

MEDICAL LIBRARIANS' GROUP. (Victorian Branch).

Newsletter December 1972.

The fifth meeting of the above group was held in the Conference Room, Department of Surgery, Monash Medical School, on Tuesday 14th November at 7.30pm.

Apologies were received from Mrs Dawson, Mrs McKinnon, Miss O'Halloran, Mrs Rae, Mrs Roch, Miss Stevenson, Mrs Strantzen, and Mrs Seymour. 28 members were present. Our membership now stands at 44, and our finances at \$96.91.

Meeting dates for 1973 were suggested as Tuesday 13th February, 15th May, 14th August and 13th November. The first meeting for 1973, that on 13th February, will probably be deferred until Tuesday 20th March, in order that we may listen to Mrs Fay Baker's account of her experiences whilst attached to the Institute of Health Library, Manilla, during the month of February.

Volunteers for another co-convenor to take the place of Mrs Enid Meldrum are being sought. Joint conveners are invaluable for the discussion of ideas for future meetings, etc., and as Mrs Baker is willing to continue as a convenor for another year, only one new one is needed. So far, one name has been put forward, that of Mrs Val Strantzen, from the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital. Mrs Strantzen will probably accept the position, but if anyone else is eager to help for 12 months or so, could she please contact Mrs Baker.

As the topic for the first meeting has already been discussed, tentative plans for the May meeting are in hand. The conveners feel that discussion on the medical libraries information card is long overdue, and suggest that this might be a good meeting to devote solely to discussion of ideas and suggestions towards the most effective and efficient form the information card may take. The newsletter to be circulated after the March meeting will put forward more details about this card to provide some sort of basis for discussion. Samples of the first few ideas that we have had will probably be circulated at the same time.

Suggested topics for other meetings have included a talk from a member of the Melbourne Medical Postgraduate Committee on the structure of the various postgraduate specialist courses available to medical graduates; a talk from an official from the Hospital and Charities Commission on the regional organization of hospitals and any plans for library provision within that regionalization. Another idea we have had in relation to activities of the group as a body was to approach the Hospital and Charities Commission expressing our concern at the task confronting librarians appointed to establish a new medical library in a hospital, and to offer the services of an expert advisory panel to try and encourage certain standards in new libraries.

Mention was then made of the submission to the Australian Universities Commission by George Franki on behalf of the Medical Librarians (National Group), for the Committee on Medical Schools. Miss Harrison reported that the A.U.C. committee is primarily concerned with medical manpower, not library provision. Within these limits, Miss Harrison felt that Mr. Franki had put forward a useful submission.

Miss Quilter, in the absence of the President of the Association of Hospital and Health Services Librarians, Miss Marjorie Pinder, commented on their activities. She mentioned that an excellent work value study had been obtained from the hospital scientists, and that this will form a very strong pattern on which to base the wage case for the hospital librarians.

The speaker for the evening, Mr Paul Hodgson from the Australian MEDLARS Service in Canberra was then introduced. He gave a most interesting and informative talk on Medlars, with a brief outline first of the history of the establishment of the service, and then of future plans. He then went on to talk in more detail about work being done at the present time, and of the capacity and capabilities of the services available. Basically, a MEDLARS search is indicated if one or more of the following requirements is met:

1. If the information is difficult to locate with a manual search;
2. If a comprehensive literature search is necessary; and
3. If up to date references are required.

Mr. Hodgson maintains that a machine search is far superior to a manual search, as Index Medicus, for example, may only use one specific entry for a particular reference, whereas MEDLARS can use up to 20 or 30 including such tags as geographical headings, sex and age of patients, types of animals used in experiments, clinical or experimental research, etc. He also mentioned a new facility, called a Current Awareness Service, whereby once the initial retrospective search has been compiled, a research worker may indicate that he would like to be supplied with a regular output of references. His specific interest fields would be matched monthly against each new MEDLARS citation tape as it was received from the National Library of Medicine, and any citations retrieved would be routinely mailed to the research worker. The citations thus obtained would be several months ahead of those published in a printed bibliography.

Interest in Mr. Hodgson's information was indicated by the variety of questions put to him after the conclusion of the talk.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks from Mrs Baillie. Supper was then served, and quite a number of members took the opportunity for further discussion amongst themselves.