**Librarian Involvement in a Family Medicine Clerkship Patient Education Project: a Case Report**

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**Objective/Background**

At the University of Minnesota, students in the School of Medicine are expected to graduate with certain clinical competencies, including communication. One component of the communication competency is patient education, which is related to health information literacy, an area of interest to many medical librarians. Since 2007, students in the Primary Care Clerkship (required until April, 2009; the Family Practice Clerkship has replaced it) have been creating plain language “Patient Education Tools,” or PETs, with instruction from UMN’s health science librarians. These PETs are archived online, in the UMN’s institutional repository (UMN Digital Conservancy or UDC), where they are indexed by Google and accessible to anyone with an internet connection.

This project will explore the librarians’ involvement throughout the process of creation, evaluation, and continued use of the PETs, in an effort to comment on generalizing this type of project for other health sciences librarians, as well as to other settings’ competencies where librarians may play a part, such as work-integrated learning in engineering or public/community engagement in the sciences.

**Methods**

The process of the librarians’ involvement in the PET creation, as well as the students’ requirements, will be documented from the first point of contact with the students through the final submission of the PET to the UDC for the main component of this descriptive study.

To demonstrate that the PETs are being used, download statistics per month are being continually collected for the original PET uploads in the UDC Primary Care Clerkship collection. The monthly download statistics for the UDC Family Medicine Clerkship collection (recently uploaded) will also be tracked.

**Results**

The current structure of the PET process has a librarian teaching an introduction to health literacy and plain language, providing the requirements for the written assignment, sitting in on the students’ presentations and discussions, and evaluating the PETs.

There are 196 PETs in the Primary Care Clerkship collection. Since January 2008, there have been 10,479 downloads from this collection. The Family Practice Clerkship collection currently holds 45 PETs. This collection has only been available since September 2009, but 107 downloads have been recorded.

**Conclusions**

**Librarians are contributing to the fulfillment of the required communication competency for students in the UMN School of Medicine by providing education in health literacy. The submission of the PETs to the UDC and their continued use has shown the students, librarians, and faculty involved that this is not only a good exercise for thinking about plain language and health literacy, but a way to create something that is helpful to others when made accessible. The process of having a librarian first teach a skill, then give students an assignment that can be used in the real world, and finally make the assignment accessible to real world users, is a model that could be generalized to other biomedical fields and disciplines.**