Overview and findings of a PhD: the barriers and priorities for research development in health librarianship

Hannah Spring

HEALER, 8th September 2011
Background and Rationale

• Government drivers for evidence based practice in healthcare

• Health librarians role in supporting health related evidence based practice (clinical librarian)

• Little evidence of health librarians engaging in EBP in relation to their own practice
Flow of evidence into practice

Generation of evidence
- To support own practice (conducting research using rigorous designs and methodologies) (EBL)

Use of evidence (consumer application)
- To support others (involvement with healthcare related research, eg. CRD, Cochrane systematic reviews)

Applying evidence to own practice (EBL)
- Applying evidence in healthcare (CL)

Background and Rationale

• Some small pockets of good practice but most research generally lacks rigour
  • “poor reporting, bias and lack of reliable or valid evaluation methods” Brettle et al (2011, p4).

• The LIS research landscape: a review and prognosis (2003, Sarah McNicol and Clare Nankivell)

Limitations:
• Tiny sample group of only 31
• Aimed to cover every sector (but was heavily weighted in public and academic sectors)
• Health barely featured
Research Aim and Methodology

• To identify the key barriers to research development in health librarianship

• To identify the key priorities to support the improvement of research development in health librarianship

• Mixed methodology incorporated into three research phases

• UK Focus
Stages of Study

• Stage 1
  • Review of research development in health librarianship published in HILJ (Rossall, Boyes, Montacute, & Doherty, 2008)

• Stage 2
  • Qualitative paradigm
  • Design: Focus group (October 2008)
Approach to sampling frame

• Eight categories of health librarian attended the focus group
  • Academic health librarians
  • Clinical librarians
  • Health library services librarians
  • Health library service managers
  • Independent health librarians
  • Strategic library managers
  • Research librarians
  • Academics
Stages of Study

• Stage 3
  • Quantitative paradigm
  • Design: National UK Survey (May 2010)

• Aimed to:
  • To gain a national picture of the barriers to research development as perceived by UK health librarians
  • To gain a national picture of the priorities for research development as perceived by UK health librarians
  • To identify the extent to which UK health librarians currently engage with research (own / others)
National Survey

• Electronically distributed (SurveyMonkey)

• Validity improved through pilot testing (focus group members)

• Sample
  • Professional Networks and Groups
  • CILIP
  • JISC Discussion Forums
  • Cascades

• 8 Categories of health librarian
National Survey

• Survey questions were based on the results of the focus group and on the research aim:

• We asked about:
  • Research qualifications
  • Research training
  • Research interest (important or not?)
  • Research experience
  • Organisational support for research and RD
  • Perceptions of barriers to research and RD
  • Perceptions of priorities for research and RD
Data Analysis

Data queried for the following example questions:

• Does length of service, research qualifications, and/or professional health LIS experience influence levels of engagement in research activity?

• Does attendance at research skills courses influence levels of engagement in research?
Data Analysis cont.

• 317 complete responses

• Measures created:
  • Research training score (n=316)
  • Research experience score (n=142)
  • Research qualification (n=86)
Findings

• Research training score – based on:

16. If you have attended any research skills courses, training days or workshops, please indicate this below (tick those that apply):

- Critical appraisal skills
- Bidding for research funding
- Ethics
- Qualitative research methods
- Quantitative research methods
- Statistics
- Writing a research proposal

Other (please specify)
Data analysis cont.

R squared = 6%

Poor relationship
Data analysis cont.

• Research experience score – based on:

12. To what extent have you been involved in research relating to health librarianship?

- I have secured funding for research (individually or as part of a team)
- I have conducted my own research
- I have been part of a research team
- I have never been involved in research relating to health librarianship

Other (please specify)
Data analysis cont.

R squared = 4%
Poor relationship
Findings

• Correlational analysis and non-parametric tests using the above scores found no relationships

• Those with a PhD were no more research active than those who had attended research training courses, or had other research related qualifications
Findings

• Further variables created to include all participants
  
  • Qualification category
    • Research
    • Teaching
    • Non-specialist

  • Research category
    • Based on levels of research experience (but included those with no experience)
Findings

- Data analysed in relation to levels of importance librarians placed on their role in terms of research.

13. How important is your role in developing the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Your own research skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b) The research skills of others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Evidence-based librarianship (i.e., conducting and/or applying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>research specific to professional library and information practice)</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Evidence-based health practice (i.e., involvement with research</td>
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<tr>
<td>undertaken by health professionals)</td>
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## Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qual_cat</th>
<th>How important is your role in developing own research skills</th>
<th>How important is your role in developing the research skills of others</th>
<th>How important is your role in developing EBL</th>
<th>How important is your role in developing EB health practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>non_specialist</td>
<td>Mean: 4.81</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>5.61</td>
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<td></td>
<td>N: 200</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>202</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 1.829</td>
<td>1.464</td>
<td>1.834</td>
<td>1.627</td>
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<tr>
<td>teaching</td>
<td>Mean: 5.72</td>
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<td>5.48</td>
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<tr>
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<td>N: 25</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Std. Deviation: 1.308</td>
<td>1.352</td>
<td>1.262</td>
<td>1.225</td>
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<td>research</td>
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<td>5.73</td>
<td>5.11</td>
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<td></td>
<td>N: 83</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 1.854</td>
<td>1.442</td>
<td>1.879</td>
<td>1.669</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Mean: 4.94</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>5.67</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N: 308</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 1.812</td>
<td>1.447</td>
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## Findings

<table>
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<tr>
<th>res_cat</th>
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<td>nil</td>
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<td>Std. Deviation</td>
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<td>Std. Deviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>5.94</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>Mean</td>
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<td>Std. Deviation</td>
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<td>.660</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Mean</td>
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Conclusions

• Research experience or possessing research related qualifications (as defined in this study) was not associated with research activity

• However:
  • Most health librarians place high value on research development within their role
  • Most health librarians place high value on the development of evidence-based practice
  • Most see it as an important aspect of their role regardless of ability (in terms of quals or experience)

• Further analysis necessary on barriers
References


Full bibliography available on request.