Assessing the Impact of Literature Search Services: Supporting Our User Community's Work Productivity

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Objectives

To evaluate the impact and value of literature searching by determining how scientists and health care professionals actually used the information in the search results in their research and medical activities.

Methods

A nine question, online survey was developed to solicit feedback and identify the reason(s) for the search request, how the user planned to utilize the information received, and its potential impact on the user's work. Each time a literature search was requested, the reference team (four librarians), sent the survey link with the search results. Data collection started in February 2015 and ended December 2015.

Acknowledgements

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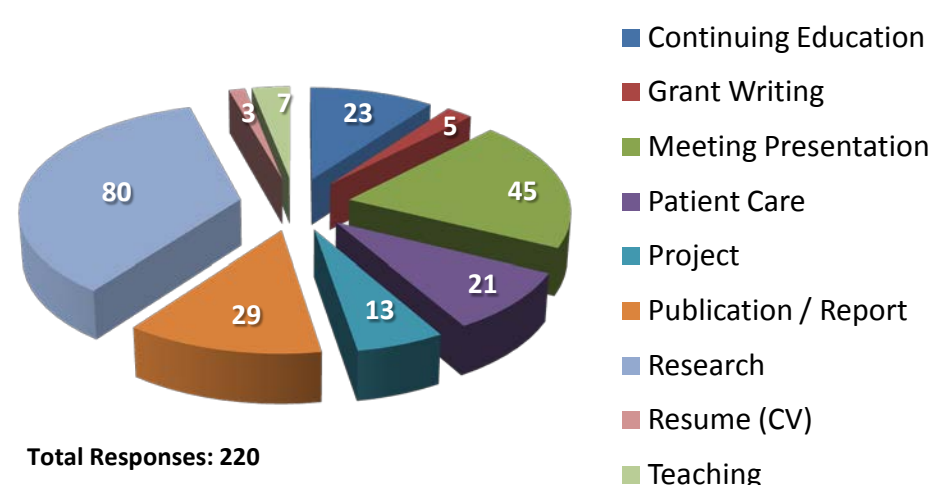
[1]Farrell A; Mason J. Evaluating the Impact of Searching Services on Patient Care Through the Use of a Quick-Assessment Tool. JCHLA/JABSC. 2014; 35:116-23.

Research Article
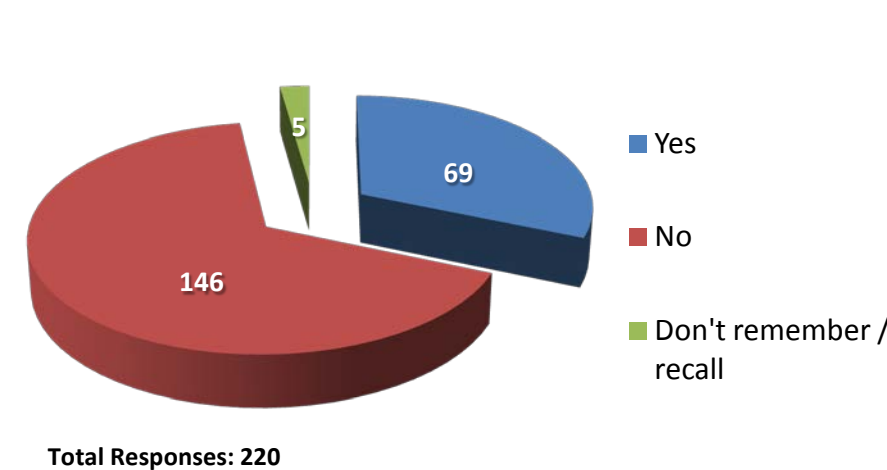**Article de Recherche**

Results

During this 11-month period, a total of 805 literature searches were completed by the reference team. From this pool of potential survey responses, 220 surveys were completed, for a response rate of 27.3%. Several survey questions allowed for multiple responses to be selected; exceeding the total number of completed surveys.
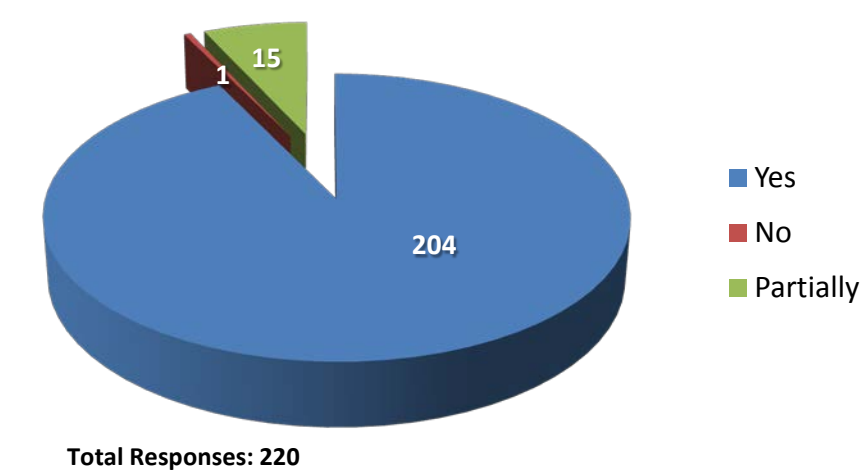
What was the purpose of requesting your literature search?

Continuing Education, Grant Writing, Meeting Presentation, Patient Care, Project, Publication / Report, Research, Resume (CV), Teaching

Total Responses: 220

Is this your first time submitting a literature search request?

Yes 69, No 146, Don't remember / recall 5

Total Responses: 220

Did the info you received answer your question?

Yes 204, No 1, Partially 15
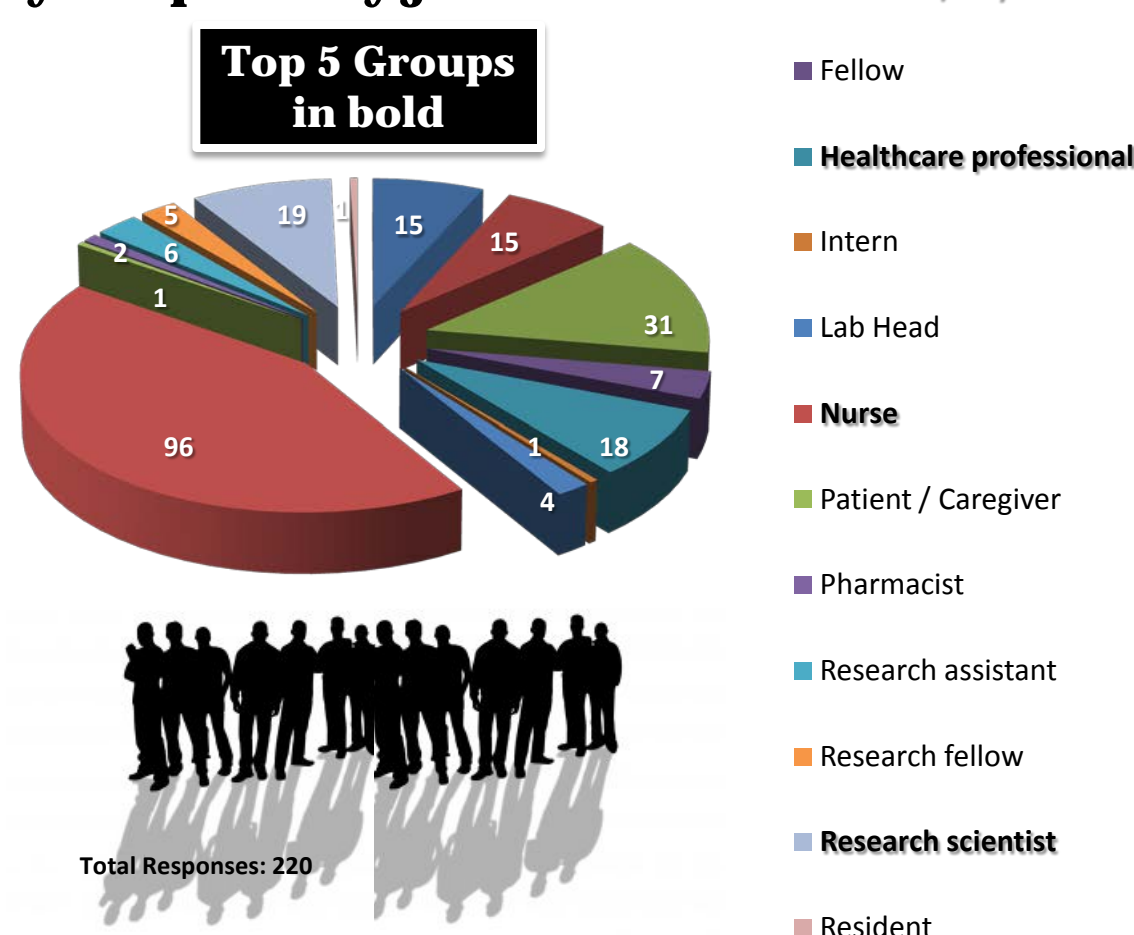
Total Responses: 220

What was the immediate impact of the info you received on your work or research activity? Please select all that apply.

Answer Options (17 other responses were incorporated into existing answers)	Response Count
There was no immediate impact	14
Information was not received in time to have an immediate impact	2
Supported my current research / rethink my research	118
Helps me to generate new ideas and insights	110
Helped me with my presentation or talk	109
Keeps me updated in my area of expertise	96
Saves me time	96
Helps to increase my productivity	60
Information was used to enhance/improve a MSK procedure/process/policy	51
Helps me to make better decisions	49
Confirmed the knowledge/expertise I have	48
Treatment/management (confirmed/changed drugs, treatment, and/or post care plan)	20
Refreshed memory	17
Saves my department money	12
Diagnosis (confirmed/changed diagnosis and/or diagnostic test or procedure)	7
Avoided adverse event(s) / critical incident(s)	6
Initiated referral to or consultation by another department	5
Prevented referral to or consultation by another department	5
Avoided ordering of additional/unnecessary diagnostic test(s)/procedure(s)	0

Total Responses: 825   Orange highlighted options: Patient-related impact   Blue highlighted options: User-related impact

Please indicate why the info provided *DID NOT* answer your question. Please select all that apply.

Answer Options	Response Count
My question was answered	148
There appears to be not enough evidence published on the topic	14
Information was not received on time	4
Information provided was not on target	3
No answer exists	3
Information was received on time but not enough time to read it	1
Results sent were not "evidence-based"	1
Information provided did not answer the question	1
Other (please specify)	1

Total Responses: 164   Out of 220 respondents, 57 skipped this question.

Regardless of immediate impact or completeness of answer, how will you use the info in the future? Please select all that apply.

Answer Options	Response Count
Share / discuss with colleagues	133
Research or publish	122
Teach	72
Revision of clinical pathways, practice guidelines, policies or procedures	47
Change approach to a particular patient and/or future patient(s)	34
Apply for grant funding	29
Other (please specify)	14
The information will not be used in the future	10

Total Responses: 461   Orange highlighted options: Patient-related impact   Blue highlighted options: User-related impact

Please tell us a bit about yourself. What best describes your primary job duties?

Top 5 Groups in bold

Administrative support (assistant, secretary), **Administrative staff (manager, supervisor)**, **Clinician / Physician**, Fellow, **Healthcare professional**, Intern, Lab Head, **Nurse**, Patient / Caregiver, Pharmacist, Research assistant, Research fellow, **Research scientist**, Resident

Total Responses: 220

Key Findings

• 92.7% of respondents indicated that the information received answered their question and less than 10% provided reasons why their question was not answered. The most frequent reason – *there appears to be not enough evidence published on the topic.*
• 31.3% of survey respondents indicated this was their first time submitting a request.
• 66.3% of survey respondents can be classified as repeat requesters.
• 95.5% of respondents utilized the results they received to impact patient care, enhance their own knowledge base, or work productivity.
• 77% of respondents used search results in scholarly communications activities.

Conclusions

The Library has an opportunity to step-up efforts to market Literature Search Services and develop an awareness campaign using survey feedback to promote benefits. The information delivered to users had both practical (e.g. saved them time) and creative (e.g. helped them to generate new ideas) implications that should be incorporated into these marketing messages.