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Librarians and Information Literacy in Health Sciences : A Bird's Eye View

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**LIBRARIANS AND INFORMATION LITERACY
IN HEALTH SCIENCES. A BIRD'S EYE VIEW**

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to offer a synthetic and up-to-date perspective of the increasingly expanding subject of information literacy, without any pretence of being an in-depth or even exhaustive approach of all its aspects. The concept of “information literacy” (IL) has a history going back as early as the 1970’s, though there is a relatively recent tendency to replace its precursors or synonyms such as library orientation, bibliographic instruction, information skills development, user / reader education etc. The term itself carries weight and importance, which continue to grow in the context of information proliferation. Standards of IL competency have been and are being established at national levels, while the European Commission makes the concept official in the “Memorandum of Lifelong Learning” drafted in 2000. Some scholars even consider IL more responsible for the digital divide than the actual access to the information resources. Medical librarians are key players in these trends, becoming increasingly aware of their changing role in the dissemination of information. The paper sets out to explore how well prepared we are for this role, what are the main problems and barriers we need to tackle. Further on, how do we find the optimal “mixture” between the type of library we work for, with its specific users, the methods we apply in teaching IL, and the proposed goals. Measuring the outcome of such an endeavour is also submitted to scrutiny. The case of the Cluj medical library is presented, where from simple library tours a few years ago, a teaching of IL curriculum has been integrated for three student categories.