



Assessing Health Information Needs of Patients and Families in an Adult Outpatient Clinic

Tracy E. Powell, AHIP, Clinical Services Librarian, Lister Hill Library Lee Vucovich, AHIP, Assistant Director for Reference Services, Lister Hill Library, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, Alabama

Background

November 2006: Kirklin Clinic Patient Resource Library opened

- Comprehensive Cancer Center, Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences, and The Kirklin Clinic
- Located in a prominent location in the clinic
- Staffed 40 hours per week by professional librarians
- The Kirklin Clinic houses over 700 doctors and covers 35 specialties



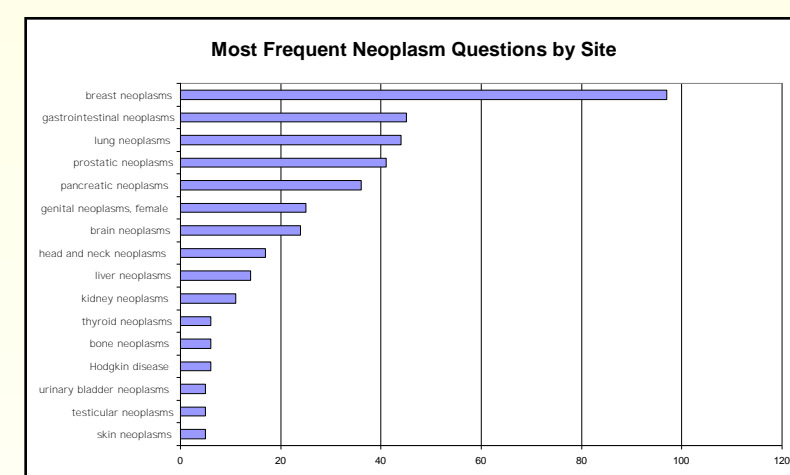
Objective

To determine the information needs and the types of resources preferred by a diverse population of patients and families in a busy adult interdisciplinary outpatient clinic.

Methods

This study includes patients and family members requesting information from professional librarians in The Kirklin Clinic Patient Resource Library during the first 15

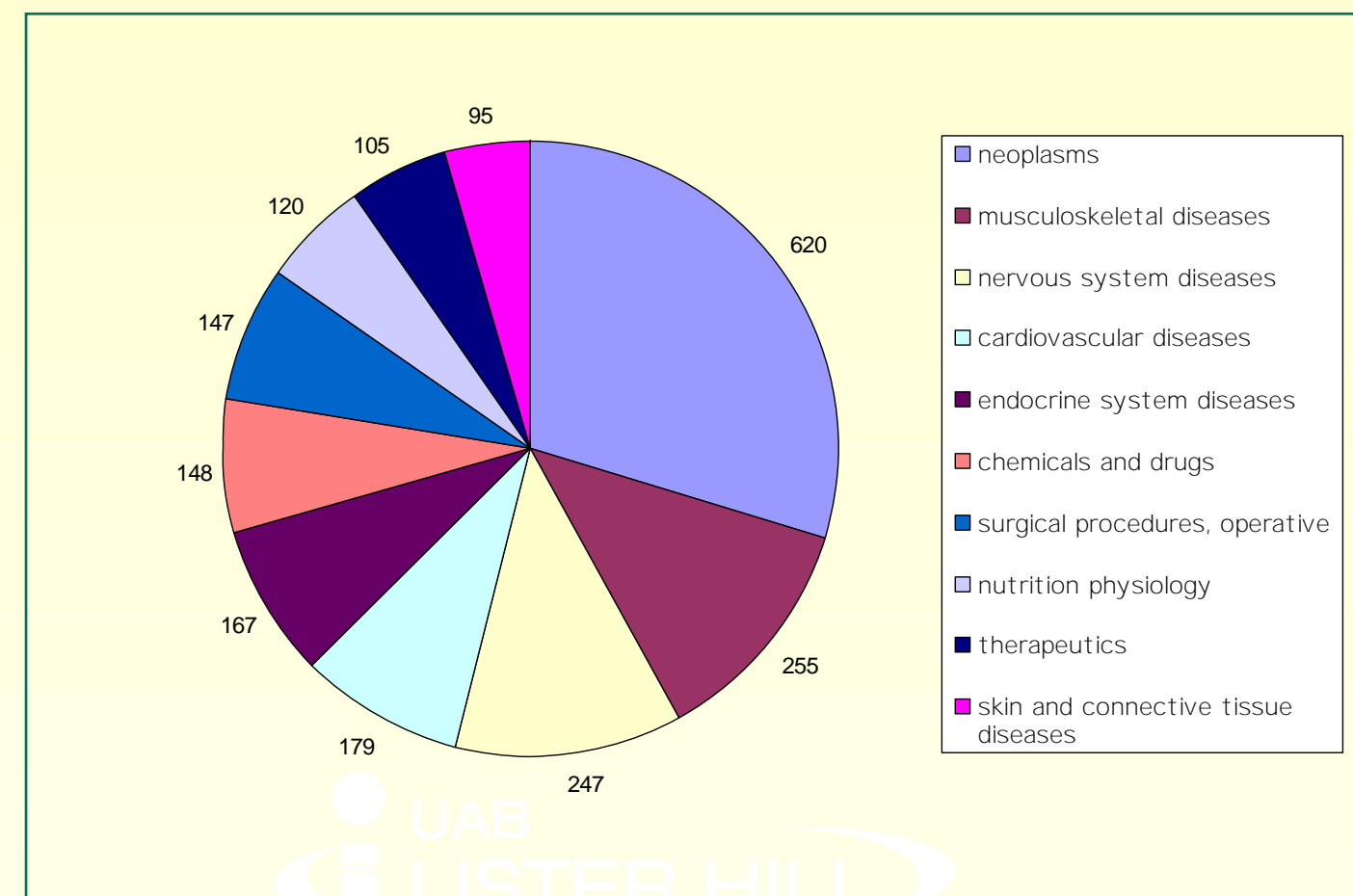
- Library circulation and usage statistics and a database of information from detailed visitor information forms, approved by UAB IRB, were gathered
- Individual question concepts were mapped using Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) in an Excel spreadsheet
- 2,265 information requests for 7672 visitors were
- Two levels of MeSH were used for each concept
 - broad terms were taken from the first or second level of the tree
 - narrow terms were the most specific MeSH heading applicable
- Data were analyzed and aggregated by using MeSH headings
- Information on the most common diagnoses in the clinic was gathered for comparison
- Data on the resources used to answer questions were also collected and analyzed



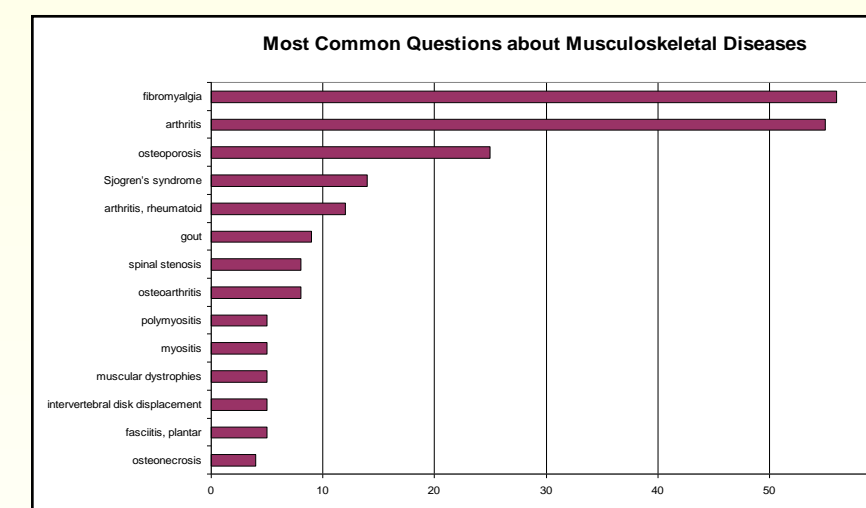
Some specific neoplasm types were combined such as **gastrointestinal neoplasms and neck neoplasms**

- # Unique MeSH terms related to neoplasms: 38
- # Question concepts related to specific histological types: 258
- # Question concepts related to other neoplasm concepts: (e.g. neoplasm metastasis or cyst) 258

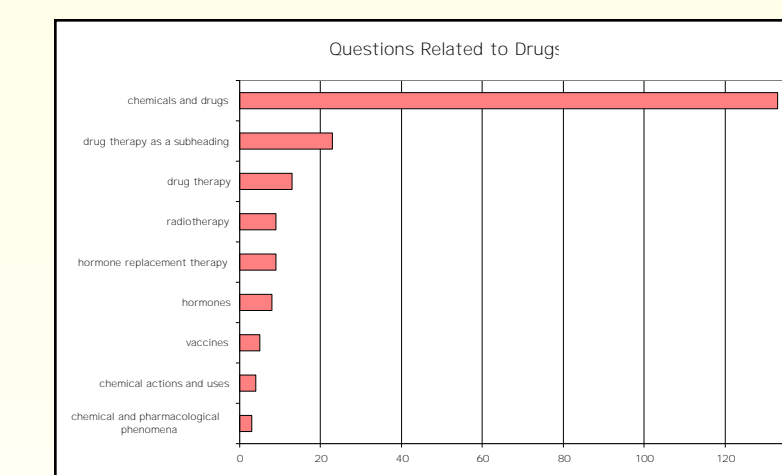
Results Related to Information Requests



Specialty clinics located at other UAB sites include Orthopedics, Ophthalmology and Psychiatry



- # Unique MeSH terms related to musculoskeletal diseases: 38
- # Question concepts related to musculoskeletal diseases: 258



- Many MeSH trees relate to chemical and drug concepts
- Supplementary MeSH concepts were used for drugs
- Individual drug and chemical concepts were combined into the broader MeSH category **chemicals and drugs**
- # Unique MeSH terms related to chemicals and drugs: 165
- # Question concepts related to chemicals and drugs: 165

Conclusions

- Questions asked by visitors are very specific, cover a wide variety of topics, and require skill to answer effectively
- Online resources, both consumer and scholarly, are necessary to adequately answer visitors' questions
- Topics searched in the library did not correlate closely with the top diagnoses at The Kirklin Clinic

- Visitors often come to the library with very specific diagnoses
- Visitors often are seeking information on more than one topic, for themselves and others
- Topics sought by visitors are often unrelated to their clinic visit
- Visitors are usually pressed for time

- MeSH works well for standardizing the questions asked because of the specificity of the topics
- MeSH terms are not always a good fit for the concepts involved

- Free pamphlets are popular, but tend to be too broad for many topics sought
- Internet resources are used much more than print
- Access to scholarly online resources has been invaluable to answering questions asked
- Professional librarian skills are vital in adequately meeting the information needs of this population



Future Directions

- Map visitor question concepts to MeSH on an ongoing basis
- Use results to guide collection development and webpage development
- Share results with clinicians and administrators
- Work with clinics to identify specific information needs for their patients
- Identify and work with patient educators in the clinic

Results Related to Services

