LIBRARY FUTURES: A DECADE ON: FROM CYBRARIAN TO CLINICAL LIBRARIAN

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Overview

• History – status of librarians
• Current profile health librarians
• QH librarians - Survey design / methodology
• Survey results
• Follow up comments
• Conclusion
History – Status of librarians

- Decade on – from a ‘female calling’ to information management
- Redefine image of librarian from ‘hand maiden’ to ‘cybrarian’
Queensland Health – Librarians – Current profile

- 20 health libraries in Queensland – diverse range – corporate – hospital
- 43 professionally qualified personnel (31 librarians and 12 library technicians)
- Change in role over years – clinical librarian role, evidence based practice focus and ‘business as usual’ role
Survey design/methodology

- Quantitative and qualitative methods
- SurveyMonkey – quantitative data collection (N=41)
- Follow up survey (N=15) – explored issues raised from SurveyMonkey results
- Featured strongly in comments was recent industrial unrest
Survey Profile

- Gender – males 18% and females 82% of respondents - overall
- Age – majority in 51-60 years age cat. 46%
- Classification for librarians– majority in PO3 level
- Qualifications of librarians – High proportion hold Grad. Diploma – no intentions further study
Choice of career

- Standing and respectability in the community
- Career path – majority had no defined career path nor do they now
- Majority desired promotion in future
- Hampered by lack of promotion opportunities
- Rewards not adequate in terms of salary/status
Union involvement

- Majority in union – 67%
- WHY not included in HP scale:
  - Follow up comments showed disappointment with their union’s level of support
  - Librarians small group within Health
  - Failed to show clinical involvement
  - Mostly affable and avoid conflict
  - Not noticed by senior bureaucrats
  - Sacrificial lamb
  - Generally not undertaking duties, the cessation of which would create major inconvenience
Stereotypes – WHY still exist

• Majority of respondents (82%) acknowledge that negative stereotypes still plague professions.
• The image/status is not particularly high.
• Associated with public library setting.
• Predominance of women in library work.
• Unequal power relations within organisational structure and within society as a whole.
• Location of library within QH.
Challenging the image – HOW?

- Redefining role within hospital settings – clinical librarian – evidence based practice
- Dressing professionally
- Displaying qualifications
- Demonstrating qualities of ‘a good library manager’
- Marketing oneself and library
- Posters / Audio visuals promoting library services
Clinical Librarian