

Westmead Hospital Serials Sub-Committee Report of Activities 1996/2001

Background

The Westmead Hospital Library and Information Resources Committee was first formed in mid 1986 as the Serials Sub Committee to consider journals recommended for purchase by the Library. As serials are ongoing costs (not once only like books), they must be approved by this Committee and not just the Department Head. Full consideration of new titles can take some time to complete so it was decided that rather than the full Library Committee devoting half of its quarterly meeting time to serials, a Sub-Committee specifically dealing with serials would be formed which would then make recommendations for ratification by the full Library Committee. In 1999 when the Area Library committee was formed, the Serials Sub-Committee was incorporated into the new Westmead Hospital Library and Information Resources Committee.

The Library Information and Resources Committee is chaired by the Manager, Library Information and Resources (as delegated by the Director of Corporate Services) and includes the following representatives: - Medical Staff Council ICPMR, Dental School, Nursing, Allied Health, Community Health, Student representatives (Nursing, Medical and Dental), all Librarians from Hospitals in Western Sydney Area Health Services and the Children's Hospital and the Serials Officer and assistant from Westmead Library..

The Committee meets quarterly, usually in February, May, August and November. The Manager, Library Information and Resources reports back to the Library Committee about suggested titles and recommended policies.

Policy formulation

The original Committee adopted the following policies, which continue to be endorsed by the new Committee.

- * Normally only one copy of a journal title is to be held. Exceptions, on merit, can be made where it is appropriate for a duplicate copy to be held in the Department eg. Specialised, workbench titles; or, locational problems. (If Parramatta or Area Services are moved to Westmead, second copies of titles may then be cancelled).
- * Approval is based on the perceived need for the title and funding source. Any title approved for location within a Department must be paid for by the Department. It is preferred that titles be housed in the Library for security purposes and suggestions from departments who are willing to pay for a title from their own funds (but house them in the library) are preferred.

- * All recommendations must be forwarded to the Manager, Library Information and Resources 12 days prior to the next scheduled Library Information Resources Committee Meeting.
- * Current savings and expenditure for library and departments are to be regularly presented by the Manager, Library Information and Resources to the Library Information and Resources Committee.
- * All requests to be acknowledged and the Manager, Library Information Resources to ensure ongoing liaison with those requesting titles.
- * If appropriate, the Serials Officer to obtain sample issues of titles before presentation to the Committee.

Major events affecting serials over this period

- There have been additional costs incurred as many publishers have increased the price of print subscriptions to cover the so-called “free online access” that they now offer.
- * Many titles have now become available in full text format through the Internet, including those available via Ovid on the CIAP network. There are usually additional costs associated with such access and many titles only offer the most recent years. The Committee has considered such access for the future and supports the continuation of print subscriptions until online access can be equally guaranteed for all WSAHS users.
- In late 1999 The NSW Department of Supply, Peak Purchasing Council and Department of Health joined with hospital and the Department of Health Libraries to develop a tender document. As a result, from August 2000 journals can now only be ordered through Swets Blackwell or Ebsco. Fortunately, Westmead has used both suppliers for a long time and did not have to change subscription agencies for all titles. Although savings will result across all of NSW Health, Westmead will possibly pay a little more in the future as we no longer can access individual discounts.
- The fluctuating Australian dollar together with publisher price increases over this period has seriously eroded budgets for purchasing journals.

In the period 1995-1999 the average cost of journals indexed by Medline was US\$282.51 and this had increased to \$419.22 per title by 1999. Since that time the situation has worsened with the \$A fall against the \$US. The average price increase for titles actually ordered by Westmead has in fact been over 16% per annum and without regular reassessment and review of the serials collection the Library would not have been able to remain as close to budget as it has.

Several surveys of journal usage were undertaken, and, a special group of library staff worked with Diane Ball on a project for her Ph.D. on Learning Organisations which resulted in the development of a "decision tree" document for assessing the relevance of journals held by a library. This instrument was to be of major importance in preparing for the moving of the library stack area from Parramatta in late 2001 including the culling of older issues of some less relevant titles in order to transport and house those items in the smaller stack area located at Blacktown Hospital.

**Summary of Serial Activity
1996/2001**

	DEPARTMENT	LIBRARY	TOTAL
New titles ordered/donated	93	39	132
Titles cancelled/ceased publications	82	81	163
Increase/Decrease	11	-42	-31
Costs of new titles	22,771.39	12,581.18	35,352.57
Savings from cancellations in \$	56,834.20	99,062.32	155,896.52
Net Savings	34,062.81	86,481.14	120,543.95

As can be seen from the above the Library, has done its best to maintain a current, relevant collection whilst continuing to buy necessary new titles and containing costs during a period of budget restrictions. We have saved over \$120,500 with the loss of only 31 titles.

The success of the strategies undertaken owes much to the contribution of the members of the sub-committee and to the Library "Serials Team", which prepares details of newly suggested titles, circulate information about serials to users and the sub-committee, orders, accessions and claims titles and generally liaises with relevant users and suppliers about these extremely important resources for the Hospital.

Linda Mulheron
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