

TITLE: Nursing educators' perceptions of collaboration with librarians

Bottom Line: Very few nurse educators indicated that they saw librarians as partners in the educational process or research pursuits, and there is a contradiction between the respondents' perceived searching skills and their actual knowledge of searching skills. This illustrates that librarians do have a place in the EBP process within nursing schools, but they need to convince nurse educators that this is the case.

Focused Question: Do nurse educators collaborate with librarians to teach evidence-based practice, and do they regard librarians as a useful resource?

Citation: Nursing educators' perceptions of collaboration with librarians. Schulte S.J., Sherwill-Navarro P.J. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*. 2009 Jan;97(1):57-60.

Summary of the aim and methods of the study

- The aim of this twenty-question survey was to quantify anecdotal evidence of nurse educators' perceptions of librarians and to understand how librarians can approach future collaborations with nursing faculty. The authors had found several studies examining how librarians perceive working with teaching staff, but none of these covered educators' perceptions of collaborating with librarians.
- The study population was drawn from the full-time nursing faculty staff within 74 nursing schools in Indiana and Florida.
- The questionnaire survey comprised quantitative and qualitative questions which were analyzed statistically and thematically. The questionnaire was developed by the authors, and provided in an appendix.
- The authors did not send the questionnaire directly to the population under study; instead they used intermediaries (nursing faculty leaders, program directors, and reference librarians serving nursing schools).

Main Results

- A total of 112 responses were gathered (response rate??). 104 of these indicated which state they were from; 47% of these were from Florida and 53% were from

Indiana. It is not known which schools were represented. Most of the participants (60%) reported a master's degree as their highest level of education.

- Responses to the open-ended question "How would you define collaboration with a librarian?" were assigned a theme or themes and presented in Table 1. The two most common themes were providing reference assistance (40 times) and communicating needs and resources (27 times). Very few respondents indicated that they see librarians as partners in the educational process or research pursuits, as 14 responses mentioned instruction and 9 responses mentioned researching/publishing together.
- Responses to the Likert-type question presenting 10 different scenarios where a librarian and nurse educator might collaborate produced a definite pattern of results, presented in Figure 1. The results indicated a positive response in the assessment and curriculum development categories, and a more neutral response in the instruction category. Responses were also analyzed using chi-square analysis by state and self-rated ability to use library resources. No statistically significant differences were noted.
- Responses to the open-ended question "What do you feel is the role of librarians in supporting the trend toward evidence-based practice?" were assigned a theme or themes and presented in Table 2. Nurse educators overwhelmingly viewed the librarian's role in EBP as the search expert (65 responses), but only 4 respondents noted that librarians could help with evaluating the literature.
- Nearly three quarters (72%) of respondents rated themselves as excellent or good at using library resources, but the most common feature used for searching was simple keyword searching (87% of respondents). Only 25% of respondents noted using MeSH/other subject headings.

Comments:

- Important topic for research, and a questionnaire was the correct study method to use.
- The questionnaire was developed by the authors, who do not seem to have based this on anything other than their own "anecdotal evidence" of nurse educators' perceptions.

- Although the sample comprised responses from two states, the authors did not ask for each respondent's institutional affiliation. It may have been helpful to know how evenly spread the responses were in terms of institution and state. As such, a large number of responses could have come from one institution and therefore biased the results in favour of the experiences of staff at that one institution.
- It was also impossible to know the response rate – the authors stated that 74 nursing schools were approached, but gave no information about the nursing schools.
- Respondents were asked for information about their nursing qualifications, but it may have been useful to know about their teaching qualifications as well.
- The results were analyzed in an easily interpretable way, with useful subheadings. Concern was expressed over the use of decimal points in percentages – was this to make the paper seem more “scientific”?
- It would be possible to replicate the study as the authors gave the full questionnaire, but the authors did not identify any limitations in the methodology that might have influenced the results.
- The authors' conclusions appear to be based on an objective interpretation of the results, as each point draws its evidence from these.

Appraised by: Oxford Librarians May 2009