



Studiengang in Bibliotheks- und Informationswissenschaft 2017-2019

Huber, Jacqueline (2019). Beyond traditional roles: Insights from expert interviews on how to establish a systematic review service in the library

Abstract

In the last few years, several systematic review services have been established in medical libraries in Switzerland. Compared to Anglo-Saxon countries, this is a late start, particularly since such a service represents an important piece of a puzzle for research support and opens up a new scope for medical libraries in particular. Systematic reviews try to summarise and evaluate all primary studies concerning a specific research question and thereby synthesise new findings out of them. In essence, they are more than the sum of their parts and therefore are considered research in itself. In addition, systematic reviews epitomise the backbone in evidence-based medicine. Evidence-based medicine is, as the name suggests nothing else but to base decision-making on evidence and systematic reviews provide the highest-level evidence.

Health science librarians play an integral part in systematic reviews as they ensure a high-quality standard. Searches for systematic reviews done by librarians are rigorously done, and have a more complex search strategy, which in turn enhances recall and are reproducible with identical results. To sum up, searches are superior compared to searchers without the involvement of a librarian. A systematic review service of a library therefore offers valuable support for researchers in conducting a systematic review. In addition, researchers are in general often uneducated about the systematic review process. Therefore establishing a service supports not only researchers but also evidence-based medicine in general.

At the Medical Library of the University of Basel, a systematic review service was established in 2018. To evaluate and improve this new service in process as well as to find common measures on how to build up such a service, this thesis conducted expert interviews with worldwide participants from medical libraries. Case studies on building up a systematic review service or more general literature exist but not detailed thoughts on reasons, challenges and solutions when establishing such a service. This approach was used because as aforementioned, Anglo-Saxon and also Scandinavian countries have taken the lead in such services. Experts working in medical libraries in Canada, Norway, the UK, USA and Switzerland were chosen for the interviews. Switzerland was included to have an input from within the country.

Qualitative analysis of the findings from the expert interviews gave valuable insights on the question of how to establish a systematic review service as well as how to improve and further the service at the Medical Library of the University in Basel. In addition, the hope is that this thesis might raise awareness on the topic of systematic review services in the library and academic environment in German-speaking countries.