

# The Status of Women in the Administration of Health Science Libraries

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## ABSTRACT

Results of a survey of large health science libraries in the United States demonstrate that the relative position of men and women in administration is comparable to that prevalent in other types of libraries. Medical school and the largest libraries are the most likely to be administered by men. The percentage of women who are directors of large biomedical libraries has declined radically since 1950. The statistics presented here will serve as a base for assessing future change.

THE underrated status of women in biomedical librarianship is a topic which is almost nonexistent in library literature. Because women comprise the vast majority of the work force in the medical library profession, the subject should be of maximum concern to all medical librarians. According to figures obtained by Rothenberg, Rees, and Kronick in their manpower survey of health science libraries [1], the total librarian population was nearly four-fifths (78.6%) women, with male librarians comprising only 21.4%, or a female-male ratio of 3:1. They further reported that the average annual salary for female librarians was \$10,044 and for their male counterparts, \$12,732. In the summary of their article, Rothenberg et al. state:

Although librarianship is a "women's career," it is evident that women are significantly underpaid when compared to men with similar educational qualifications. In addition, women are often given positions of less responsibility in libraries. These factors contribute to the softness of the professional image of librarianship.

Even though this survey did not have as its primary thesis the status of women medical librarians within their working environment,

the facts and conclusions reported by the investigators were not surprising because they tend to coincide with studies conducted since the beginning of the century regarding the roles, responsibilities, and salaries of women and men in the general librarian population as well as in specific library groups.

Based on the findings of Schiller [2], there has been only one national survey conducted for the singular purpose of determining the status of women librarians in the United States. This study, carried out early in the 1900's by Fairchild [3], included 100 libraries of various types. Seventy-one years ago Fairchild reported, on the basis of evidence deduced from her survey, "They [women] do not hold positions offering the highest salaries and apparently they do not receive equal remuneration for the same work."

Schiller points out that Bryan's classic work, *The Public Librarian* [4], based on a 1947-48 survey, contained "more significant analyses and breakdowns by sex than most studies provide." Bryan's survey encompassed educational, economic, and career factors and implied the existence of a "dual career structure for librarians differentiated on the basis of sex—an accelerated career for the minority, composed of men, and a basic library career, established within considerably lower limits for the majority, who are women."

Even though Bryan's work of nearly thirty years ago is obsolete, it is still important for purposes of comparison with subsequent surveys relating to the status of female librarians in the public library systems—and especially with those surveys conducted after Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 became law. One such statistical study, based on data valid as of January 1, 1971, for public libraries in the

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United States and Canada serving a population of 100,000 or more, has been reported by Carpenter and Shearer [5]. They determined that men were more likely to be public library directors, and the likelihood increases substantially in large public library systems. The "dual career structure" referred to by Bryan was still very much in evidence at the beginning of 1971.

Blankenship's survey of selected American college head librarians was undertaken "in an effort to determine whether or not there are significant differences between the number and kinds of libraries directed by men and those headed by women" [6]. One of the conclusions drawn by the author from his statistical data was that opportunities in library administration exist for either sex because 51.45% of the respondents were women and 48.55% men; but these percentages do not necessarily indicate equal opportunity, for no correlation was made between these percentages and the woman-manpower situation in academic librarianship at the time of the survey. Other statistics showed that men tended to achieve the status of head librarian at an earlier age than women and were more likely to head publicly supported college libraries and larger college libraries. Blankenship observed that women head librarians tended to change positions less often than men and that they were as capable as or perhaps more capable than men in obtaining institutional funds for their libraries.

Schiller's national study [7] of the characteristics of professional library personnel in over 2,000 institutions of higher learning was conducted in 1966-67. Her findings emphasized that the relative status of women in academic librarianship was declining instead of improving. Women accounted for 67% of the academic librarian work force; yet, at the time of the survey, not one of the fifty largest academic libraries was headed by a woman. In 1930, 27% of the libraries in the nation's seventy-four largest institutions of higher learning had female chief librarians, but by 1967, only 5% had libraries that were directed by women.

The Berkeley report [8], an in-depth study of the status of women in the Library of the University of California, Berkeley, was issued in 1971. It stressed a significant and often overlooked fact affecting all librarians, i.e., librarianship is an underpaid profession because of its categorization as a "female" occupation when compared to "male" occupations requiring sim-

ilar amounts of education and experience. According to the report, women who resigned or retired from administrative positions were being replaced by men, and the resulting blatant underrepresentation of women at the administrative level was one of the report's major concerns.

Neither from the studies we have referred to nor from Schiller's review article [2] can any substantive commentary or statistics be derived bearing upon the status of women in biomedical librarianship. As far as we can ascertain, this is an almost unexplored subject.

For several years, our observations led us to believe that in medical libraries qualified women were bypassed in favor of less qualified men when top administrative positions were at stake. Gertrude L. Annan, one of our profession's most prestigious members, had comparable thoughts which she expressed aptly in a letter to the Editor of the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association* [9]. She wrote that in contrast to the recent entry of women into many formerly all-male preserves:

The very opposite extreme is true in medical libraries. Once a woman's world, we find that since salaries have improved there has been a male invasion, and the tables are turned. . . . It is a serious situation. Top quality women librarians are most unlikely to enter a field in which they will have no opportunity to compete for top positions. This will be a loss to the profession and to medical school libraries.

To ascertain whether the facts bore out our hypothesis or whether our view was biased, we conducted a survey of large health science libraries in order to determine the actual status of women as medical library administrators. We also wanted to see whether the trend of men replacing women in administrative positions held true in the biomedical library community as it did in some other segments of the profession. In our view, the most important aspect of this project was the providing of base figures on the status of women in biomedical librarianship to serve as a point of reference for assessing change that may arise during the coming years in response to the new consciousness of women's rights in the work force and for gauging the effectiveness of legislation and affirmative action programs.

### METHODOLOGY

The libraries surveyed in our study were confined to the United States. They included all

medical school libraries and other large biomedical libraries chosen on the basis of statistics taken from Kruzas's *Directory of Special Libraries and Information Centers* [10] and from Schick and Crawford's *Directory of Health Sciences Libraries in the United States, 1969* [11]. The criteria used for the inclusion of libraries, other than those of medical schools, were a collection of 35,000 volumes and a staff of at least three.

The term "medical library administrator" is limited to the head librarian and to the associate librarian, that is, those individuals having the responsibility for the administrative activities of the *entire* library. Specific titles for the two positions obviously varied from library to library.

A questionnaire served as the basis for our statistical study of the status of women in medical library administration in the late summer of 1972. The questionnaire, directed to the head librarians, was designed to elicit the length and type of experience prior to the individual's current position, the highest academic degree earned, and faculty or nonfaculty status of the position (applicable only to academic libraries). For comparative purposes, questions regarding the number and sex of other librarians comprising the entire professional staff, the number of nonprofessional positions, the size of the library by volume count, and the name of the head librarian in 1950 were also included.

Questions concerning the ages and salaries of head and associate librarians were purposely omitted because we felt that these particular items might notably cut down on the response rate. Furthermore, information regarding age could be obtained from standard reference sources once the names of the individuals were known. Our presentation of age data in this study was derived in two steps. First, wherever possible, we obtained birth dates from *A Biographical Directory of Librarians in the United States and Canada* [12] and from *Who's Who in Library Service* [13]. Then these dates were coupled with questionnaire answers on previous experience. Comparable salary information is not readily available, and the topic is not dealt with in the statistics presented for our sample of 140 health science libraries.

In the summer of 1972, questionnaires were mailed to the head librarians of 160 libraries

selected on the basis of the aforementioned criteria. Several weeks after the initial mailing, follow-up letters were sent to those librarians who had not replied. A total of 143 questionnaires (89.3%) were returned, and of these, 140 (87.5%) were usable.

Seventeen libraries did not answer the questionnaire. Nine of these were medical school libraries varying from large to small, with the majority being in the medium-sized range. One hospital, four government, one pharmaceutical, and two society libraries made up the other eight nonrespondents.

Information obtained from the 140 usable questionnaires was arranged for each library in tabular card format to facilitate analysis. Statistics regarding administrative heads and associates in relation to their overall professional library work force are based on the situation as of the late summer of 1972.

As an ancillary project to the one just described, we also ascertained the number of female and male librarians who have held and are holding leadership positions in the Medical Library Association. We derived this information from listings of officers, board members, and committee members which appear annually in the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*.

## RESULTS

In the 140 libraries surveyed, 1,154 librarians were employed, 893 women and 261 men. Women made up 77.4% of the total librarian population while men constituted 22.6% (Fig. 1).

Libraries were grouped into five categories: medical school, society, government, pharmaceutical, and hospital. "Society" libraries included large medical society and association libraries. The term "government" was applied to federal, state, and municipal libraries; state-supported medical school libraries were designated "medical school" and not "government." "Pharmaceutical" refers to the medical research libraries operated by commercial drug companies. The categories "medical school" and "hospital" are self-explanatory. For each type of library, a detailed statistical breakdown is given in Table 1 for the number and percentage of female and male librarians employed. In each library category, women comprised more

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than 70% of the total librarian work force. The ratio of women to men librarians was 3.4:1.

At the time of our study, the position of head librarian was filled in 133 of the responding libraries and vacant in seven; positions filled by "acting" chief librarians were considered as being vacant. Fifty-four of the head librarians were women and seventy-nine were men. Women held 40.6% of the top administrative positions, whereas men held 18.8% more for a total of 59.4% (Fig. 1). Table 2 indicates head librarian positions by the type of library, the number of men and women filling jobs, the percentages of the filled positions held by members of each sex, and the number of vacant posts. The fact that the graphs reflect only the

filled head librarian positions whereas the tables represent all these positions, filled or vacant, accounts for the slight variations between some of the percentages shown on the graphs and tables.

Even though the ratio of women to men was 3.4:1 in the entire librarian population surveyed, when a female-male ratio was calculated for the 133 filled head librarian positions, the result was 0.7:1. Women made up over 75% of the total librarian work force, but they did not constitute even 50% of the top level medical library administrators. In addition, it is worth noting that of 893 female librarians employed in the 140 libraries in 1972, only fifty-four (6%) were head librarians, presenting a sharp contrast with seventy-nine male head librarians, 30.3% of a total work force of only 261 men.

In 1950, 83% of these libraries that were then in existence were headed by women (Fig. 1). Twenty-five of the 140 libraries did not exist in 1950, and the identity of the librarians at the time was unknown to questionnaire respondents in nine other cases. The percentage of female chief librarians in 1950 was computed on the 106 positions then in existence whose occupant was known. The 1972 ratio of women to men (0.7:1) in the head medical librarian posts can be compared to the situation in 1950, when women outnumbered men 4.9 to 1. In 1972, women held only 40.6% of the top administrative posts compared with 83% in 1950. While the percentage of women medical library administrators has declined dramatically within two decades, their predominance in the medical library profession as a whole has remained relatively stable. A generation ago the percentage of

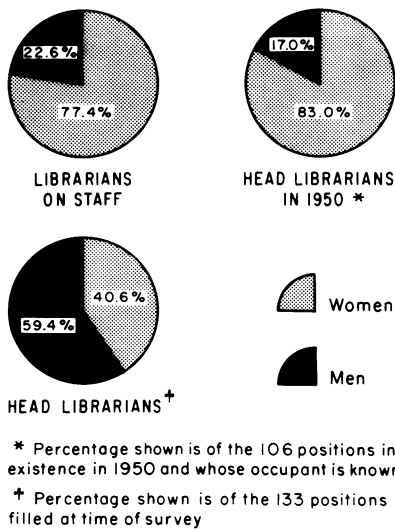


FIG. 1.—Percent representation of men and women in 140 responding libraries.

TABLE 1  
LIBRARIANS ON STAFF OF THE 140 RESPONDING LIBRARIES

Type of library	No. of libraries	Women		Men		Total positions	
		No.	% of positions	No.	% of positions	No.	%
Medical school	101	645	78.1	181	21.9	826	100
Society	16	90	75.0	30	25.0	120	100
Government	6	83	70.3	35	29.7	118	100
Pharmaceutical	13	64	81.0	15	19.0	79	100
Hospital	4	11	100.0	0	—	11	100
Total	140	893	77.4	261	22.6	1154	100

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TABLE 2  
HEAD LIBRARIANS OF THE 140 RESPONDING LIBRARIES

Type of library	Women		Men		Vacant		Total positions	
	No.	% of positions	No.	% of positions	No.	% of positions	No.	%
Medical school	34	33.7	63	62.4	4	4.0	101	100*
Society	8	50.0	6	37.5	2	12.5	16	100
Government	2	33.3	3	50.0	1	16.7	6	100
Pharmaceutical	6	46.2	7	53.9	0	—	13	100*
Hospital	4	100.0	0	—	0	—	4	100
Total	54	38.6	79	56.4	7	5.0	140	100

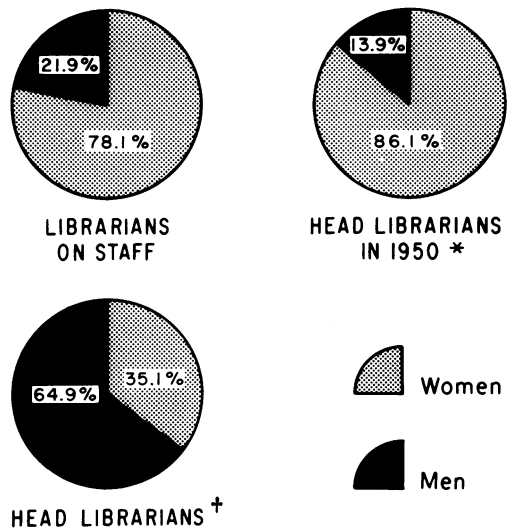
\* Due to rounding off, sum of percentages equals 100.1%.

women administrators bore a logical relationship to the 89% representation of women in the overall librarian population [14].

Because medical school libraries formed our most sizeable category and included many of the largest health science libraries, we analyzed the data obtained from the 101 responding medical schools separately to provide a visual comparison of the percentage results from this group of libraries with those obtained from the total 140 libraries in the survey (Figs. 1 and 2).

For the most part, the medical school library results were similar to those derived from the larger sample with the exception of the head librarian position. Of the 101 chief librarian posts in the medical school libraries, ninety-seven were filled at the time of the survey. The female-male percentages of head librarians have been calculated on the ninety-seven filled positions in the graphic representation (Fig. 2) and on the entire 101 positions, filled and vacant, in Table 2. Of the ninety-seven filled positions, women accounted for 35.1% of the medical school head librarians, while the percentage for men was 64.9, with men holding 29.8% more of the jobs than women. In medical schools, men held 5.5% more of the head librarian positions than they did in the complete survey sample of 133 filled top positions. In medical school libraries, men predominated in the top administrative jobs more notably than in the other four categories of libraries.

From information provided by the 101 medical school library questionnaires, we ascertained that in 1950 seventy-two chief librarian



\* Percentage shown is of the 72 positions in existence in 1950 and whose occupant is known

† Percentage shown is of the 97 positions filled at time of survey

FIG. 2.—Percent representation of men and women in 101 responding medical school libraries.

positions were in existence whose occupant was known. Of these, sixty-two (86.1%) were held by women and the remaining ten (13.9%) by men. At that time women outnumbered men by more than 6 to 1 in those positions. The number of female medical school head librarians was directly proportional to the number of women represented in the total librarian work force, when according to the 1950 United States census figures women made up 89% of all librar-

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ians. By 1972, the situation had changed drastically with men outnumbering women as medical school head librarians almost 2 to 1, in a librarian population that was over 3 to 1 female.

While women made up more than 70% of the librarian population in each of the five categories of libraries in our survey, there were only two categories, "society" and "hospital," where they exceeded men in the percentage of head librarian positions they held (Table 2). In society libraries, 50% of the head librarians were women, 37.5% were men, and 12.5% of the positions were vacant. All four hospital libraries were headed by women.

To supplement the comparisons of the librarian population and head librarian positions by type of library, we did similar analyses based on the size of the libraries that responded to our questionnaire. Size was determined by the number of volumes reported to be in the library collection. Our aim was to substantiate the often-heard hypothesis of a correlation between the size factor and the administrative status of women in the health science libraries. Secondly, did the size factor affect the distribution pattern of female and male medical librarians? Data for the twenty-five largest and twenty-five smallest responding libraries were tabulated separately and then compared.

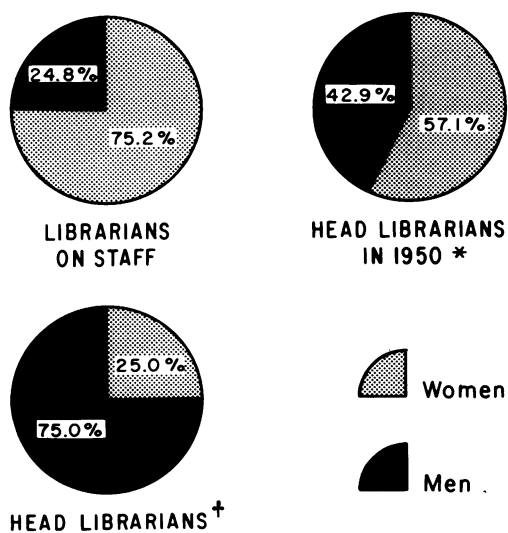
In the twenty-five largest libraries, 407 librarians were employed, 305 women and 101 men. The female-male ratio was 3:1 in the total population of these libraries. Twenty-four of the top positions were filled at the time of our survey; six were held by women and eighteen by men. Of the twenty-four head librarian positions filled, the female-male ratio was 1:3—an exact reversal of the ratio in relation to the total librarian population of these very same libraries. The female-male percentages for the total librarian population and the filled head librarian positions in 1972 and for the head librarian positions in 1950 are shown graphically in Figure 3 for the twenty-five largest libraries.

In 1950, twenty-one of these positions were in existence and the occupant was known. At that time, twelve women and nine men held the top administrative posts, a female-male ratio of 2.3:1. In our calculations for head medical librarian positions in 1950 women far outnumbered men, 4.9:1 in all the libraries included in the survey and 6:1 in the medical school librar-

ies. In 1950 men did not yet hold the majority of the head librarian positions. In the largest medical libraries which supplied statistics for this study, however, they did occupy almost half of the positions. Nearly two and a half decades ago, when women significantly exceeded men in the top jobs in the total biomedical library community, in the largest of these libraries men had made inroads inversely proportional to their representation in the total work force.

Both our 1950 and 1972 data from the twenty-five largest medical libraries bear out the fact that the larger the library the more likely it is that the top administrative post has been and is being filled by a man. The 1950 female-male ratio of head medical librarians was 2.3:1, compared with the 1972 female-male ratio of 1:3.

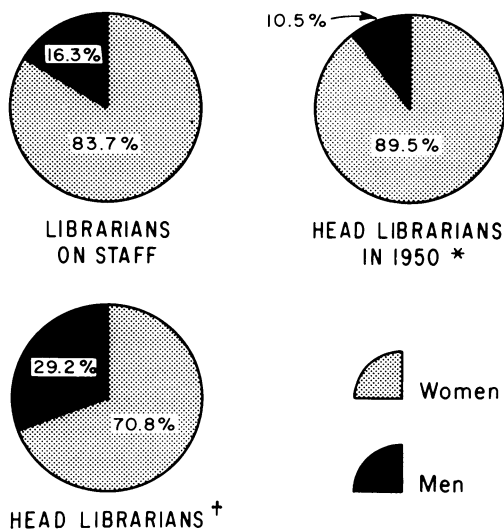
The same kinds of statistics were compiled and percentages graphed for the twenty-five smallest libraries which responded to the questionnaire (Fig. 4). In these libraries, eighty-two women and sixteen men comprised the total librarian population. In the smaller libraries, women outnumbered men 5 to 1. Twenty-four



\* Percentage shown is of the 21 positions in existence in 1950 and whose occupant is known

† Percentage shown is of the 24 positions filled at time of survey

FIG. 3.—Percent representation of men and women in the 25 largest responding libraries.



\* Percentage shown is of the 19 positions in existence in 1950 and whose occupant is known

† Percentage shown is of the 24 positions filled at time of survey

FIG. 4.—Percent representation of men and women in the 25 smallest responding libraries.

of the chief librarian positions were filled at the time of our survey—seventeen by women and seven by men. In the top posts in the smallest libraries, there was a female-male ratio of 2.5:1. In our study, we have previously provided statistics for head librarian positions of three other key groupings, i.e., all 140 libraries, the 101 medical school libraries, and the twenty-five largest libraries surveyed; in all these instances men held 59.4% to 75% of the chief librarian posts. The twenty-five smallest libraries constituted the only group where women held more of the chief librarian jobs than did men. But even in these libraries, where men made up only 16.3% of the librarian work force, they held 29.2% of the head librarian positions.

The head librarian situation in these same libraries in 1950 was quite different. We were able to determine the existence of nineteen positions whose occupants were known, and the 1950 female-male head librarian percentages and ratio were computed on this basis (see Fig. 4). At that time, the female-male ratio was 8:1; in 1972, this ratio had dropped to only 2.5:1. Even in the smallest libraries, men have made significant gains in the chief librarian positions

within a span of twenty-two years. If it is generally recognized that in the largest libraries men tend to hold the top administrative jobs, then conversely, in the smallest libraries, women are more likely to fill these positions. Our findings upheld this premise overwhelmingly for health science libraries in 1950 and, to a lesser degree, in 1972.

Of the 893 female librarians included in our study, 306 (34%) were employed in the twenty-five largest libraries and eighty-two (9%) held jobs in the twenty-five smallest libraries. The total male librarian population in our sample was 261; 101 men (39%) were employed in the twenty-five largest libraries and sixteen (6%) worked in the twenty-five smallest. These percentage differences imply that male librarians in the health science field tend to work in the largest libraries. Furthermore, it should be remembered that this study dealt with 140 libraries whose total librarian work force was 77.4% female at the time of our survey.

By consulting the two biographical directories of librarians [12, 13], we were able to ascertain the birth dates of 101 of the 133 head librarians responding to the questionnaire; thirty-seven of these dates were for women and sixty-four were for men. From the questionnaire responses, we noted the year in which each individual had attained the status of head librarian. These two dates were used to determine the age at which each person first held a headship position.

In the medical libraries surveyed, the large number of men who held chief librarian status was highly disproportional to their minority representation in the total librarian work force. Did our survey of medical libraries likewise uphold the frequently made statement that in librarianship men arrive at top positions at an earlier age than women? Our data were divided by sex and into age groups to determine within which age span the majority of female and male head librarians achieved that type of position (Table 3). At 34 years of age, 24.3% of the women and 50% of the men were head librarians. The largest percentage of men (37.5%) first became chief librarians in the age group of 30–34 years. By age 39, 48.6% of the women and 67.2% of the men had attained head librarian positions. The largest percentage of women (24.3%) first became head librarians in the age group of 35–39 years. After 40 years of age, there was a reverse relationship of percentages, with

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51.3% of the women and 32.9% of the men being appointed to their first chief librarian positions. However, of the 32.9% of the men, 25% attained chief librarian status in the age group of 40-44 years. While the information on age presented here is approximate and involves a comparatively small number of individuals, it does support the thesis that men dominate the majority of top administrative library positions and do so at a younger age than the minority of women who attain comparable positions in health science libraries.

Thus far, we have discussed only the position of head librarian in relation to the librarian work force in the 140 health science libraries. The term "associate librarian" will be used here to designate an individual holding an adminis-

trative position secondary only to that of the head librarian and having responsibility for the library's operation.

In response to the 1972 questionnaire, there were 100 associate librarian positions reported filled (Table 4). In the secondary administrative posts women predominated, holding seventy-four positions while men held twenty-six, a ratio of 2.8:1.

In the upper administrative echelon (head and associate librarian ranks combined), there were 128 women (14.3%) of the total 893 female librarians employed. Of a total male librarian work force of 261, 105 men (40.3%) held either head librarian or associate librarian positions.

Eighty-seven of the libraries responding to the questionnaire had both head librarian and associate librarian positions filled at the time. In these libraries, sixty-nine of the ninety-three associate librarians were women (74.2%) and twenty-four were men (25.8%). Of the female associate librarians, 43.5% worked for women and 56.5% for men; 21% of the male associate librarians were employed by women, and 79% worked for men. In these eighty-seven libraries, thirty-two women were head librarians; 84% had only female associates, 12.5% had only male associates, and 3.5% had one female and one male as associates. Of the fifty-five men who were chief librarians, 67% had female associates and 33% had male associates.

Sixteen (11.4%) of the 140 head librarians held doctorates; three were women, and thirteen were men. Of the female head librarians, only 5.5% had doctoral degrees while 16.6% of

TABLE 3  
APPROXIMATE AGES AT WHICH PRESENT HEAD LIBRARIANS ACHIEVED HEAD LIBRARIAN STATUS

Age groups	Women (N = 37)		Men (N = 64)	
	No.	Per-centage*	No.	Per-centage*
Under 30	5	13.5	8	12.5
30-34	4	10.8	24	37.5
35-39	9	24.3	11	17.2
40-44	7	18.9	16	25.0
45-49	6	16.2	4	6.3
50-54	4	10.8	0	—
55 and over	2	5.4	1	1.6

\* Due to rounding off, does not total 100.0%.

TABLE 4  
HEAD LIBRARIANS AND ASSOCIATE LIBRARIANS OF THE 140 RESPONDING LIBRARIES

Position	Women		Men		Total filled positions		
	No.	% of women	No.	% of men	No.	% women	% men
Head librarians	54	6.0	79	30.3	133	40.6	59.4
Associate librarians	74	8.3	26	10.0	100	74.0	26.0
Subtotal: head & associate librarians	128	14.3	105	40.2	233	54.9	45.1
Other	765	85.7	156	59.8	921	83.1	16.9
Total librarian staff*	893	100.0	261	100.0	1154	77.4	22.6

\* From Table 1.



the male chief librarians had attained them. We did not solicit information on academic degrees for the associate librarians or for the total librarian population in our survey.

In the medical school libraries, we found that there appeared to be no discernible correlation between faculty status for librarians and the sex of the chief librarian. Faculty status or a lack of it occurred in academic medical libraries at approximately the same ratio of 2:1 (male head librarian:female head librarian).

In addition to investigating the status of women in medical library administration, we decided to examine their professional leadership role within the Medical Library Association during recent years. We questioned whether leadership in the professional organization served as a criterion for top administrative positions in working situations. We were able to determine from annual listings in the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association* the number of women and men who have been MLA officers, board members, committee chairmen or cochairmen, and delegates during the past six years, 1968/69–1973/74 (Table 5). Ex officio, staff, and liaison committee members were not counted in this tabulation. However, we were not able to obtain total MLA membership figures categorized by sex for the corresponding years, so no comparisons of the statistics recorded in Table 5 can be made based on their relationship to the overall membership.

During this time span, 1968/69–1973/74, women held 47.7% of all the MLA positions. They constituted 60% of the officers, 43.3% of the board members, 52.5% of the committee chairmen or cochairmen, and 35.6% of the

delegates. On a percentage basis women exceeded men as MLA officers and as committee chairmen or cochairmen whereas men outnumbered women as board members and delegates. Every year with the exception of 1972/73, men either equaled or exceeded the total number of women represented in the four MLA position categories. For the six-year period men held 52.3% of the positions. There seemed to be no apparent correlation between women as MLA leaders and as medical library administrators. While women accounted for 60% of the Association's officers, the total of MLA positions tabulated was divided about equally between men and women. From 1950 to 1972, fourteen women and nine men served as MLA presidents.

In the Medical Library Association, women appear to have a somewhat more equal opportunity at leadership positions than they do in working situations. However, these figures represent only the number of MLA posts available. To ascertain the actual equality of opportunity, we would need to know the number of women and men who make up the MLA membership and to compare the two sets of figures.

#### SUMMARY

We have attempted to communicate the information derived from our survey with a minimum amount of interpretive commentary. No presentation has been made citing the historical, economic, or sociological factors affecting or accounting for our findings.

The female-male ratio of 3:1 in the biomedical librarian population included in our survey corresponds to that reported by Rothenberg, Rees, and Kronick in their study which encom-

TABLE 5  
POSITIONS HELD IN THE MEDICAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, 1968/69–1973/74

MLA position	1968/69		1969/70		1970/71		1971/72		1972/73		1973/74		Total	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Officer	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	4	1	3	2	18	12
Board member	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	13	17
Committee chairman or cochairman	15	13	14	15	18	16	19	22	23	15	17	15	106	96
Delegate	8	10	7	12	7	14	5	13	5	9	4	7	36	65
Total	28	28	27	31	29	36	29	40	34	28	26	27	173	190

F = female, M = male.

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passed a much larger number of health science librarians [1]. They found that 78.6% of their survey population was made up of women, while we determined that women made up 77.4% of ours.

Women constituted the majority of the biomedical librarian work force (77.4%), whereas men held 56.4% of the head librarian positions. The percentage of men (75%) holding top administrative posts in the twenty-five largest libraries in our sample was notably disproportionate to their representation (24.8%) in the librarian population of those libraries. A comparable situation existed in the medical school libraries where men comprised 21.9% of the work force and filled 62.4% of the head librarian positions.

In all types of health science libraries, the percentage of women holding chief librarian positions has diminished significantly since 1950. The trend of men replacing women in top administrative posts appeared to be evident in health science libraries as it has been in other areas of the library profession during the past two or three decades. In fact, the results of our investigation relating to the administrative status of women in health science libraries coincided closely with those of surveys made of other segments of the library profession, e.g., public libraries and academic libraries.

Our survey sample included only the largest biomedical libraries and medical school libraries in the United States. The status of women in small medical libraries or in hospital libraries is not reflected in our statistics, and a survey of this part of the health science librarian population would complement the present study.

We anticipate conducting a follow-up study of these biomedical libraries after a lapse of five years, in 1977, to determine if meaningful changes in the status of women in medical library administration occur during a period of aroused social consciousness regarding the equal rights of women in the labor market. This study was not intended to be an in-depth national survey on the status of women in biomed-

ical librarianship, and we limited our scope specifically to administrative positions. From the results of our investigation, the need for such a study encompassing the status of women in all areas of the health science library profession is evident.

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