Medical Librarians Section
Victorian Group
Newsletter
July 1983
#3

LAA

1983 Programme

4 Aug 83   Visit to ACI (Details below)

18 Nov 83   Annual general meeting – a breakfast
                     meeting!

8 Dec 83   Christmas party

Visit to ACI

August is Computer Month; here's your chance to take part!
Our meeting for 4 August will be in the form of a visit to
Australian Consolidated Industries, 310 Ferntree Gully Road,
Clayton. There will be a tour followed by a talk on appli-
cations of small computers in libraries and criteria for
selecting hardware and software. People are asked to arrive
at 6 pm for 6:30pm, and the visit is expected to last 2 hours.
Ample parking is available at ACI. There is a limit of 20
people for the visit; please RSVP ASAP to Aina Zalitis,
Central Cancer Library, tel. 602 1333 x 371.

Our regular business meeting for August will be waived because
of the visit. Anyone with matters for the attention of the
Group should contact a member of the Executive Committee.

News from your Executive Committee

Minutes received from Medical Libraries Groups in other states
reveal that ... the SA group is compiling a union list of serials
held in medical libraries in the state ... WA is in a lather
of preparation for the conference in September ... the Queensland
group is already casting about for ideas for a medical library-
oriented session for the 1984 LAA conference.

From our National Committee... we've received copies of two sub-
missions by the Medical Libraries Section to the LAA. One makes
recommendations concerning the professional practice of librarian-
ship, under headings such as selection, education & training,
registration, staff development, continuing & higher education,
recognition of special services. Another comments on the role
of sections and sectional groups – the difficulty of holding
national elections and meetings, the existence of breakaway
(i.e. non-LAA) groups, and so on. The full texts are available
from our Secretary, Aina Zalitis.

More Exec news

From Branch Council ... Work is being done on Branch objectives
for 1983/84: more on this in the next newsletter. Consideration
is being given to waiving of negotiation costs for those involved
in organizing seminars, conferences, etc.; a subcommittee has
been set up to look at whys and wherefores of staff transfers
and exchanges; remaining continuing education programmes for
1983 are as follows:

      Managing People at Work 5-6 August;

      Communicating with computer professionals 17-18 August
        (combined with Turnkey seminar);

      Ergonomics in libraries: effects of VDTs 28 September
        6pm for 6.30, Swinburne Library;

      Women in management 29 October.

Changing our name ... Various state groups have suggested that
we all become known as the LAA "Health Libraries" Section.
This has been proposed as a more accurate description of the
interests of those who make up the Section. We have been asked
to give the idea some thought with a view to voting on it at
the Section's annual general meeting in Perth in September.
Your Executive would like some FEEDBACK, especially from those
who won't be in Perth to vote - do you want to belong to a
"medical librarians'" group? a "health libraries" group?
something completely different?

LAA AGM

The 1983 LAA annual general meeting will be held in Melbourne
on Thursday 15 September. Motions may be put forward for
consideration at this meeting. If there's something you think
we should be saying, contact a member of the Executive
Committee ASAP.

Australian Medical Librarians' conference

Everyone who expressed interest should now have a copy of the
brochure about the conference to be held in Perth 18-23 September.
The Conference Planning Committee has offered free accommodation
in the home of one of its members to a Victorian delegate who
cannot get funding for accommodation, and might otherwise be
unable to attend. If you'd like to take them up on the offer,
please let Aina Zalitis know ASAP (tel. 602 1333 x 371).
Also, anyone who wants info about accommodation other than
that described in the brochure is advised to contact Convention
Makers, 257 Adelaide Terrace, Perth 6000.

Voucherless swap flop

There has been very little response to the Health Commission
Library's register of libraries interested in exchanging
photocopies outside the $3 ILL system (see last newsletter
for details). We can only suggest that librarians wishing
to make such arrangements get on the phone to each other
and do some individual wheeling and dealing.

At the last general meeting (31 May)

The term of office of the present Executive has been extended
to December 83, and in future will run from 1 Jan to 31 Dec.

Non-LAA members of the Group from now on will not be asked for
a donation in lieu of fees, will not receive mailings, and
will not be entitled to vote or hold office - but you are welcome
to attend meetings & participate in other group activities.

We heard a most informative talk from Alan Saunders, Director
of the Victorian Drug Information Centre at the Royal Melbourne
Hospital. Alan, a pharmacist, took charge of the Centre in 1980,
when it became the state centre for the National Drug Information
Service based in Canberra. He traced the development of DISs
in the USA in the 1960s, through the first Australian DIS in
Melbourne in 1968/9, to the establishment of a nationally-
coordinated service in 1977. The explosion in the number of
synthetic drugs produced a need for drug information to be
retrieved, evaluated and presented in a useable form to health
workers; there are now DISs in most major hospitals.

The Australian NDIS was the first national computerised system
anywhere in the world; it uses the same telecommunications
network as the Australian National Library's Medline system,
to disseminate data from Canberra to the state centres, and
from state centres to local centres - hospitals, community health
centres, community pharmacies, etc. The service is reactive
rather than active - it responds to enquiries, and drug profiles
are written for future reference. At present there are 250 such
profiles. Drug profiles are lengthy, so special high-speed
transmission lines and printers are used. The database covers
therapeutic but not addictive drugs, and can be searched using
the STATUS system (about to change to STAIRS) on drug names,
disease names, adverse effects, etc. Any paragraph of any
profile can be retrieved.

Drug information is always referenced, and kept up-to-date by
using Medline, Inpharma, and air-mail journal subscriptions.
The Australian Drug Evaluation Committee of the Department of
Health, in consultation with drug manufacturers, subjects each
profile to a lengthy vetting procedure. The profiles are not
copyright, but each carries a disclaimer that they are intended
for use by the medical and allied professions. There is no
charge for drug information.

Alan finished by emphasising the extent of cooperation between
DISs and libraries, and encouraging librarians to familiarise
themselves with and make more use of DISs.

Get into a directory

Alex Byrne, c/- Library, James Cook University, Townsville,
Queensland 4811, is compiling the first Directory of Online
Search Services in Australia, to be published by Footscray
Institute of Technology Library and the Australian Database
Development Association. He is distributing a questionnaire
to gather service descriptions and to identify characteristics
of online services and searches in Australia. Please contact
him if you want to be included.

Keeping library statistics

Following Health Commission guidelines, most hospital administrations are asking their libraries to provide quarterly statistics on occasions of service. An impromptu meeting of hospital librarians was held 6 June at the Royal Children's Hospital library to get our act together, so that our libraries' statistics present a consistent picture of library services. A draft statistical format was worked out and subsequently approved by the Executive. Copies have been distributed to all hospital libraries; anyone who missed out, or wants to know more should contact a member of the Executive.

Peer review

The issue of peer review in medical libraries is rearing its head in some hospitals these days. Our industrial advisory group is holding a watching brief on this - anyone with notes or queries is invited to contact Stacey McKeown, Royal Children's Hospital Library, tel. 347 5522 x 238.

Patient education information

The process of patient education is often informal and sometimes inadequate. Similarly the demand made by patients and the public alike for consumer health education is growing and yet is not necessarily being met by information resources within the community.

The librarian at Bendigo Base Hospital sees the medical library as having a responsibility to provide for the health information needs of the hospital and community. The problem is: where can one obtain credible, reliable material for the least possible expense?

The librarians of the Bendigo Base Hospital and the Northern District School of Nursing have raised the possiblity of creating a set of materials and subjecting them to review committees of interested staff, or of farming out topics to staff to compile materials on.

This would be done with the aim of encouraging staff to become more actively involved with the concept of patient education and of establishing a file of reliable reference material that could be made available to patients and the public alike.

The librarians working on this would like as of our readers: Has anyone seen or had experience with such a program before, and would they like to discuss its viability? If so, please contact Heather Morton, Bendigo Base Hospital Library, P O Box 126, Bendigo Vic 3550; tel. (054) 43 0411 x 424.

Moves

Brenda Lee has moved from the medical library at the Alfred Hospital to the position of Librarian-in-Charge, Alfred Hospital School of Nursing. Taking Brenda's place in the medical library is Kathy Basher.