

Rcn members, but had to limit the number of photocopying requests because of demands on staff time. She hoped that the use of local libraries would be encouraged and the Rcn Library used more as a backup library.

Jane Williamson, Librarian at University College Hospital School of Nursing described an informal co-operative of nursing libraries set up as a result of changes in Bloomsbury Health District boundaries in 1982. The aim was to provide a library service for nurses and paramedical staff in the various hospitals concerned, some of which had qualified staff only. It was decided to set up a monthly current awareness service of journal articles selected by the library staff in each hospital. New books are listed regularly with a different user group, e.g., nurse managers, being featured each month.

The library is included in the orientation programme of all new trained staff and Miss Williamson talks to staff on postbasic course about the library service. She has seen increased use of the library over the last few years and attributes this to the better teaching of students and some library-minded senior managers.

The last speaker was Mrs Diane Benjamin, Nursing Librarian, Eastbourne Health District who provides a service to trained staff as well as nurse learners. The group who are attending postbasic courses are highly motivated and she endeavours to support them by providing material they need herself or through links with other agencies. She sees her role with the majority of staff, who are not attending courses, as trying to create an awareness of the need for keeping up to date. They have special library membership cards so that they are made especially welcome. All new staff receive a package of information which includes a guide to the library service. A newsletter is sent out 3 or 4 times a year, including new additions to stock, and she distributes some current awareness bulletins. Displays of books, journal articles and pamphlets are prepared for inservice study days and she has 5-10 minute 'slot' to address the course participants. Mrs Benjamin stressed the importance of taking opportunities to meet staff so that they could put a face to the service. Another service offered is the mobile library service to outlying hospitals and a community staff lodge. The venue and timing of visits is arranged through close liaison with nursing officers and a notice advertising the visit is sent out beforehand. She has found that the luncheon period is the most popular and productive of visitors. A selection of about 100 books is taken on special display racks, purchased with money raised by trained staff. Over the last year the number of trained staff registered with the library service has doubled.

She stressed the importance of going out to reach people and to provide a service using whatever funds could be used, then when a demand had been created one could ask for funds to continue and expand the service.

During the discussion period various points were raised relating to problems faced in trying to provide a library service. One speaker felt that there was a danger in thinking of the school of nursing library as the main library serving trained nurses. Other libraries within the district such as the medical library or postgraduate centre might be able to offer more appropriate stock and services such as on-line retrieval. The best way of meeting the information needs of trained nurses was through an integrated district library service serving all N.H.S. staff.

Rosemary Clarke

The Library Needs of the Paramedical Professions: A Workshop Report of a seminar held on 18th October, 1983

A joint NHS Regional Librarians Group/DHSS Working Party on library services has been established and, in an effort to identify the information needs of the various health



professions, a series of one-day workshops have been organized. The penultimate of these was for the paramedical professions, with representatives from relevant educational institutions, professional societies, district officers and other practitioners as well as a DHSS officer and several librarians: about thirty people in all.

Mrs Margaret Ellis, District Occupational Therapist, Tower Hamlets, identified the information needs of the various groups common to all the paramedical professions in a paper which led into the morning's discussion. Many present felt the need for time-saving services such as current awareness, abstracting, photocopying and bench book provision. Much of the paramedical literature is not research-based yet and there are few tools to retrieve it anyway. Paramedical literature is often not accepted by the major medical journals. Mrs C A Miller, librarian, Pinderfield's General Hospital, Wakefield, spoke about the rehabilitation current awareness bulletins produced at Wakefield and the hope to create a data-base which would be accessible on-line. The question of dissemination via journals came up again during the afternoon session, when a Regional network was mooted as an alternative, possibly by view-data.

Several people reinforced Mrs Ellis' request for user education, particularly with the increase in use of technology within libraries about which many present expressed a lack of knowledge and confidence. User education should start as early as possible, preferably when students. Students need to be taught both how to use libraries and to appreciate the potential of libraries. There is a need for greater communication between teaching and library staff, as students now often receive self directed study and project work and need guidance as to how to approach it.

It was felt that standards of service were extremely variable and access often difficult. Mr Roy Tabor, Regional Librarian, Wessex, pointed out that this was due to development in the past of separate provision for the various professions, dominated by post-graduate medical education. It was also noted that access was often difficult for community-based workers and in multi-sited hospitals. There is a need for members of the professions to demand at District and Regional level that money be provided for services. Mr Tabor spoke in the afternoon of the Help for Health project, as an example of response to a demand, but he was aware of a conflict: money spent on this would be detracting from more traditional, educational services. Mrs B Hughes, librarian, Combined Training Institute, University Hospital, of Wales, pointed out that financial provision was not the only requirement: user-education and good library services were likely to generate such a demand that present staffing levels could not cope.

After this review of existing services, Mr Tabor who opened proceedings for the afternoon, considered ways in which they could develop to meet changes and expanding demands. He looked forward to better managed services employing modern management techniques, with Regional Librarians for all Regions and a structure which provided for at least one qualified librarian per District, serving all NHS information needs, with Regional back-ups and networks for dissemination of information. Technology would have an important part to play in this network, with use not only of established data-bases, but of in-put into Regional data-bases from local centres, with use in interlibrary loans, current awareness, union lists of periodicals etc. Terminals could be used for communication and dissemination and could be used for viewing of information (view-data).

The final workshop, on December 7th will aim to produce a document to define expected library needs in the NHS professions over the next 20 years.

Katherine Clark

Converting Information into Care

Report of RLG/DHSS Workshop, 7th December 1983, King's Fund Centre.