

Critical Incident Technique – a direct measure of the impact of healthcare library services.

Anne Gray

Milton Keynes Hospital Library Service

It is increasingly important for libraries to be able to assess the impact of their services, not only using indirect measures such as the number of literature searches, information literacy training or books borrowed, but also the actual impact on population health, patient care or healthcare costs. A Health Information and Libraries Journal (HILJ) review by myself and Sue Lacey-Bryant of literature on the impact of information services or resources on patient care in primary care (1) highlighted the value of critical incident technique (CIT). As a result of this review, I created Critical Incident record forms both to evaluate the direct impact of search skills training and literature searches.

At the recent LfN study on evidence based library services a number of librarians showed an interest in trying these forms, which have not yet been tested in practice. I would be very happy for librarians to trial these questionnaires in a systematic way in their service. The forms are available on the For Librarians pages of NLH. The CIT form relating to the effectiveness of information skills training is available on the evaluation page at

<http://www.library.nhs.uk/forlibrarians/toolkits/evaluation> The CIT form relating to the effectiveness of the impact of literature

searches is on the service evaluation page at
<http://www.library.nhs.uk/forlibrarians/toolkits/serviceevaluation>

If you do use these forms please feedback your comments and findings to me so that we can all learn from your experiences.

Anne Gray
Milton Keynes Hospital Library Service

1 "Demonstrating the positive impact of information support on patient care in primary care: a rapid literature review"
Sue Lacey Bryant & Anne Gray
Health Information and Libraries Journal 2006, v23, pp.118–125