Getting into the Game
Inaugurating a Clinical Librarian Program
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Himmelfarb Health Sciences Library, The George Washington University

The Problem
- While librarians provide training and support to internal medicine residents, many residents seemed unaware of the library’s collections and services.

The Pitch
- Librarian assigned to attend daily morning residents’ meeting twice each week.
- Librarian to provide real-time answers to questions arising from case-based discussion.
- Librarian available to address other issues – e.g. DynaMed codes, off-campus access, research projects.

Batting Practice
- ‘Listen’ for questions – fast-paced discussion rarely pauses to clearly state question.
- Shortened clinical terms (e.g. bronch) and acronyms can be hard to decipher without deep clinical knowledge.
- Speak up – discussion may have moved on once answer is identified yet you need to find appropriate time to insert new information into discussion.
- Time consuming - defining questions, searching and selecting ‘best’ answer required 4-6 hours for session.
- Delivering answers – how to document question and answer/resource to residents (e.g. email, digital drop box, webpage, etc.)?
- Part of the team – despite assurances from program director that seeking additional information is desired, residents reluctant to acknowledge areas where additional information is needed.

Balls & Strikes
- Initially, librarian returned ‘answers’ via email message to chief residents which was forwarded to residents. This evolved into website updated with questions and linked full-text answers.
- Availability of question/answer resource lists for morning meeting spun off into other related resource lists. Some lists well-used/well-maintained (Subspecialty Readings, Night Float) and some less so (Noon Conference); all are linked from residency homepage.
- Librarian increasingly called for one-on-one research assistance for resident talks.
- Librarian does not have as much opportunity to promote clinical information tools (e.g. DynaMed, Essential Evidence Plus, etc.) as hoped, but does have opportunity to use/assess resources in ‘live’ environment.
- Building relationships takes time. Residents appreciative, but change rotations frequently so there’s always someone ‘new’ and frequently it’s the librarian!

The Scoreboard
- Website linked from residency homepage which contains all scheduling and curricular information for residents.

Next Season – Future Plans
- iPad recently acquired and its use and apps will be explored to answer clinical questions.
- Training additional librarians to support residency programs which heard about trial and requested additional librarian support.
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Resources to help residents keep updated
- General topic and date, from most recent to least
- Specific Question + link to full-text resource + citation
- Narrow clinical question
- Recent review article for primary topic of discussion

Customized URL to enhance ‘findability’ of website
- Links to related readings lists and residency homepage
- Last year’s questions/answers
- Librarian contact information
- All resources linked via Library’s proxy server