**SHLA Journal Club – January 22, 2019**

Visintini, S., Boutet, M., Manley, A., & Helwig, M. (2018). Research support in health sciences libraries: a scoping review. *Journal of the Canadian Health Libraries Association*, 39(2), 56-78. doi:   
<https://doi.org/10.29173/jchla29366>

**Discussion Questions**

1. **What research services does your library currently offer? Did the article provide any ideas or models for future service provision? A “spectrum of services” figure is provided by the authors on page 66; are there any services your library currently provides on the left-end of the spectrum that could be expanded upon?**

* SHA offers almost none, except for systematic reviews (which we rarely do); staffing and time are major barriers
* Most of the research support services we offer are aimed at students, such as search training; we do get evidence search questions from researchers but we aren’t directly involved in the process; because the SHA is in a period of transition, it’s difficult to know which services might be important in the future or that could be expanded on – we don’t know what the research landscape will look like once the amalgamation is complete
* USask is involved in almost all of the activities – systematic, synthesis and scoping reviews; thesis support; some librarians involved in OA and data management
* Services that could be expanded – larger group instruction and peer-to-peer training
* Sask Poly somewhere in the middle – do some capital “R” research, but much of the training isn’t research specific; there is another department on campus that provides many of the supports; need to figure out library’s role and how to collaborate; interested in the services around research metrics but not as important in a polytechnic environment where tenue isn’t based on research output
* Lacking institutional support for librarian research

1. **What are some potential barriers for service expansion at your institution? The creation of new positions was central to 27 of the studies, and fee-based services were mentioned by three of the studies; would this potentially remove some barriers? Are either option feasible?**

* Budgets are always a big thing and not sure that a fee-based model truly offsets the cost of an extra person; interesting that so many USask people are cross-appointed with the SHA, so would those people go to SHA for free if USask were to make services fee-based? Optics – can look bad or be confusing
* Agreement that if you charge for something, people will go elsewhere
* Creation of new positions – was surprised that that was the top way libraries do this, but this is reflected in the number of insecure/contract positions that are common in libraries
* How many are truly new positions with additional people, or re-naming positions without hiring anyone new; has also noticed that many research support positions are contract
* Is hiring of new people related to the lack of expertise within the organizations? Could some of current work be re-allocated to a library technician?

1. **Only three of the identified studies reported conducting a needs assessment prior to implementing a new service, and less than half included some form of evaluation. The authors argue that future studies must focus more on evaluation. How does your institution currently evaluate services or decide to offer a new service? How can this be improved upon?**

* We talk about evaluation, collect stats; needs assessment
* Needs assessment or evaluation often are a sabbatical project; informal feedback; for implementing new services, there are institutional politics that need to be navigated
* Lots of stats gathered but no formal assessment; have been doing user experience testing but not currently used to evaluate research services

1. **Open discussion**

* Scoping reviews
* Couldn’t find a formal tool for critical appraisal for scoping reviews; article used PRISMA
* Methodology – appreciated how descriptive they were about their search process (number of databases, search strategies)
* Time consuming and difficult to screen out articles