EDITORIAL
Springing into the new year: Hypothesis 2.1 .......... 3
Erin D. Foster

ORIGINAL RESEARCH
MLA Research Section’s Research Agenda Committee Systematic Review Project: A Status Report ................................................................. 5
Marie T. Ascher & Jonathan D. Eldredge

OF INTEREST
Introducing the column .................................18
Carol L. Perryman

RESEARCH SECTION NEWS
MLA 2017 Debrief ............................................. 20
Erin D. Foster

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# Editors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Erin D. Foster, MSLS</th>
<th>Carol L. Perryman, PhD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Services Librarian</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth Lilly Medical Library</td>
<td>School of Library and Information Studies</td>
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<td>Indiana University School of Medicine</td>
<td>Texas Woman’s University</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:edfoster10@gmail.com">edfoster10@gmail.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:cperryman@twu.edu">cperryman@twu.edu</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

# Editorial Board

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abby Adamczyk, MLIS</th>
<th>Brooke L. Billman, MLIS</th>
<th>Krystal Bullers, MLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liaison Librarian for Medicine</td>
<td>Research Section Chair-elect</td>
<td>Emerging Technologies Librarian, Pharmacy Liaison</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drexel University Libraries</td>
<td>Program Chair</td>
<td>Shimberg Health Sciences Library</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:ALA99@drexel.edu">ALA99@drexel.edu</a></td>
<td>Medical Librarian</td>
<td>University of South Florida Health</td>
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<td>College of American Pathologists</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kbullers@health.usf.edu">kbullers@health.usf.edu</a></td>
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<th>Susan Fowler, MLS</th>
<th>Ayaba Logan, MLIS, MPH</th>
<th>Ex officio</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systematic Review</td>
<td>Research and Education Informationist</td>
<td>Marie Ascher, MS, MPH, AHIP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services Coordinator</td>
<td>MUSC Libraries</td>
<td>Research Section Immediate Past Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Medicine</td>
<td>Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC)</td>
<td>Nominating Committee Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington University</td>
<td><a href="mailto:loganay@musc.edu">loganay@musc.edu</a></td>
<td>Section Council Rep.</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:fowler@wustl.edu">fowler@wustl.edu</a></td>
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<td>Marie Ascher @nymc.edu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Michelle B. Bass, PhD, MLSI</th>
<th>Margaret Hoogland, MLS, AHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Section Chair</td>
<td>Research Section Community Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Council Alt. Rep.</td>
<td>Assistant Professor,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Research Librarian</td>
<td>Clinical Medical Librarian, Health Science Library</td>
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<td>Lane Medical Library</td>
<td>Mulford Health Sciences Library</td>
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<td>Stanford School of Medicine</td>
<td>University of Toledo</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:michaellebbass@stanford.edu">michaellebbass@stanford.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Margaret.Hoogland@utoledo.edu">Margaret.Hoogland@utoledo.edu</a></td>
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‘Springing’ into the new year – Hypothesis 2.1

Erin D. Foster, MSLS
Co-editor, Hypothesis
Data Services Librarian
Ruth Lilly Medical Library
Indiana University School of Medicine
Indianapolis, IN

Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2017 issue of Hypothesis! As of January 2017, I stepped into the role of editor - many thanks to Dr. Christine Marton for her leadership in revitalizing Hypothesis and her time as lead editor. In addition, thanks to the Hypothesis Editorial Board, Marie T. Ascher, and co-editor, Carol L. Perryman, for their hard work in putting together the Spring/Summer 2017 Hypothesis issue! I am grateful for the time, interest, and support contributed by all in realizing this issue of Hypothesis.

With that, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Dr. Carol L. Perryman as the new co-editor of Hypothesis! Carol served on Hypothesis’s Editorial Board previously, but expressed interest in becoming a co-editor following Christine Marton’s departure. A former hospital librarian who began an academic career after many years of practice, Carol’s research interests include evidence-based practice, critical evaluation, and more recently, the changing roles of medical librarians in practice. I look forward to Carol’s insight, expertise, and guidance given her significant experience in the field of library science research.

The centerpiece of this issue is an update on the status of the Research Section’s Research Agenda Committee Systematic Review project. Written by Marie T. Ascher and Jonathan D. Eldredge, this article provides an overview of the questions posed by the 15 systematic review teams, brief updates as to the various teams’ progress, and a discussion of the challenges faced so far in this project. This issue also introduces a new column that aims to highlight a variety of topics that may be of interest to medical librarians conducting research including: research ‘works in progress’ taking place in the medical librarian community, summary results of failed and/or unpublished research, as well as links to and information about relevant research studies published in other disciplines. Finally, since we’ve recently wrapped up MLA 2017, the
Research Section News portion of this issue provides a debrief on section sponsored MLA programming and a listing of some Research Section member contributed papers and posters!

Lastly, I want to emphasize Hypothesis’ role as a platform for medical librarian research. As our profession grows in diversity and our roles shift and adapt in the larger communities we are part of, dissemination of the research we do is vital to furthering our profession and emphasizing the unique lens that medical librarians provide as part of the research enterprise. We accept submissions to Hypothesis on a rolling basis – please, do not hesitate to reach out if you are interested in contributing. While we may be revamping our submission process soon, the easiest way to submit your work is to email either of the Editors at the email addresses listed at the beginning of this issue. Feel free to get in touch with any questions/comments. You can keep track of Hypothesis news and updates through the Research Section’s webpage on mlanet.org as well as via the Research Section of the Medical Library Association Facebook group.

We hope to see your research soon.

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ORIGINAL RESEARCH
Marie T. Ascher
Jonathan D. Eldredge

MLA Research Section’s Research Agenda Committee
Systematic Review Project: A Status Report

Marie T. Ascher, MS, MPH, AHIP
Lillian Hetrick Huber Endowed Director
Health Sciences Library
New York Medical College
Valhalla, NY

Jonathan D. Eldredge, MLS, PhD, AHIP
Associate Professor
Evidence Based and Translational Science Collaboration Coordinator
Health Science Library & Informatics Center Biomedical Informatics Research, Training, and Scholarship Unit
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM
jeldredge@salud.unm.edu

BACKGROUND

Ambitious intentions, however well-conceived and embraced, can take time to manifest. Our elected and appointed MLA leaders have encouraged us for over 20 years to integrate the best evidence into our professional practices. These broad-based investments at the policy level now are yielding tangible results.

The first MLA research policy, Using Scientific Evidence to Inform Practice, emphasized applying research evidence when making decisions [1]. This 1995 policy statement, along with MLA President Rachel Anderson’s 1997 inaugural address, helped spark the international Evidence Based Library and Information Practice (EBLIP) movement that continues to thrive today [2, 3, 4]. In fact, most MLA presidents since 1997 have called on us to integrate research evidence into our practices [5].

The newest MLA research policy, The Research Imperative, called for the Research Section to articulate an MLA research agenda [6]. The Research Section’s Research Agenda Committee
conducted two Delphi studies in 2008 and 2011 to identify the most important and answerable research questions facing the profession [7]. The second Delphi study led the Committee to develop guidelines for voluntary teams to create systematic reviews for assembling the best evidence to form the tentative answers to each of the 15 top-ranked research questions [8]. The teams were to act largely autonomously. The 15 teams, consisting of over 200 medical librarians worldwide have made progress, for the most part, in completing their systematic reviews [9, 10]. The principal benefits of these systematic reviews will be as evidence resources for answering these top-ranked questions in addition to acting as blueprints pointing to further research needed to build our knowledge base strategically.

Health sciences librarians have been integral members of systematic review teams outside librarianship since the 1990s, particularly in medicine [11, 12, 13, 14, 15]. Many guidelines and experts on systematic reviews point to the need for librarians to serve on systematic review teams [16, 17, 18]. Our own profession has produced over 90 systematic reviews on subjects related to library and information practice [19]. These systematic reviews frequently confirm the recurring observation that our own knowledge base lacks sufficient amounts of rigorous research evidence. A large percentage of our evidence also resides within the gray literature rather than the peer reviewed literature, which poses challenges to identification and critical appraisal.

This paper provides a status report on the MLA Research Section’s Research Agenda Committee Systematic Review Project. There has not been a comprehensive report on the project since the 2015 Open Forum held at the Annual Meeting of the Medical Library Association in Austin, TX, where representatives from all active teams provided reports [20]. To date, teams have continued to vary in their rate of progress. Some teams have moved through the process relatively quickly while others are regrouping. An evaluation of the overall project experience from the point of view of the participants is forthcoming.

**METHOD & RESULTS**

To complete this inventory of progress, the fifteen team leaders were surveyed as to their current progress and to report any research outputs to date. The status categories they had to
choose from represent discrete phases of the systematic review process: 1) Not started or regrouping; 2) Very early: Question clarification or earlier; 3) Early: Search strategy development 4) Mid: Screening abstracts; 4) Late mid: Screening articles; 5) Later: Data extraction and analysis; 6) Nearing completion: Manuscript preparation; 7) Complete and published. All teams with current leadership responded. The remaining two were described by the first author of this paper as “not started.” There is one team currently without an assigned team leader and has stalled at square one as of this writing. Results of this inquiry are reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Team Leaders’ Reported Team Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Number of Teams</th>
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<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nearing</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Later</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late mid</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Early</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very early</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not started</td>
<td>3</td>
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Three of the fifteen teams have completed their reviews and published articles. Six other teams are late in the systematic review process, two teams are in the middle, and four teams are very early in the process. Three teams are either regrouping or currently without leadership. The loss of leadership has been an issue for several teams throughout this ambitious project. Table 2 lists status by team and research outputs, including publication and presentation information.
The original questions that emerged from the second Delphi study [7] are listed although teams were tasked with reworking their questions to make them suitable for conducting a review.

Table 2. Team Progress and Research Outputs

| Team # 1. | Question: There are still a number of relevant questions from the 2008 research agenda, but to me this is most critical: "What is the quantifiable evidence that the presence of a librarian, not just information resources, improves patient outcomes, increases research dollars, improves student outcomes (e.g., better board scores), or increases hospital intelligence (e.g., if the top hospitals have access to hospital librarians/libraries)"
| Status: Complete and published |
| Presentations: |
| Publications: |
| Perrier L, Farrell A, Ayala AP, Lightfoot D, Kenny T, Aaronson E, Allee N, Brigham T, Connor E, Constantinescu T, Muellenbach J, Epstein HA, Weiss A. Effects of librarian-provided services in healthcare settings: a systematic review. J Am Med Inform Assoc. 2014;21(6):1118-24. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4215058/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4215058/) Note: This paper was the winner of the 2015 Ida and George Eliot Prize which is given to the authors of the work published in the preceding calendar year that has been judge most effective in furthering medical librarianship. |

| Team # 2. | Question: Is there a significant difference in patient outcomes (or research output or educational outcomes) between institutions with and without libraries?
| Status: Very early – question clarification |
### Team # 3.
**Question:** What is the added value libraries bring to education, research, and patient care in the health sciences and health care fields? Even if it is not possible to quantify benefits, documenting qualitative research results rigorous enough to stand the scrutiny of administrators and researchers would be of great value.

**Status:** Later - data extraction and analysis

### Team # 4.
**Question:** Low health literacy can result in medication errors, noncompliance of treatment regimes, poor health outcomes and even death. What is the role of the medical librarian with health care providers, community organizations, local public libraries and members of the public to improve health literacy among entire communities?

**Status:** Later – data extraction and analysis

**Presentations:**
http://www.mlanet.org/d/do/1924

### Team # 5.
**Question:** What are the information needs of practicing physicians and other health care workers? The 1985 Covell article is still heavily cited but was published way back in 1985. The information environment has changed dramatically. We need to update that study in light of new educational strategies, resources, technology and social networks.

**Status:** Nearing completion - manuscript preparation

### Team # 6
**Question:** The explosion of information, expanding of technology (especially mobile technology), and complexity of healthcare environment present medical librarians and medical libraries opportunities and challenges. To live up to the opportunities and challenges, what kinds of skill sets or information structure do medical librarians or medical libraries are required to have or acquire so as to be strong partners or contributors of continuing effectiveness to the changing environment?

**Status:** Nearing completion – manuscript preparation

**Presentations:**


Team # 7.

**Question:** Does what we do matter? **Longer form:** Do the resources we provide - materials, reference services, and educational offerings - make a difference to our customers - save lives, shorten length of stay, improved educational outcomes, increase research dollars, improve research results?

**Status:** Late mid - screening articles
**Presentations:**


**Team # 8.**

**Question:** How do we provide information support in a clinical world that functions based on electronic medical records systems and other similar informatics platforms and tools. What is the library's role, if any, in providing preclinical education with respect to informatics applications like electronic medical records systems?

**Status:** Mid - screening abstracts

**Team # 9.**

**Question:** Do health sciences libraries and librarians have any measurable (statistically significant) positive impacts on consumer health, the outcomes of medical care, the productivity of biomedical researchers and the knowledge obtained by graduates of biomedical and health sciences training programs, and at what total cost?

**Status:** Later - data extraction and analysis

**Presentations:**


**Team # 10.**

**Question:** How best to objectively document library/librarian impact on the 'bottom line' (time, money saved, shorter length of stay, ROI for expensive electronic resources, support training programs/Magnet status, funded research support, etc.)?

**Status:** Completed and published

**Presentations:**


**Publications:**

| Team # 11. | Question: As a profession, how do we measure our impact in our environment—be it clinical or academic—in such a way that it influences the decision makers in our institutions?  
[I "stole" this from the previous study, but I think that it is still the most important question facing us.]  
Status: Not started – regrouping |
| --- | --- |
| Team # 12. | Question: Does the intervention/instruction/assistance of a professional medical librarian have a long term impact on the information seeking behaviors of health care professionals?  
Status: Not started – regrouping |
| Team # 13. | Question: What are the most effective instructional methods for teaching informatics/knowledge management/EBP within health sciences curricula?  
Status: Complete and published  
Presentations:  
Holyoke AN, Dennison CC, Farrell A, Machel V, Marton C, O'Brien KK, Pannabecker V, Swanberg SM, Thuna M. Systematically assessing methods used by librarians to teach |


Publications:

Team # 14.
Question: In medical schools where librarians are included in the curriculum, do the students have a greater degree of information literacy than students in schools where librarians are not part of the curriculum?
Status: Not started - regrouping

Team # 15.
Question: What skills and knowledge must librarians possess in order to be able to design tools to help researchers visualize, mine, and otherwise manage large and complex data gathered during both quantitative and qualitative research?
Status: Later - data extraction and analysis
Presentations:
Meeting of the Medical Library Association. 2015 May 14-20. Austin, TX. 


https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/jchla/index.php/jchla/article/view/22906/17075

DISCUSSION

Fifteen teams conducting systematic reviews on the top-ranked research questions met with varying success. One of the teams completed their systematic review in about a year and their paper was the 2015 winner of the Medical Library Association’s Ida and George Eliot Prize, awarded annually for a work that has been judged most effective in furthering medical librarianship [21]. Others have moved more slowly, but most are on track to completion. The project has resulted in presentations at meetings in the US, Australia, France, Canada, and the UK and three important systematic review papers have been published so far [21, 22, 23] with several in the pipeline. Future work of the Committee involves a centralized web resource summarizing the outcomes of the project as well as an overall evaluation of the project to inform other such potential endeavors. Although the actual overall time of completion has exceeded preliminary expectations, the project is continuously yielding valuable information and will continue to be a landmark in health sciences librarianship research.

REFERENCES


Eldredge J. Evidence-Based Librarianship; a commentary. Hypothesis. 1997 Fall; 11(3): 4-7.


<http://repository.unm.edu/handle/1928/24634>.


Introducing ‘Of Interest’

Carol L. Perryman, PhD
Co-editor, Hypothesis
Associate Professor
School of Library and Information Studies
Texas Woman’s University
Denton, TX

*The role of a librarian is to make sense of the world of information. If that’s not a qualification for superhero-dom, what is?* Nancy Pearl, as quoted in the Seattle Times, July 10, 2003.

We hypothesize (pun, of course, intended) that librarians really are super-heroes, putting out small-, mid-, and large-scale fires while dancing between flames, giving our time to keeping up with change. Sharing those experiences, both good and bad, is the best part of practice and research – and making sense of it all is something best done by superheroes!

We’re delighted to announce the start of a new column intended to highlight in-progress library research, and to share information of interest. Publishing your planned or in-progress work in Hypothesis can increase participation and interest in your study, and encourage connections with others working in the same area – the very essence of our community. After your research is complete, consider publication in Hypothesis, a peer-reviewed publication that’s indexed in CINAHL. But there’s more: if you had a poster at MLA, consider submitting a summary. If you see an announcement you think might be of interest to your colleagues, send us a link and a brief annotation.

If you have upcoming research and are interested in promoting it through Hypothesis, please send us the following information:

- Research project working title
- Investigator(s) information: Name, Institution, Position Title
- Contact information for the principal investigator
- Research project description (250-350 words)
- Additional information: survey deadline, project website, etc.
- If you are conducting survey research, you must have obtained Human Subjects approval, and will need to include a brief statement to that effect.
‘Of Interest’ contents will not be limited to dissemination of survey-based research; equal-length summations of planned research in the area of health science librarianship are welcome. Other information considered for publication in the column includes brief summaries or annotated links to research of interest. Use of the structured abstract format for research reports is encouraged, but not mandated, and we will be happy to respond to your questions. *Hypothesis* is published biannually by the MLA Research Section. Items to be included should be sent to the co-editors by March 15 for the Spring/Summer issue and September 15 for the Fall/Winter issue.
MLA 2017 Debrief

The Librarian’s Role in Reproducibility of Research Symposium
Held Saturday, May 27th from 1-5pm

This symposium aimed to educate attendees about the important roles for librarians and information professionals at their home institutions to raise awareness about and support research reproducibility. Attendees learned more about reproducibility from keynote speaker Shona Kirtley, Senior Research Information Specialist for the EQUATOR Network at the Centre for Statistics in Medicine, University of Oxford, as well as a panel of librarians and information professionals who are involved in enhancing reproducibility. At the conclusion of the event, attendees better understood the basics of reproducibility, were empowered to create strategies for how they might find partners, and get involved in reproducibility of research at their individual institutions.

More information – including speaker slides, handouts, and additional resources - can be found on the symposium website: http://mlasympoisum.libguides.com/2017

#meddatalibs Special Content Session
Held Sunday, May 28th from 3-4:25pm

The Research Section (RS) and the Medical Informatics Section (MIS) co-hosted a book group discussion on the new MLA publication: The Medical Library Association Guide to Data Management for Librarians, edited by Lisa M. Federer. Michelle Bass, RS chair-elect, teamed up with MIS chair-elect, Patricia Gogniat, to moderate this session. They facilitated an engaging conversation of the book and its contents. Overall, it was a successful showing for the first book group discussion held at an MLA conference! Additionally, those interested in following discussions about medical data librarianship online, should follow and make use of the Twitter hashtag #meddatalibs!

Research Section Business Meeting
Held Sunday, May 29th from 7-8:55am

For meeting notes, please see the MLA Research Section’s webpage on mlanet.org.
Research Section Member Activities @ MLA 2017

The information for these papers and posters was gathered as part of a pre-conference survey of MLA 2017 Research Section activities sent out by Chair, Michelle B. Bass. This is not a complete listing of Research Section member contributions to MLA 2017.

Contributed papers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
<th>Presentation title</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akers, Katherine</td>
<td>The Value of Case Studies in Evidence-Based Librarianship: An Examination of the Journal of the Medical Library Association</td>
<td>Daring to Dream: Facilitating Scientific Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amos, Kathleen</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henderson, Margaret</td>
<td>Providing Support for an Interdisciplinary Research Group with a Multidisciplinary Informationist Team: Is It Effective?</td>
<td>Librarians as Innovative Collaborators: Doing What it Takes to Form New Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yatcilla, Jane</td>
<td>HAMMERing out the Details: What Can an Online Bibliometrics Engine Tell Us About Research in Animal-Assisted Therapy?</td>
<td>Bibliometrics in Action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foster, Erin D.  
Enhancing Accessibility of Rare Disease Literature for Researchers and Patients  
Technology Dreamin': New Applications for Current and Emerging Technologies

Henderson, Margaret  
Adding to the Evidence: A Survey of Faculty Research Data Management Practices and Needs  
Data Librarians: Daring to Move Beyond Traditional Roles

Ascher, Marie T.  Martinez, Ophelia  Moy, Fred  
Dare Your Students to Debate: An Innovative and Collaborative Approach to Teaching Evidence-Based Medicine  
Daring to Design: Librarian Roles in Curriculum

Foster, Erin D.  
Hosting a Science Hack Day...and You Can Too!  
Lightning Talks Session 3

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Poster sessions:

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Galati, Marianne</td>
<td>The Publisher and Editor Regretfully Retract This Publication</td>
<td>Session 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varman, Beatriz</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown, Rebecca</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoogland, Margaret</td>
<td>Clinical Apps: Gateway to Accessing Health Information</td>
<td>Session 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenzweig, Merle</td>
<td>The Anatomage Table: An Innovative Approach to Anatomy Education</td>
<td>Session 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, Emily</td>
<td>Rural Information Connection: An iPad Mini Lending Program to Rural Student Physicians</td>
<td>Session 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigham, Tara</td>
<td>Coloring Your &quot;Art&quot; Out: Outcomes of Offering Coloring Materials in Targeted Hospital Staff Areas</td>
<td>Session 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESEARCH SECTION NEWS
Erin D. Foster

Sakmar, Kristen
Bullers, Krystal
Hanson, Ardis
Howard, Allison
Orriola, John
Polo, Randall

Dare You Look the Predator in the Eye? How Librarians Are Addressing the Nightmare of Questionable Publication Practices
Session 1

Fitterling, Lori

MEDLIB Q-Bank Anyone? Creating a Question Bank of Medical Informatics Information Literacy Test Questions for Librarians
Session 3

Powell, Kimberly

Searching by Grant Number: Analysis of Web of Sciences and PubMed Search Results
Session 3

Spencer, Angela J.
Eldredge, Jonathan D.

Roles for Librarians in Systematic Reviews Over Time
Session 3

Fitterling, Lori

Voices in the Choir: Librarians Helping to Move Osteopathic Research Forward
Session 4

Rosenzweig, Merle

San Francisco Plague of 1900-1904: Economics, Politics, and Racism
Session 4

Grabowsky, Adelia

Using Reflection and Peer Discussion to Increase Engagement of Master’s in Nursing Students during Library Orientation
Session 4

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