Standards for hospital libraries in Germany

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November 2004

Hospital libraries

- ensure that the hospital is supplied with up-to-date information and literature by means of their customer-oriented services, information resources and expertise

- form the basis for optimal patient care and for continuing training and lifelong learning

- use innovative technologies in order to continuously improve the transfer of information

- make the hospital more interesting for potential staff and patients through their broad array of service offerings

- support the hospital significantly in addressing the requirements for better integrated patient care, which is a politically driven issue

The "Standards for Hospital Libraries in Germany" define the minimum resources needed to meet the requirements of an efficient hospital library and its service offerings. They relate primarily to the needs of hospital libraries. Appropriately extended resources are needed for libraries with further target groups, e.g. university libraries.

Information resources

o   The library should continuously evaluate current information needs and procures the required media (books and journals in printed and electronic form, expert databases, Internet sources, audiovisual media, etc.). It should make available both basic literature for training purposes and specialized literature on state-of-the-art research.

o   All resources, services and technologies should be offered and used as are necessary for keeping the hospital supplied with up-to-date information, e.g. document delivery services, full-text accesses, multimedia offers, Internet sources, etc.

o   The library should train users in the use of the information resources.

o   Ideally, besides the scientific library there should also be a patients' library providing the patients of the hospital with patient education materials, information brochures, recreational literature, etc.

Integration into the hospital infrastructure

o   The library should be integrated into the organigram, control system and hospital's information material (flyer, Intranet and Internet pages, etc.).

o   The library staff should have fixed contact partners for matters of finance and contents.

o   The library should have access to appropriate information channels inside the hospital for the dissemination of information from the library.

o   New hospital staff should be routinely familiarized with the library services.

Cooperation

o   The library should make use of possibilities to cooperate with other libraries within the same institution and with other library facilities, in order to benefit from an exchange of expertise and potential cost savings in the supply of literature.

o   The library should cooperate internally with other relevant departments such as the documentation department, hospital information system, laboratory and pharmacy.

Room resources

o   The hospital library should be housed in self-contained, centrally situated rooms with sufficient space for library stocks, computers and copy machines for the users and workplaces for the staff.

o   The library staff should be available as contact partners during fixed opening hours. As many library information resources as possible should be accessible to hospital staff around the clock.

o   Ideally, a training room should be available to provide the hospital staff with information competency skills.

Technical resources

o   The library's technical resources should keep up with the latest developments in the area of information technologies. These presently include computer workplaces with Internet access for both library staff and users, copy machines, printers are scanners, telephones, e-mail access and fax machines, if necessary also CD-ROM servers, video recorders and DVD players.

o   The library should use software that is suitable for effective administration of its stocks.

o   The library should train the users, if necessary, in handling library-specific software.

Financial resources

o   The library should have its own budget for literature, staff costs, material costs, investment and operating costs, which are appropriate to the information needs of the institution as well as the library's range of tasks and services. The budget figures of comparable libraries can be taken from the German Library Statistics and used as a reference.

Staff resources

o   The following formula can be used as a guide for the minimum requirements regarding staff resources in hospital libraries:

**Number of hospital staff (full-time equivalents)[1] / 700
= minimum number of qualified library staff[2] (full-time equivalents)[3]**

For a hospital with 1,000 members of staff, for example, this results in a staff requirement of 1.4 for the scientific library.

o   As with all other occupational groups, library staff should be given the opportunity to regularly participate in continuing training.

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[1]Number of staff: = <u>all</u> staff of the institution, i.e. medical staff as well as all other staff of the hospital (engineering, administration, etc.)

[2]Qualified library staff = certified librarian, library assistant

[3]J. C. Gluck et al.: Standards for hospital libraries 2002. J. Med. Libr. Assoc. 90 (4) October 2002, pp. 465-472