Assessing Our Judgment: Comparing Librarian and Allied Health Professionals’ Evaluation of Relevance of Search Results

Jane Morgan-Daniel & Nancy Schaefer
University of Florida Health Science Center Libraries
Project Background

Temporary & permanent liaisons to OT, PT, & Rehabilitation Science

+ Reference questions on education strategies for health professions students, patients, & caregivers

= Which health & education databases are the most useful?

=> How well did librarian and requestors evaluate of results relevance align?
1. “What are the predictors of success for Occupational Therapy (OT) students on fieldwork?”

2. “What is the best method for teaching patients to help self-manage their low back pain?”

3. “What evidence are OTs using when educating parents (caregivers) of children with physical disabilities on adaptive equipment?”
4. “What are the best practices for teaching clinical reasoning to OT students?”

5. “What resources are available to educate patients on weight-bearing status post-surgical procedures?”

6. “What materials are available for proxy raters (formal or informal caregivers, family, friends) to identify at-risk older drivers?”
Methods

Raters received Excel spreadsheet with relevance criteria based on PICO

Librarians & requestors independently evaluated each title & abstract for relevance according to PICO rubric

A non-evaluating staff member combined all spreadsheets into one master

Averages of librarian responses & requestor responses were calculated and compared
Thematic analysis performed on all comments on spreadsheet. Overarching themes influencing relevance evaluations discerned.
Comparison of librarians and requestors: Alignment of relevance judgments

Librarians more stringent
-11.9

Librarians less stringent
-0.24

Caregiver
Patient
HCP Student
Discussion:
Overall Relevance Criteria

• No rater selected sex or ethnicity as relevance criteria for these questions

• Raters only rarely selected setting or study design
Most frequently selected* criteria:

- Education level
- Intervention methods
- Outcome

*Small sample size limits generalizability
Most frequently selected* criteria:

- Intervention methods
- Assessment methods
- Disease/condition
- Outcomes

*Small sample size limits generalizability
Caregiver Education

Relevance Criteria

• Disease and outcome were the most frequently selected criteria for both requestors*

For the Older Drivers question:
• Librarians and requestor showed nearly the same amount of interest in Disease and Outcomes
• Librarians were more interested in Intervention and Assessment Methods than requestor

*Small sample size limits generalizability
Factors influencing relevance evaluations

1. **Varying term definitions**
   1. Subjectivity of key term definitions
   2. Carry-over from librarians’ previous search topics
   3. Librarians’ discipline-specific expertise

2. **Unexpressed information needs**
   1. Requestor’s priorities for elements of research question
   2. Intervention group’s educational level
   3. Type of practitioner delivering intervention
   4. Underlying questions

3. **Intended information use**
   1. Directly applicable to specialization OR transferable
   2. Practical OR theoretical
   3. Only best practice OR any intervention tried/proposed
Conclusions

Recommendations for practice:

Librarians

1. Reference interviews
   • “Confirm, don’t assume”: (term parameters)
   • “Prompt and wait”: Underlying search expectations

2. Weeding results
   • “Err toward greater inclusion”

Database providers

• Subject heading gaps
Next Steps

• Extend search of the same six questions to additional databases

• Investigate search results on same criteria:
  yield (# of results)
  % relevance
  unique relevance

• Incorporate findings into pertinent LibGuides and orientations/classes
Questions

Health Professions Co-Authors:
Christine T. Myers
catomyers@phhp.ufl.edu

Jason Beneciuk
beneciuk@phhp.ufl.edu

Linda Struckmeyer
lstruckmeyer@phhp.ufl.edu

Luther King
lking1@phhp.ufl.edu

Mary Jeghers
mjeghers@phhp.ufl.edu

Shabnam Medhizadah
s.medhizadah@phhp.ufl.edu

Librarians/Presenters:
Jane Morgan-Daniel
Community Engagement & Health Literacy Librarian
morgandanie.jane@ufl.edu

Nancy Schaefer
Reference & Instruction Librarian
nancys@ufl.edu