The perceived impact of a cancer library on the patient care: some preliminary, partial results

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INTRODUCTION

The Scientific and Patients Library of the Centro di Riferimento Oncologico of Aviano (CRO) is part of the Scientific Directorate, it is a BiblioSan member. It has been under ISO 9001:2008 certification since 2009 and it is involved in several Accreditation Programs.

AIM

To get a picture about what the various kinds of library users - clinicians, researchers, technical staff, students, and patients as well - think about the various library services' impact on patient care.

METHODS

We used indirect data coming from three different but complementary sources:

a) a survey carried out by our Continuing Education Office in 2010 among the CRO health personnel for knowing the Staff education needs.

b) The evaluation forms filled by the health personnel participating in two different Continuing Education on-the-job courses.

c) The evaluation forms filled by the patients participating in the different activities.

DISCUSSION

Some results coming from these different sources will be reported and discussed.

CONCLUSIONS

The main goal of this poster is to give a contribution to the current professional debate about the impact of academic and non-academic libraries on patient care. The topic can be seen as a challenge for health librarians, as it puts our profession on the centre stage, together with the other healthcare and research professions. Further research is needed in this field above all in Italy.

Key words: Libraries, medical; Outcome Assessment (Health Care); Patient care; Library Services; Library Surveys
INTRODUCTION

The Centro di Riferimento Oncologico of Aviano (CRO) is one of the nine Cancer Comprehensive Centres in Italy. Established in 1984, the CRO Library supports the information and documentation needs both of the Staff and the Patients' (specific section, 1998). The library is part of the CRO Scientific Directorate, it enjoys a wide professional network, not only of libraries, it is a Biblisoan member. It has been under ISO 9001:2008 certification since 2009 and it is involved in several Institute Accreditation Programs (Accreditation Canada/Qmenutum, OECI etc).

There was a recent debate between the academic Eahil-health libraries about the topic of perceived impacts of the library on patient care (see one of the Linkedin EAHIL specific subgroups). Some recent and “historical” papers from the literature (1-5)inspired us to deepen this topic that is crucial for our research and care library. Our ISO 9001:2008 path is requires this data. But we changed our first idea to administer a specific questionnaire through Gdrive to our clinical and research staff for two important reasons: 1) the over exposition of our users to surveys in the last months, so there was a risk of a low percentage of answers. 2) the subsequent idea that it is better to be part of a general survey(4), not a specific one focused on our library only.

In 2010 we took part at our Institute of a survey carried out by the CRO Continuing Education Office (CEO) aimed at knowing the education needs of the CRO health personnel in order to plan the subsequent 3 year education plan. A part was dedicated to the perception of the library services.

AIM

The aim is to get a picture about what the various kinds of library users - clinicians, researchers, technical staff, students, and patients as well- think about the various library services' impact on patient care.

METHODS

We used two different ways to get preliminary, partial and indirect results about our aim.

1. The printed questionnaire administered to the CRO health care workers (hcw) and the research staff, together with the salary folder in 2010. It was composed of 7 parts, the 6th one “Library section” included 10 questions related to the perceived usefulness for the research and clinical practice of some core library services. The questionnaire was received by 710 people. There was 1 month to answer. The data was collected by the CEO and elaborated with the Epidemiology and Biostatistics Unit collaboration.

2. The evaluation forms filled in by the heath personnel participating in two different Continuing Education on-the-job courses held by our library in 2012-2013:
   - the first one is a training course related to the whole cycle of the information resources (from the search through the selection and organization to the utilization for the production of new knowledge(3)
   - the second one a program devoted to improve the patients-doctors/HCW relationship, i.e. the institutional Patient Education and Empowerment Program (PEEG)coordinated by the Library. These forms included some questions related both to the perceived usefulness of these education courses for their daily work and the perceived impact of these programs on patient care.

3. The evaluation forms filled in by the patients participating in one of the activities of the above PEEG.
DISCUSSION
The respondents to this survey held by the CEO were 277, 39% of the total who received the questionnaire (710). The respondents were nurses (30%), doctors (15%), technicians (13%), biologists (11%) etc…Only some data related to some specific questions will be reported. 186, equal to 67% of the respondents, answered that they used the library services as they found it useful for their daily work. 266, equal to 95.8% of the 277 respondents, answered that they recommended to a friend to use the library services.

The answers related to the specific question of the impact of the education course about library information resources “Si fa presto a dire Internet” were: 55 people total (22 first edition 2012-13; 33 second edition 2013-14) attended this course above all were biologists, i.e. research personnel, but also a few doctors and nurses. 40 (equal to 73% of them) found it useful for their daily work to participate to this course.

Related to the second “course”, i.e. Program of Patient Education managed by the Library, the health personnel who participated in this on-the-job “experience” were 26 in 2012 and 33 in 2013, were above all doctors. We have quantitative data only related to 2013, narrative ones – reported in the minutes of the organizational meetings of the Patient Education Group - related to 2012. In this case the role of the library is very appreciated, also the expectations in terms of support. 26, equal to 78% of the 33 participants in 2013 believed that this service of the library impacted on the patient care. This is a “frontier topic” and the results are still to come.

Related to the patients opinion, our focus is on one of the different activities: the hour long meetings – named “classes” - were doctors/health care workers (hcw) and expert patients and volunteers as teachers, speak to other patients and their relatives about relevant health topics during the daily activity hours in the clinical setting. 163, equal to 92% of the 177 CRO respondents in a 8 months multicentric survey (from June 2013 to February 2014) found that activity very useful for them; 12, equal to 7%, useful. The librarians have a key role in this activity for and with patients, not only in organizing and managing it but also in spending their competence in the quality evaluation and scientific information retrieval.

CONCLUSIONS
The main goal of this survey is to give a contribution to the current professional debate about the impact of academic and non-academic libraries on patient care. The topic can be seen as a challenge for health librarians, as it puts our profession on the centre stage, together with the other healthcare and research professions.

Our results are only partial. We decided to putting off until late 2014 being part of a general survey aiming to get some insight about the perceived impact of the all library services. But further research is needed in this field above all in Italy.

REFERENCES