Planning a Strategic Lineup for the Delivery of Effective Reference Services

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Erin Kerby, MSI; Nadia J. Lalla, MLIS; Deborah Lauseng, AMLS
University of Michigan (UM), Ann Arbor, MI

Introduction
The purpose of the study was to determine trends in the provision of all forms of reference services by librarians and other staff at the library from July 2010 – June 2011.

The Taubman Library serves professional schools of medicine, public health, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy and the UM Health System; it is also open to the public.

Methods
Data was collected from:
- service management software (Footprints)
- statistical management software (Desk Tracker)

A trend analysis addressed potential correlations in the data for:
- service points
- length of reference transactions
- peak service times
- staffing levels

For each service point, frequency and percentage were calculated for the predefined categories of:
- question length
- reference contact type
- purpose of contact/visit

The analysis also addressed trends specific to particular service points, such as:
- frequency in number of transactions over certain periods of time.

Conclusions
Trends in usage and peak service times:
- were as expected
- supported initial changes to service points and staffing in 2011 – 2012

Changes made to data collection to provide more detail about the purpose of contact:
- supplementary data collection survey for Information Desk and Backup Staff

Currently evaluating optimal means to collect more detail about liaison activities:
- expanded systematic reviews
- clinical liaison opportunities

The study has been extended for a year to evaluate the changes made to data collection and to determine if additional staffing changes are necessary.

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For More Information
Please contact ekerby@umich.edu.

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