



LIBR538F -- TOP TEN REFERENCE COMPETENCIES IN HEALTH SCIENCES

Prepared by:

Dean Giustini MLS
UBC Biomedical Branch Librarian
Adjunct Faculty, SLAIS

Introduction to reference competencies

Health sciences libraries (HSLs) provide information and instructional assistance to a wide range of users in at least four reference contexts (in-person, chat-reference, e-mail and telephone). Reference assistance includes directional and more involved research queries. Improving the information literacy (IL) skills of HSL users by offering bibliographic instruction is integral to providing library service. Instruction may take the form of "one-on-one" assistance, small group seminars or leading larger workshops.

Library users are encouraged to be independent and engaged in lifelong learning. HSL librarians assist in the use of *and teach how to effectively navigate* library catalogues, Websites, print and electronic resources. The democratic Web has brought new library tools to the desktop for optimum convenience but also instability given "free and fee" content, remote access and distributed users authenticating across far-flung geographical and institutional boundaries. As much as possible, reference librarians are required to stay current with trends in network access in order to help HSL users cope with volatile environments.

TOP TEN COMPETENCIES

1. Help users locate words, terms, phrases and syndromes. Decode abbreviations. Provide abbreviations/acronyms for journals and biomedical terms. Locate biographical information in directories.

Introduction to ready reference - list of core resources

<http://www.slais.ubc.ca/courses/libr538f/02-03-wt2/coreref.pdf>

Writer's Toolbox

<http://toby.library.ubc.ca/subjects/subjpage1.cfm?id=412>

2. Help users verify, complete and/or correct citation information. Locate supplementary materials.

- UBC Library catalogue
- PubMed Citation Matcher
- MEDLINE
- Web of Science (Science Citation Index)
- CINAHL
- BIOSIS (Biological Abstracts)
- EMBASE (Excerpta Medica)
- PsycINFO (Psych Abs)
- CISTI & NLM Locatorplus
- Canadian University catalogues
- WorldCat
- Google & web search engines

3. Demonstrate and teach users how to access major biomedical databases (print and online) using multiple interfaces, vocabularies and gateways. Use document delivery and interlibrary loan services.

- MEDLINE using OVID or PubMed (NLM Gateway & Index Medicus)
- Web of Science (Science Citation Index)
- EMBASE (Excerpta Medica); CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature)
- BIOSIS (Biological Abstracts) (and Bioinformatics resources at NCBI)
- Current Awareness Tools
- Chemical Abstracts/SciFinder Scholar
- PsycINFO (Psych Abs)
- UBC Library Document Delivery, CISTI Orders and ILL

4. Help users locate authoritative information on diagnosis & therapy for diseases, disorders and treatments.

- Merck Manual of Diagnosis and Therapy (print and free online)
- Conn's Current Therapy
- Lange Handbooks – Current Medical Diagnosis & Treatment; Pediatric Diagnosis & Treatment; Surgical Diagnosis & Treatment; Obstetric & Gynecologic Diagnosis & Treatment
- Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine/ Cecil's Textbook of Medicine
- Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPGs) and Consensus Statements - Canada and U.S.
- Consumer health ie. MEDLINEplus, Canadian Health Network (CHN), etc.
- Complementary and alternative health (CAM) subject guide

5. Help users locate drug information by brand, trademark or generic name. Locate therapeutic class, contraindications, synonyms & adverse effects. Overdosing/poison control & drug question referral.

- CPS (Compendium of Pharmaceutical Specialities)
- Goodman and Gilman's Pharmacologic Basis of Therapeutics
- USP DI Drug Information for the Health Care Provider
- USP DI Advice for the Patient
- American Hospital Formulary Service (AHFS) Drug Information
- Martindale's The Complete Drug Reference
- Physician's Desk Reference (PDR), Mosby's Physicians GenRx
- Pharmacy subject guide (Understand role of pharmacists in health care).

6. Help locate reference values (or ranges) used in interpreting diagnostic procedures & laboratory tests.

- Books at OVID sources (Ebooks page on LSL website)
- Writer's Toolbox sources for tests
- Web: MEDLINEplus & Canadian Health Network (CHN)

7. Help users identify sources of information and location of psychological tests/measurements.

- Mental Measurements Yearbook, Tests
- CINAHL
- PsycINFO (Psych Abs)
- (HaPI) Health & Psychosocial Instruments
- Psychology Subject Guide/librarian

8. Locate chemical names, structures, formulas, elements, common properties (molecular weight or melting point). Conversion tables. Health & safety. Use indexes and appendices.

- Merck Index
- CRC Handbook of Chemistry and Physics (print & online)
- Navigating national formulary information (British, American, etc.)

9. Help users find and interpret local, provincial and national statistics and major statistical sources.

- Statistics Canada
- CIHI (Canadian Institute for Health Information)
- BC Health Statistics
- Cancer Facts and Figures
- MMWR – Morbidity Mortality Weekly Report
- Statistical Universe
- World Health Statistics
- World Almanac
- Gov Pubs and Health Epi Subject Guides

10. Help users navigate electronic media, websites, aggregated databases and e-texts:

-
- Access to **Unrestricted (free) databases**
- Aggregators: Books at OVID, Scholar's Portal, Health Reference Centre, MD Consult, Stat!REF
- Journals and etexts - ie. PubMedCentral, freemedicaljournals.com, medicalstudent.com

Footnotes to be added later. DG. 24 January 2003
