed the need for strategic planning regarding potential new roles and collaborative pathways within librarianship. Diarmuid Kennedy's presentation 'Health & Personal Social Services and Higher Education in Northern Ireland: managing a special relationship', detailed the synergies and challenges within the DHSSPS Service Level Agreement, highlighting the H.O.N.N.I website for HPSS staff as helping to 'brand' access to products under various licensing arrangements. The fuller IHSLG slot on the Tuesday saw the chairperson and another Queens Medical librarian Helen Jenkins, present on the current health reforms taking place in Ireland with the potential development of an 'E-health portal' and a demonstration of the H.O.N.N.I site respectively.

The 'Libraries for Nursing' group session 'Vignettes for nursing library practice', as well as having Great Britain and International speakers, also covered local

provision in presentations on the HPSS contract and its implementation arrangements at NHS trust level and in-service education by librarians Hazel Neale, Rosina Doherty-Allen and Rosemary Cassidy. Royal College of Nursing Library and Information Services Information needs analysis of nurses was described by librarian Caroline Lynch with the RCN's e-learning support practices demonstrated the following day by local librarian Maureen Dwyer, www.rcn.org.uk. Patricia Concannon presented on the library and leafleting resource supporting priority subject areas in health promotion in the WHSSB area. Librarians Joanne Campbell and Sarah Lewis-Newton from the Marie Curie Centre UK also covered local library provision in their presentation. Murial Haire Nursing Librarian at the Irish Nurses Organisation, Dublin gave a web demo of the 'Nurse2Nurse' web resource for its membership base www.nurse2nurse.ie

In the true interests of cross sectoral working, Helen Osborne, Deputy Chief Librarian WELB in her session 'With my brains and your beauty', work-shopped partnership approaches to public access to information about health and wellbeing. The conference was also honoured by the participation of Professor Frank Dobbs, Director, Institute of Postgraduate Medicine and Primary Care, University of Ulster who outlined his work around diagnostic score cards and the input librarians can make in the research data field.

The obvious high level of participation by speakers and local delegates was hopefully a true expression of appreciation for the very generous support of the conference by Dr. Muir Gray, Director for the National Library for Health and also from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

And yes as you may have reckoned the organised tour around some of the historical city centre pubs followed by the gala dinner in Belfast City Hall were also much appreciated and demonstrated as such by many a raised glass!

Delegates who had never visited Belfast before, returned home with the notion that it is a warm-hearted, eternally sunny place where librarians are accorded their rightful importance - and so indeed it was for three days in September 2004. But for all of us, reality beckons once again and in the closing speech of the Conference, Jackie Lord, in thanking all who had contributed to the success of the event expressed the belief that the conference had been truly a wonderful celebration of the depth and richness of our profession and reiterated the need for us as Health Librarians to continue to take responsibility for our own future development, to influence as well as to react, and to ensure a greater awareness of the vital, central role we can play in the delivery of better health care.

Susan Ekin, Librarian, NIPEC - Having shared experience, learning and fun we all come away with expanded horizons, fresh ideas (and lots of exhibition freebies!). As a lone librarian within my organisation, I feel that I have benefited greatly from the opportunity to network, to extend my professional knowledge and perhaps most importantly, I return to my daily routine with the encouragement of knowing that although I may operate in a 'solo' environment, I am definitely not alone

Maureen Dwyer, Librarian, Royal College of Nursing - As a local HLG member I am very pleased with the success of the Belfast conference in attracting the largest number of delegates since the mid nineties. HLG and CILIP are UK-wide organizations - England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. HLG has over 2000 members from across all parts of the UK. We work in close partnership with two groups: Libraries for Nursing (LFN) and Information for the Management of Healthcare. HLG supports evidence based librarianship, and our journal, *Health and Information Libraries Journal (HILJ)* is a high quality, peer reviewed publication for the dissemination of research in our field. The HLG conference is our major continuing professional development event of which I hope you have been given a flavour and enticed enough to attend the next!

Conference website: www.cilip.org.uk/groups/hlg/conf2004/index.html

Abbreviations

HLG	Health Libraries Group (of CILIP)
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services & Personal Safety (N.I.)
FOLIO	Facilitated Online Learning as an Interactive Opportunity
NICE	National Institute for Clinical Excellence

Evaluation of Libraries for Nursing Study Day

Are we being served? Core issues in collection development, held on 12 November 2004 at the RCN, London

The November LfN Study Day focused on issues in collection development this year and included speakers from a variety of different sectors.

The first speaker was Alison Turner, Library Partnership Co-ordinator for NeLH, a particularly well-timed speaker given the imminent launch of the new NLH.

Allison's presentation focused on what we could expect from the National Library for Health and provided some screen shots of the new look website and the single search environment.

The next presentation was provided by Hazel Atlass, Sarah Cull and Elspeth Everitt from the RCN, entitled: Are we being served? The Royal College of Nursing collections: the three graces....

The presentation took a 3 stage approach with Hazel providing some historical background to the collections within the RCN and how the collections have evolved over the years. Elspeth then outlined the current RCN collections and