

# Competencies of Information Employees in the Context of Dynamic Information Needs of Health Care Staff

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## Abstract

The article describes the functions of information employees in modern health care. Selected surveys of librarians' educational needs are presented and discussed, and a list of professional competencies indispensable in answering health professionals' information needs is proposed. The potential of academic training of librarians and information professionals offered by Polish universities is also discussed. The unique value of information employees' competencies in offering information services to different groups of health professionals and patients, their responsibility and partnership in either research or therapeutic teams are accentuated.

**Key words:** embedded librarianship, medical librarian, informationist, information competencies, health competencies, training, information employee

**Słowa kluczowe:** bibliotekarstwo uczestniczące, bibliotekarz medyczny, informacjonista, kompetencje informacyjne, kompetencje zdrowotne, kształcenie, pracownik informacji



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Expectations regarding librarians and information professionals are modulated in response to changes in the pace and manner of human communication, the development of science and technology, as well as become adapted to the life of the modern man, including his functioning in the workplace. These factors, affecting the functioning of libraries and information centres, can be observed and experienced also in the sphere of health care learning and practice, in its various institutions, disciplines, professions, etc. Library service meeting the information needs of health care workers has a long tradition, in many countries of the modern world deriving from the collections gathered by medical associations, although today its implementation has a completely different nature.

An important element shaping information work in this area has always been a growing variety of supported users – ranging from scientists and practicing physicians, the remaining medical staff, administration employees, to patients and the general public. Meeting their needs

invariably involves enormous responsibility arising from risk (threat to life and health), which may be associated with supplying inadequate or incomplete information [1]. There is a growing resource of information and referring publications, and a greater access to full texts and databases collecting different types of data from the area of health sciences. There is also a growing group of tasks related to training users in the area of information literacy, copyright protection, the ability to prepare materials for publication, sharing digital collections (see below), many of which are due to the development and application of digital technologies. Because medical librarians are continually obliged to adjust their competences to the changing requirements of the supported environment, this professional group has always been perceived in the milieu as a kind of a role model.

As a result of the changing library practice, related jobs and responsibilities assigned to them become differentiated. Given the dynamics of that evolution, the process of formulating the competences required of the