The hospital library
– its value for the hospital as an enterprise –

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November 2004

Hospital libraries contribute to the success of a hospital with the services described in the following:

Information management

- They cover the information needs of doctors, nursing staff, administration staff, scientific staff, management and patients.
- With their access to suitable information resources they serve the growing quality requirements of patient care and thus contribute to providing patients with optimal, state-of-the-art treatment.
- With their ready availability of information they enable timely, informed decisions to be made at the patient's bedside and thus also help shorten the length of hospitalization for the patient. With state-of-the-art technology – e.g. personal digital assistants (PDAs) – they supply ad hoc information required by the doctor directly at the patient's bedside and thus contribute to cost reductions, e.g. in medication prescriptions.
- With their extensive offer of information resources and services they increase the attractiveness of the hospital for potential new employees and possibly also patients.

Procurement management, optimization of information procurement

- They continuously evaluate the information needs of the hospital staff and flexibly adapt the information offer in accordance with those needs.
- They make new offers available, such as express document delivery or use of electronic media such as e-journals and e-learning.
- They save costs, increase working efficiency in the hospital and contribute to the hospital's profitability by saving the staff valuable working time in searching for literature and information and avoiding unnecessary duplicate work.
- Through their expert knowledge of the book trade, library discounts, tax regulations, etc. they make use of the fastest and least expensive channels of procurement. Through continuous process optimization they contribute to efficient use of financial resources.
- They use their knowledge of the market to achieve more attractive conditions by negotiating with information providers and they use synergy effects, e.g. by entering into consortium agreements with other libraries.
- They evaluate their service offers and their management in accordance with the hospital's quality management guidelines, e.g. KTQ certification ("Cooperation for Transparency and Quality in Hospitals").

Continuing education and training

- They make available resources for lifelong learning and provide materials e.g. for interactive training and e-learning.

- As part of quality assurance that is increasingly being demanded for continuing education and training, they offer the material for collecting CME points (continuing medical education).

- They promote the use of new information and search options by communicating the relevant knowledge. They also train new staff in the most effective means of information procurement.

- They offer staff being trained a suitable learning environment and thus contribute to successful training.

Cooperation

- In order to optimize the hospital's internal information management they cooperate with the relevant departments (hospital information system, documentation departments, IT departments).

- They cooperate with other libraries in order to increase efficiency (e.g. in document delivery).

- They open up new customer groups that use their information resources (subject to charge). They cooperate, for example, with physicians in private practice as part of integrated care with outpatient and inpatient services and thus contribute to the profitability of the library.

Information and service offers of medical libraries

The kind of information and services offered by a medical library depends significantly on the library's target groups, i.e. the library type:

Library type 1. Target groups: Doctors, medical professionals, administration staff (e.g. in hospital libraries)

Library type 2. Target groups; additionally to 1.: Pre-registration year students (e.g. in libraries of academic teaching hospitals)

Library type 3. Target groups; additionally to 1. and 2.: Scientific workers and students in all semesters (e.g. in medical libraries of universities or research and teaching institutions)

Information offers	Library type 1	2	3
Reference works	x	x	x
Medical textbooks, examination literature		x	x
Medical specialist literature, medical practice literature, clinical manuals, continuing education literature	x	x	x
Literature for nursing staff and other medical professionals	x	x	x
Audiovisual media, multimedia products	x	x	x
Literature for patients (fiction, patient guides)	x	x	x
Literature for hospital administration (legal texts, hygiene specifications, management literature)	x	x	x
Printed journals	x	x	x
Electronic journals	x	x	x
Medical research journals	(x)	(x)	x
Journals for continuing medical education, medical professional press	x	x	x
Electronic catalogue for all information resources	x	x	x
Medical specialist databases (often available only as campus licenses)	x	x	x
Service offers			
Media administration (monograph, subscription, license and password administration, binding, cataloguing, etc.)			
Media lending	(x)	(x)	x
Document delivery services	x	x	x
Inter-library lending	(x)	(x)	x
Internet sources, e.g. guidelines, best practice examples	x	x	x
E-learning products	x	x	x
Communication of knowledge about database searches	x	x	x
Introduction to information and literature searches for (new) staff	x	x	x
User-specific information on special topics (e.g. alert services)	(x)	(x)	x
Information material for library users, newsletters	x	x	x
Organization of circulars	x	x	(x)
User workplaces	x	x	x
Internet workplaces for users	x	x	x
(Color) copying, scanning and printing facilities for users	x	x	x
Enquiry service (personal, telephone, e-mail, chat)	x	x	x
Library website on the intranet/internet	x	x	x
Offers for external customers (subject to charge)	(x)	(x)	(x)