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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE USE OF LIBRARY SERVICES BY USERS AT HOSPITAL LIBRARIES OF
HOCHIMINH CITY, VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT

Purposes: This paper is based on a Masters' dissertation submitted to the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Hochiminh city, which provides the overall picture of the use of library services by users at hospital libraries of Hochiminh city, Vietnam. A question are is conducted with the aim of investigating 400 users in four hospital libraries in Hochiminh city in May 2012.

Methodology: Question are analysis was used in terms of quantitative approach. Data were collected by investigating users' need by a question are as well as interviewing librarians in four hospital libraries. Besides, this paper has a combination of some various methods of research. Then, Microsoft Excel was utilized as a main tool to synthesize and analyze data in this paper.

Findings: This article analyses the missions, role of hospital libraries in a medical modern environment at hospital of Hochiminh city, Vietnam. The main findings are examining users' characteristics and users' need and information behavior in hospital libraries of Hochiminh city, Vietnam.

Recommendations and future research: Four main recommendations were proposed including broadening many groups of users; Investigating annually users' need; Enhancing in marketing hospital libraries; and guiding users. The study recommends that researchers should carry out research on "The satisfaction of information need of users at the hospital libraries of Hochiminh city" in order to provide bases to improve the status and effectiveness of hospital libraries.

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INTRODUCTION

Hospital libraries plays a crucial role in hospitals. In some developed countries, hospital libraries have implemented and developed along with establishing of associations, professional organizations of medical library which responsible for guiding hospital libraries in a long time. In Vietnam, some hospital library has organized and run effectively in most of medical office, research instructions, hospital. However, many hospital libraries have much limitations, even others have no library in their hospital. Therefore, the ability of using information of users is really limited by this situation. It requires many hospital should improve effectiveness of hospital libraries with the aim of satisfying users' need. Thus, developing hospital libraries in Vietnam hospital is really necessary in the present stage.

Aims of the study

The paper aims to provide the overall picture of users' need in hospital libraries, identify the use of information services by

users at hospital libraries of Hochiminh city, Vietnam; and then proposing some solutions for developing hospital libraries in Hochiminh city.

Research questions

To achieve these aims, the study ought to answer the following questions:

- Investigating the characteristics of users at hospital libraries in Hochiminh city
- Putting forward some solutions for developing of users' need at hospital libraries in Hochiminh city.

Overview of the hospital libraries of Hochiminh city, Vietnam

Hospital library is specific medical library which is located in hospitals, medical centres, short or long term health care facilities. It is responsible for providing medical information resources for health care professionals and staffs in hospitals. Moreover, hospital library also provides health information services for patients and communities. Hospital library is one kind of medical library system. A hospital library maintained

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within the walls of a hospital, containing a collection of print and online resources on medicine and allied health to serve the information and research needs of doctors, nurses, patients, and staff, usually managed by a medical librarian. Hospital librarians are organized in the Hospital Libraries Section of the Medical Library Association. This definition was defined by Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science. According to statistics of Hochiminh Medical Office (2011), there was 383 medical facilities in total. It divides into two groups which the first group is included 35 general hospitals and 34 specialized hospitals. This paper focuses on investigating four hospital libraries including Thong Nhat hospital, Cho Ray hospital, Nhi Dong 2 hospital, and Eye hospital.

Function, mission of the hospital library in Hochiminh city, Vietnam

Functions of the hospital library

The hospital library has functions of collecting, storing, providing medical science information, supporting effectively in exploiting information resources for serving hospital functions such as examining, treating diseases, training human resources, teaching, learning and research of hospital staff (managers, doctors, nurses, medical technical staff, research staff), students in medical university and patients.

Missions of the hospital library

- Collecting, processing, organizing information resources: Supplementing, exchanging, analyzing, processing and preserving of various types of materials, building, improving the relevant retrieval system;
- Exploiting and dissemination of information: hospital libraries are to perform common tasks in retrieving information through traditional and modern medias; Providing services such as loan service, inter-library loan service, supporting in using online public access cataloguing; Providing based-on-need information; Guiding information users; Training, supporting learning, scientific research for users.

Characteristics of information users in hospital library in Hochiminh city, Vietnam

The information users of hospital libraries have diversities about career, education background, ages. It could be divided into four subgroups:

Researchers, education and training staff: Users are researchers, teaching staff, medical students who are working at medical institutions, research centers, universities, colleges, hospitals. This group has high education background and masters deeply information skills. In order to support in research, teaching and learning, this group usually requires information relates to many medical accomplishments such as new treatment methods with high effectiveness, or results from testing some new types of medicine. Basing on their using information, they can create new scientific information which related to their research areas. General speaking, this information users group has high and consistent need.

Practitioner, professionals: They include doctors, pharmacists, nurses who are working in hospitals are responsible in providing information which related to the treatment and caring of patients. Thus, this group often has requirement of precise, in time information and directly related to the effective treatment methods, or professional tasks in hospital. Moreover, sometimes this group takes part in scientific research as the compulsory mission.

Managers: They are responsible for managing, executing the hospitals' activity. Their information need are legal, strategic, forecasting, macroscopic, general information about medical field, such as law, policy, strategic development.

Medical service users: This group includes patients and patients' family who are vary from professional and educational background. It makes the diversity of information need. One of prominent features is unstable information need. In fact, their information need just appear meanwhile they stay at hospital for long care, and then, they do not continue using hospital library. Moreover, their need are not presented clearly. The content of need are diversity and general. With the aim of satisfying the information need, hospital libraries have library and information services which are complied with numbers of bed. In brief, the difference about education background, purposes of use information, information need and behaviour makes diversity of information users' need in hospital.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In literature history about hospital library over the world, there were many articles which found at various aspects of hospital library. Sulaiman Al-Ogla (1998) investigated that the status of libraries in the hospitals, institutions, information resources, hospital library space, and library and information services. This article restricted at hospital which served for hospital staff in Riyadh. Diane G. Wolf, Christine C. Chastain-Warheit (2002) is a research of many various authors which conducted in United States. This paper analyzed the status of hospital libraries, library services, role of librarians in taking care of patients, some compulsory requirements for librarians in new era. This paper was published on Bulletin of Medical Library Association in January, 2002. Beryl Glitz, Virginia Flack, Irene M. Lovas (1998) had been undertaken to explore the characteristics and services of 355 hospital libraries in the United States and describe the equivalence between the status and standards for hospital libraries.

There was a research by Lucy Selman, Irene J Higginson and other authors (2008) which investigated about patients' information need. This paper was published on website <http://www.bmj.com> which focused on patients' information need in South of Africa and Uganda. Another paper by Jenkins V, Fallowfield L, and Saul J (2001); Or Leydon G., Boulton M và Motnihan C.(2000); Meredith C, Symonds P and Webster L (1996) also made some surveys with various groups of users. In brief, most of these papers investigated about the status of hospital libraries, users' need at different aspects in some areas over the world. In Vietnam, there had one paper which investigated about hospital library was conducted by P W Brennan (1992), published on the bulletin of Medical Library Association. This paper shown about the status of medical

library of Vietnam, general information about Vietnam medical library system and some achievements of The Ministry's Central Institute of Medical Science Information (CIMS). Moreover, this paper also mentioned some problems which the medical library system in Vietnam had faced with. Another paper by Nguyen Trung Thanh was published on Library Journal of Vietnam National Library (2010) which presented the status of management of state for medical library system and achievements of this system. However, there has not any paper which conducted over ally and sufficiently about the status of hospital library in Hochiminh city, especially in users' need of using hospital library services in Hochiminh city. Therefore, this paper would be a problem need to be researched in Vietnam.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Some research methods are used in conducting this paper such as:

- Literature research method is used in finding theoretical background about hospital libraries.
- Observation method is aimed to gather data about information behavior of users at four hospital libraries.
- Individual interview method is conduct with hospital libraries' managers and information users with the purpose is that investigating the status of hospital libraries, evaluating information need, information behaviour, the satisfaction of information need and desiration of them.
- A question are is designed for gathering specific data about information need, the satisfaction level of information users in hospital libraries and their expectations for hospital libraries.
- Statistic and analyzing data method by Excel is used for processing data in order to evaluate the status of hospital libraries and proposing some solutions for developing hospital libraries.

Limitations of the study

Investigating users at four hospital libraries was conducted to make base for analyzing, evaluating and putting forward some solutions for developing hospital libraries in Hochiminh city. A question are was conducted with the aim of interviewing 400 users in four hospital libraries in Hochiminh city in May 2012 and 100 questionares per each hospital library. A total of 400 questionares were distributed and 294 (73, 5%) responded back. The process of investigating users by question are was carried out coincidently among users with non-users.

-Thong Nhat hospital library: 61 responds/ 100 distributed questionares (61%)

-Cho Ray hospital library: 75 responds/ 100 distributed questionares (75%)

-Nhi Dong 2 hospital library: 82 responds/ 100 distributed questionares (82%)

-Eye hospital library: 76 responds/ 100 distributed questionares (76%)

Among 294 back questionares, there was 173 responds (58.8%) of users who used hospital library services at various level; and 121 responds of participant did not use hospital library (41.2%).

-Thong Nhat hospital library: 28/61 responds who used hospital library (45.9%)

-Cho Ray hospital library: 42/75 responds who used hospital library (56%)

-Nhi Dong 2 hospital library: 56/82 responds who used hospital library (68.2%)

-Eye hospital library: 47/76 responds who used hospital library (61.8%)

Some purposes of investigation are included: frequency, purposes, reasons for users to use hospital library service, level of satisfaction of users with library and information services.

FINDINGS

HOSPITAL LIBRARY USERS' CHARACTERISTICS AT HOCHIMINH CITY

Elements of hospital library users

The hospital library users at four investigated hospital libraries are divided into some following groups:

Doctors: After 6-year-graduation, doctors often take part in orientational courses, master, medical specialist 1, medical specialist 2 or doctoral program. The hospital library is one of suitable and sufficient information sources for users' need.

Nurses: This group tooks a small quantity. They have graduated bachelor of nurse and studied some courses with the aim of improving their qualification.

Other users: Besides two above groups, the hospital libraries also serve other information users such as phararcists, medical technical staff.

Patients and patients' family: At four investigated hospital libraries, there have no policy for patients and patients' family, except for the fact that Thong Nhat library and Nhi Dong 2 library allowed patients and patients' family use reading service at library when they are in need. The result of interview with librarians shows that some patients use reading service at library at only once time. The main reason is that they have shortage of foreign language skill as well as most of materials are not suitable for their information need. This was also the cause why this survey did not investigate this group.

It is clear from Table 1, 95.9% of the respondents are doctors, and only 0.7% are phararcists, remaining 3.4% belongs to nurses. There has no users are patients in this survey. Table 2 describes that there have 173 of respondents who used hospital libraries, the majority of the users are doctors (93%) while only 1.2% of respondents are phararcists.

Education background and working places of users

Table 3 illustrates that 100% of library users have degree of bachelor at least. Most of them used library services with the aim of improving their qualification. It is clearly shown that 63 (36.4%) of 173 respondents have graduated bachelor; master level is 14 respondents (8.1%), and the highest rate of respondents is the medical specialist 1 (53.8%) whilst there is only 3 of respondents are medical specialist 2 (1.7%).

Table 1. Respondents by careers (both library users and non library users)

Hospital library	Doctors		Nurses		Pharmacists		Total of respondents
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Thong Nhat	51	83.6	8	13.1	2	3.3	61
Cho Ray	75	100.0	0	0	0	0	75
Nhi Dong 2	80	97.6	2	2.4	0	0	82
Eye	76	100	0	0	0	0	76
Total	282	95.9 %	10	3.4 %	02	0.7 %	294

Table 2. Information users of hospital libraries

Hospital library	Doctors		Nurses		Pharmacists		Total of respondents
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Thong Nhat	18	64.3	8	28.6	2	7.1	28
Cho Ray	42	100.0	0	0	0	0	42
Nhi Dong 2	54	96.4	2	3.6	0	0	56
Eye	47	100.0	0	0	0	0	47
Total	161	93.0%	10	5.8%	02	1.2%	173

Table 3. Library users by education background

Hospital library	Master		Medical Specialist 2		Medical Specialist 1		Doctor		Total of respondents
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Thong Nhat	3	10.7	0	0	12	42.9	13	46.4	28
Cho Ray	5	11.9	1	2.4	21	50.0	15	35.7	42
Nhi Dong 2	4	7.1	2	3.6	37	66.1	13	23.2	56
Eye	2	4.3	0	0	23	48.9	22	46.8	47
Total	14	8.1%	3	1.7%	93	53.8	63	36.4	173

USERS' NEED AND INFORMATION BEHAVIOR IN HOCHIMINH HOSPITAL LIBRARIES

Users' need of using the hospital libraries

It is found from Table 4 that the respondents were asked to indicate their concern and using the fields of materials. The result of survey shows that the majority of respondents (65.2%) use usually medical materials and related fields in their professional fields. Besides, users also use many different fields such as economic and politics, arts and creations, culture and society, science and technology (the percentage varies from four hospital libraries). However, the rate of using these fields is not high as the rate of using medicine field. It is clearly seen that there are the diversity of using materials of users in hospital libraries. They usually used two of many various types in order to satisfy their need. However, because of specialized features of hospital libraries, although there is different from the satisfying level and frequency of using materials in libraries, book is the best used material in four hospital libraries.

The rate of using books at two libraries Thong Nhat and Nhi Dong 2 is the same percentage (approximately 47%), the next rate was professional databases (36%). Besides, the library users also use thesis and magazines in serving their work and learning. Otherwise, Cho Ray hospital library had 51.9% of respondents who use books. This rate is not higher than the rate of using databases (48.1%). The reason could be explained by the fact that this library has no more than two types of materials for users (just databases and books). It is clear to see this rate in Table 6. Materials by English are most used by users in four hospital libraries (65%), followed by Vietnamese materials and materials in French. The cause is that all of users have university degree, had good English skills and most of medical information resources by English.

Information behavior of users

Frequency of using hospital libraries services

It is further found from Table 7 that 41.2 % of respondents do not use hospital libraries, yet they use library at department library, internet, book store or colleagues. Some reasons for this status are that they have no time for using library (96%), do not know whether library existed or not (0.8%), and have no need to finding materials (3.2%). For respondents who use four hospital libraries, in response to the question how frequently do they use hospital libraries, there have some different ways of responses. Table 8 indicates that majority of respondents use library sometimes (32%), usually (20.1%). Only 3.6% of respondents use library daily (see Table 8). Cho Ray hospital library has the highest percentage of using usually library (38.7%), followed by Nhi Dong 2 hospital (18.3%) and Eye hospital (17.1%). There have many reasons for this status were suitable materials for the users' need, comfortable spaces, spare time of users, enthusiastic librarian; meanwhile, Thong Nhat hospital has the lowest percentage of using library. In brief, the main cause lead to the rate of usually using library was not high was that they had no much time for using library, unsuitable materials for need, uncomfortable spaces of library, and they had no need for finding materials

Purposes of using hospital library

The fact is that there have many purposes for users use hospital library such as serving teaching, learning, treatment, creation, etc... 173 of respondents have different purposes of using hospital libraries. Table 9 illustrates that learning is one of many purposes of users which takes the highest percentage at four hospital libraries. 81.8% of respondents are at Eye hospital library, followed by Cho Ray hospital (73.5%) and the mostly same percentage by Thong Nhat hospital (64.9%) and Nhi Dong 2 hospital (68.3%).

Table 4. The field of materials which were used by users

Hospital library	Economic & Politics	%	Medicine	%	Culture & Society	%	Science & Technology	%	Arts & Creation	%
Thong Nhat	3	9.7	26	83.9	0	0	0	0	2	6.5
Cho Ray	0	0	38	63.3	15	25	7	11.7	0	0
Nhi Dong 2	7	11.9	49	83.1	3	5.1	0	0	0	0
Eye	1	1.5	43	65.2	16	24.2	0	0	6	9.1

Table 5. Need of material types

Hospital library	Book	%	Thesis	%	Journal	%	Newspapers	%	Database	%
Thong Nhat	23	47.9	3	6.3	5	10.4	0	0	17	35.4
Cho Ray	27	51.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	48.1
Nhi Dong 2	48	47.1	5	4.9	12	11.8	0	0	37	36.3
Eye	36	29.0	25	20.2	9	7.3	12	9.7	42	33.9

Table 6. The language of materials were used frequently by users

Hospital library	Vietnamese	Percentage	English	Percentage	French	Percentage
Thong Nhat	12	33.3	24	66.7	0	0
Cho Ray	15	28.3	38	71.7	0	0
Nhi Dong 2	8	12.9	52	83.9	2	3.2
Eye	15	25.9	43	74.1	0	0

Table 7. Reasons why respondents did not used hospital libraries

Hospital library	Have no time to use library	(%)	Have no need to use materials	(%)	Have no awareness of library's existence	(%)	Have no suitable materials for users' need	(%)	Uncomfortable library space	(%)	Tota of respondents
Thong Nhat	33	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33
Cho Ray	32	94.1	2	5.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	34
Nhi Dong 2	25	96.2	1	3.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	26
Eye	29	93.5	1	3.2	1	3.2	0	0	0	0	31
Total	119	96%	4	3.2%	1	0.8%	0	0	0	0	124

Table 8. Frequency of using hospital libraries

Hospital	Daily	%	Usually	%	Sometimes	%	Only once	%	Never	%	Total
Thong Nhat	0	0	2	3.3	23	37.7	3	4.9	33	54.1	61
Cho Ray	8	10.7	29	38.7	5	6.7	0	0	33	44.0	75
Nhi Dong 2	3	3.7	15	18.3	37	45.1	1	1.2	26	31.7	82
Eye	0	0	13	17.1	29	38.2	5	6.6	29	38.2	76
Total	11	3.6%	59	20.1%	94	32.0%	9	3.1%	121	41.2%	294

Table 9. Purposes of using hospital library

Purposes of using hospital library	Thong Nhat	(%)	Cho Ray	(%)	Nhi Dong 2	(%)	Eye	(%)	Total of respondents
Research	7	18.9	3	6.1	5	7.9	1	1.8	16
Teaching	3	8.1	1	2.0	2	3.2	5	9.1	11
Learning	24	64.9	36	73.5	43	68.3	45	81.8	148
Treatment	3	8.1	2	4.1	12	19.0	0	0	17
Recreation	0	0	7	14.3	0	0	3	5.5	10
Other purposes	0	0	0	0	1	1.6	1	1.8	2

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, some suggestions are put forward to improve the use of the hospital libraries among many different groups of users. Four main recommendations were proposed including:

- Broadening many groups of users would be a necessary solution. Depending on every particular situation, each hospital library should build serving policy for patients and family' patients in order to help them access information, library services in the hospital libraries
- Investigating users' need should be conducted regularly (once to twice a year) with many different groups of users.

Questionares, focus group interview should be two methods which suitable for this solution. The results of investigations and interviews would be reasonable bases for the hospital libraries to conduct other activities

- Enhancing in marketing the hospital libraries would be an effective solution for attracting the present users and the potential users such as marketing services, resources, facilities of the hospital libraries. The ways of marketing hospital library should be focused on various characteristics of users.
- Guiding users would also a crucial solution. Hospital libraries could combine many ways in the best effectiveness such as consulting the users in finding

materials, using library services, retrieving information; training information literacy and basic information skills for users.

Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Research

The hospital libraries play the important role in supporting users in research, teaching, learning, treatment and recreation. With the aim of improving the activities of hospital libraries in general and enhancing the level of users' satisfaction, these above solutions should be conducted one by one or parallelly. However, depending on the particular status of hospital libraries, every hospital libraries could decide the priority level of solutions. In the future, further research need to investigate the satisfaction of the hospital libraries of Hochiminh city with the users' information needs.

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