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# Evidence-Based Answering Service : a Croatian Experience

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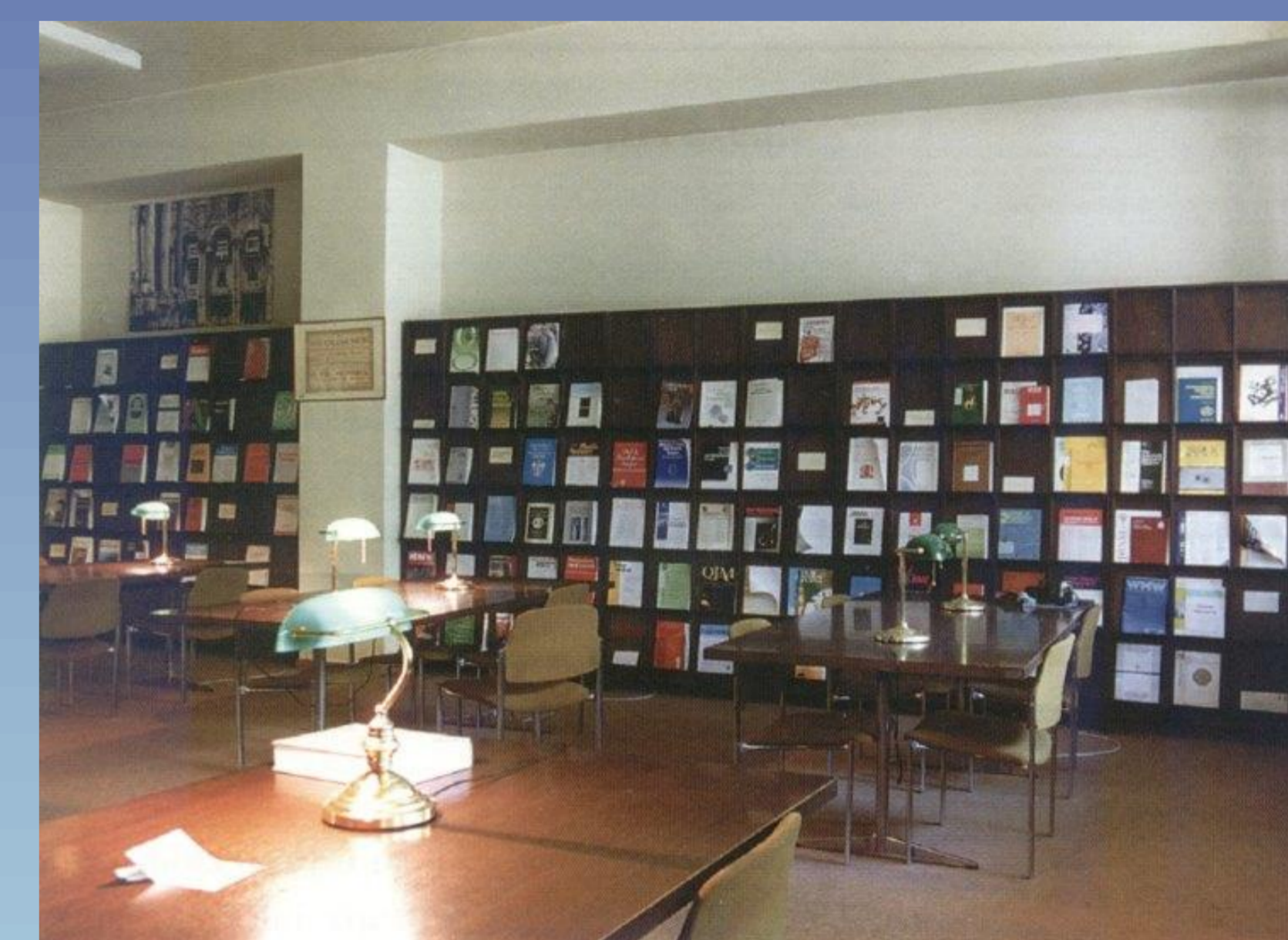
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## Introduction

Transfer of the scientific evidence into the clinical practice involves familiarity with information resources, as well as skills in formulating search strategy, finding, selection and interpreting of information. Most clinicians generally support the evidence based health care and wish to use evidence based information. But, it frequently happens that they do not have adequate skills or enough time for searching and evaluating evidence needed in their everyday practice. The Central Medical Library and the Croatian Medical Journal, both affiliated to the Zagreb University School of Medicine, have designed a web-based information service, which support clinicians, nurses, and the other health professionals in answering questions arising in everyday practice.



## The staff

The medical librarian with MD degree and knowledge in concepts and practice of the evidence-based medicine will prepare the answer on each question, using all relevant information resources available to the library. The CMJ's technical personnel are responsible for administering and maintaining the information service.

## Questions

The user-physician may send his/her question by the web-request form. It contains the following information: the question formulated as a free text or structured according to PICO form; reply period (ASAP, 1-2 days or more than a week); users comments, e.g. information sources already used; and personal information.

## Evaluation of the service

The user's satisfaction with the service and its practical value will be measured by a satisfaction questionnaire. After a few weeks, a short questionnaire will be sent by an e-mail to every user-physician. The questionnaire is intended to be a feedback form for the impact of the sent information on the clinical decision and patient's condition. Data on familiarity of the Croatian physicians with the principles of the evidence-based medicine and their respective attitudes will be collected by a web-based questionnaire.

## Searching and appraising

To answer the question, the librarian select appropriate information sources based on their availability and quality of the content (systematic reviews, meta-analyses, randomised controlled trials). The search cascade starts with a search of the highest quality evidence-based sources: the Cochrane Library, Clinical Evidence and ACP Journal Club. If necessary, other sources may be searched, but only if the appropriate answer was not already found. In general, information with the strongest evidence will be used. The answer will be returned by an e-mail to the user-physician.

## Conclusions

Though included in the field of medicine for more than a decade (primarily on the academic level), the principles of the evidence-based medicine are not fully implemented into the everyday clinical practice. The physicians do not apply in practice the published scientific evidence in large measure because of the relatively complex process of finding and appraisal. An information service can help in transfer of scientific evidence into the everyday clinical practice.