

*Medical Librarianship:
A Career Beyond the Cutting Edge*

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A Career Beyond the Cutting Edge

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www.mlanet.org

Do you have any of
these characteristics?

- thrive in changing environments
- innovation
- technological aptitude
- creativity
- service orientation
- excellent communication skills
- teaching ability
- public relations savvy
- Web design talent



Consider becoming
a medical librarian!



What is a medical librarian?

Medical librarianship is a service profession. Medical librarians provide health information about new medical treatments, clinical trials and standard trials procedures, tests, and equipment to physicians, allied health professionals, patients, consumers, and corporations. They help physicians provide quality care to patients, help patients find information, answer consumers' questions, and provide information to the health care industries.

Medical librarians become Web managers, medical informatics experts, and chief information officers as well as catalogers, instructors, and reference librarians. A medical librarian needs a graduate degree in library or information science. A background in science, health sciences, or allied health is beneficial, as are graduate courses in medical informatics or medical librarianship. Those who are willing to be flexible in employment opportunities or are geographically mobile have greater career options.

Where do medical librarians work?

- hospitals, academic medical centers, and clinics
- colleges, universities, and professional schools
- consumer health libraries
- research centers and foundations
- industry
 - biotechnology
 - insurance
 - medical equipment
 - pharmaceutical
 - publishing
- federal, state, and local government agencies
- anywhere health information is needed



What are some positions that might be available to you?

- Web manager for an academic medical center
- community outreach coordinator for a public health agency
- collection development officer at a university library
- reference librarian at a hospital
- electronic resources cataloger for an Internet startup company
- director of a nursing school library
- user education specialist at a consumer health library
- information architect for a pharmaceutical company

Whom do librarians work with?

- physicians, nurses, health educators, and other allied health care professionals
- administrators
- programmers and information technology specialists
- faculty and students
- consumers and the community

What abilities must medical librarians have?

- retrieve, select, organize, and disseminate health information
- evaluate advanced information technologies
- instruct end users in the retrieval and application of health care information
- develop content and design materials for instructional purposes
- plan, budget, and manage programs and services
- develop, design, and manage digital access and content
- work on multidisciplinary teams
- use technology appropriately and effectively
- communicate well, both in written and oral formats

What are the minimum qualifications for medical librarians?

- Master's of library and information science from an American Library Association-accredited school
- strong oral and written communication skills
- strong interpersonal skills
- strong computer skills

Salaries

Salaries vary according to the type and location of institution, the level of responsibility, and the length of employment. The Medical Library Association reports that in 1998 the average starting salary was \$31,066. The overall average salary for medical librarians in 1998 was \$45,016. Library directors can earn between \$47,689 and \$175,854.



Should I become a medical librarian?

If you are people and service oriented or enjoy interacting with others, intrigued by the electronic delivery of information, Web page design, delivery of health care information, or information retrieval, a career in medical librarianship may be right for you.

For more information about medical librarianship, visit the Medical Library Association Website at www.mlanet.org or contact the Medical Library Association at 65 East Wacker Place, Suite 1900, Chicago, IL 60601-7298; 312.419.9094; mlapd1@mlahq.org; or info@mlahq.org.

The Medical Library Association (MLA), established in 1898, is an educational organization of almost 5,000 individuals and institutions in the health sciences information field. MLA is dedicated to excellence in health through access to information. Its major purposes are to serve society by improving health through the provision of information for the delivery of health care, the education of health professionals, the conduct of research, and the public's understanding of health. The foremost concern of the membership is the dissemination of quality health sciences information for use in education, research, and patient care.