

# The Contemporary Medical Society Library

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## ABSTRACT

Four hundred sixty-eight medical societies in the United States were surveyed to determine those which sponsor libraries. Seventy-eight libraries were identified, of which eighteen are "marginal" and nine are jointly supported by a medical school and a society, leaving fifty-one relatively "substantial" libraries whose major support is through society membership. Characteristics measured include size of collection, types of media, staff, budget, services, and sources of support. Questions are raised concerning the role of the medical library as one institution which participates in the continuing education of the physician.

## THE PROBLEM

**A**N association or a society is an organization of persons for a particular purpose or program, based upon needs of the group (1, 2). A program is the development of planned action to meet these needs. A medical society-sponsored library reflects a *need* among the members for some mechanism which will facilitate medical communication and has a *formal program* organized and supported by members to meet this need.

A complete census of medical society-sponsored libraries in the United States has never heretofore been conducted. Only regional studies, histories of large societies, and selected data have been previously available (3, 4). The purposes of this investigation were to identify those medical societies which sponsor libraries and to measure some of the characteristics of their libraries in order that their role in medical communication may be better understood.

## POPULATION SURVEYED

In this investigation, a "medical society" is defined as an organization of physicians. A list of 468 such societies was derived from three sources: records of the American Medical Association; *Health Organizations of the United States and Canada*, compiled by C. S. Wasserman (5); and the *Directory of the Medical Library Association* (6). The societies,

TABLE I  
POPULATION SURVEYED

Type of Society	Societies Searched in 4 Library Di- rectories		Libraries
National Medical Societies . . . . .	187		1
	Questionnaires		
	Sent	Returned	
American Medical Association:			
State societies . . . . .	54	54	10
County societies . . . . .	219	161	59
Independent local societies . . . . .	8	8	8
Total questionnaires . . . . .	281	223	
Total surveyed	468		78

which represent a wide range of purpose, size, life-span, and other characteristics, were then assigned to one of three classes of sponsorship: American Medical Association constituent or component society, national medical society, or independent local society. The three classes of societies were then surveyed to identify those which sponsor libraries (see Table I).

*American Medical Association Constituent or Component Society*

A nationwide survey of county medical societies, conducted by the Association in 1963, indicated that there are 1,929 county medical societies in the United States (7). This survey also indicated that 219 county societies maintained "book collections" of some kind. In this investigation, questionnaires were sent to these 219 county societies and also to the 54 state (constituent) societies of the Association.

*National Medical Societies*

The national medical societies are a heterogeneous group from the viewpoint of purpose; their basis of organization represented such diverse variables as specialty (e.g., American Psychiatric Association), sex (e.g., American Medical Women's Association), age group or status (e.g., Student American Medical Association), and hobby or special interest (e.g., American Physician's Art Association).

The 187 national medical societies selected for this study were not sent

questionnaires, but were searched in four library directories: American Library Association *Directory*, Medical Library Association *Directory*, National Science Foundation *Directory of Information Centers*, and Special Libraries Association *Directory of Biological Sciences Division*. This search yielded four libraries which, with the exception of the American Medical Association, were omitted from this study for the following reasons:

- (1) American Academy of General Practice Library—supervises a number of nonlibrary functions such as typing pool and reception desk. The collection itself is small: “500 packets” of nonbook materials.
- (2) American College of Surgeons Library—recently disbanded its clinical collection and is presently redefining its program.
- (3) Radiological Society of North America Library—its functions are subordinated to the publications program; head of the library is an editorial assistant of the Society.

#### *Independent Local Societies*

Eight independent local societies were sent questionnaires; replies were received from each with indications that libraries sponsored by this class of society maintain strong programs.

Data on six nonresponding state societies were obtained from the American Medical Association Field Service Division. Second questionnaires and/or telephone calls were directed to all nonresponding county societies with over 200 members until there was complete coverage of this group. The result is a census which provides almost complete coverage of libraries sponsored by medical societies in the United States.

Questionnaire returns indicated a wide range of opinion with regard to the definition of a medical society library. A library was interpreted by some as any small office collection, often with no financial support or “supported by fines.” For this study, a cut-off was established at a minimum of 120 bound volumes or the equivalent in unbound journals and of some form of budget and service to membership. A low cut-off was selected to identify “marginal” libraries in order that more may be learned of their operations. According to these criteria, there are seventy-eight medical society-sponsored libraries.

#### GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Medical society-sponsored libraries are distributed unevenly throughout the country (see Figure 1 and Table II). Libraries are clustered in

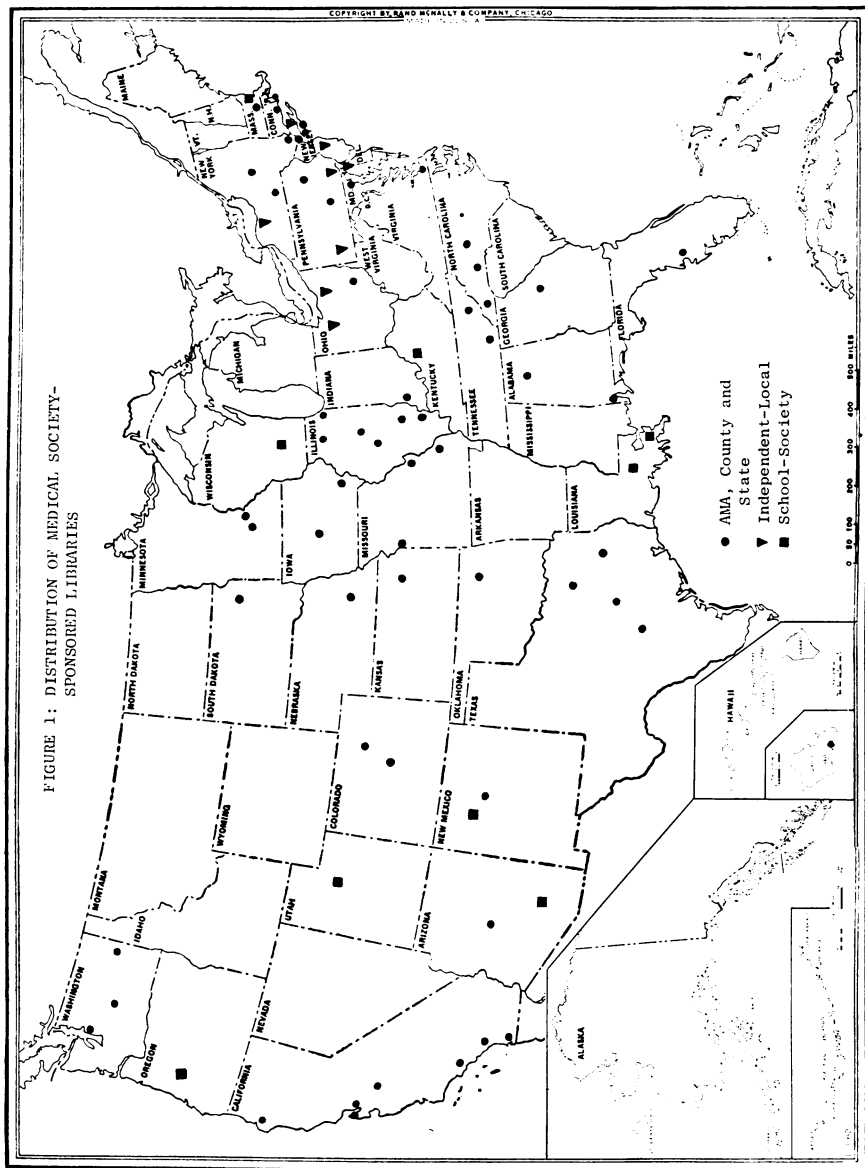


FIGURE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF MEDICAL SOCIETY-SPONSORED LIBRARIES

FIGURE 1

TABLE II

## MEDICAL SOCIETY-SPONSORED LIBRARIES BY STATE IN RANK-ORDER DISTRIBUTION\*

No. of Libraries	States
8	New York
7	California
6	Illinois
4	Pennsylvania, Texas
3	Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Washington
2	Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, Tennessee
1	Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, Wisconsin
0	Alaska, Arkansas, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Carolina, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming

\* Includes libraries supported jointly by societies and medical schools.

selected states, while fourteen states support no medical society library. New York and California have the greatest density of medical libraries.

## SPONSORSHIP AND SUPPORT

Data indicate that the medical society library is largely of local jurisdiction. Of the seventy-eight society-supported libraries in this study, 59 (76 percent) are supported in whole or in part by county medical societies, ten (12 percent) are supported in whole or in part by state societies, and eight (10 percent) are supported by independent local societies. Nine libraries are supported jointly by a society and a medical school. The American Medical Association Library is the only library in this study which is sponsored by a national medical organization.

*County Medical Society Libraries*

The county medical libraries, especially in smaller communities, are often supported jointly by a society and a local hospital. Varied combinations of arrangements were found, such as payment of fee by society or hospital, housing in hospital, joint staffing, common membership, and so on. Insufficient data exist to enable statistical analysis of type of sponsorship.

At least three large county society libraries are supported by and serve members of state medical societies: Los Angeles County Medical Society Library, Denver Medical Society Library, and the Medical Society of the County of Kings and Academy of Medicine of Brooklyn Library. Five known county society libraries have made arrangements with medical

schools to provide services for their members: Jefferson County Society—University of Louisville, Kentucky; Bernalillo County Medical Society—University of New Mexico; Orleans Parish Medical Society—Tulane University, New Orleans; Pima County Medical Society—University of Arizona; and East Baton Rouge County Medical Society—Louisiana State University. A sixth library, that of the Medical Society of the County of Kings, is presently negotiating a cooperative arrangement with the Downstate Medical Center of the State University of New York.

#### *State Medical Society Libraries*

Of the ten state society-sponsored libraries, six are supported solely by membership dues. Four known state libraries are supported jointly by both society and medical school: Massachusetts Medical Society—Harvard Medical School; Oregon State Medical Society—University of Oregon; Utah State Medical Society—University of Utah; and Wisconsin Medical Society—University of Wisconsin.

#### *Independent Local Society Libraries*

The independent local societies in this study have no formal relationships with the constituent units of the American Medical Association in whose area they are situated. These societies or "academies," however, draw their membership from the local AMA society. Often, both societies are housed in the same building; the Librarian of the Delaware Academy of Medicine, for example, is also secretary of the county medical society. These societies are general in nature; that is, they are not confined to one medical specialty. A depth study of local conditions may yield information on the relationships of the societies; for example, some of the academies predate the county society. Why they have remained separate entities is an interesting question. In general, this group of libraries is well supported.

### THE COLLECTIONS

With a few exceptions, the medical society-sponsored library is small by any standard of comparison with the medical school library. Of the medical society libraries in the survey (excluding those sponsored jointly by a school and a society), 30.8 percent maintain collections of less than 1,000 bound volumes, 50 percent have less than 7,500, and 77 percent have less than 28,000. Of these same libraries, 25 percent receive less than 25 subscriptions to current periodicals, 50 percent receive less than 126 subscriptions, and 77 percent receive less than 300 subscriptions (see Table III).

By comparison, the median number of bound volumes for medical

TABLE III  
 SIZE OF BOOK COLLECTION IN RELATION TO CURRENT JOURNAL COLLECTION

Bound Volumes	Journal Subscriptions										Total	
	0-25	26-50	51-75	76-100	101-200	201-300	301-500	501-700	701-900	901-2,000		2,000+
0-500.....	14	3	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	19
501-1,000.....	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
1,001-5,000.....	2	3	2	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	9
5,001-10,000.....	—	—	2	—	6	—	1	—	—	—	—	9
10,001-20,000.....	—	—	—	—	4	4	2	—	—	—	—	10
20,001-30,000.....	—	1	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	4
30,001-50,000.....	—	—	—	1	—	4	1	2	1	—	1	10
50,001-75,000.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0
75,001-100,000.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	1	—	3
100,001-200,000.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0
200,001-350,000.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3
Total .....	17	8	4	3	12	10	6	2	2	1	4	69

Figures represent number of libraries. For example, 14 libraries have collections of from 0 to 500 bound volumes and of from 0 to 25 journal subscriptions. This tabulation does not include libraries sponsored by both schools and societies.

school libraries is 54,779 and the median number of subscriptions is 992 (8). This variation may reflect, among other factors, a difference in user requirements of the two types of libraries; however, such analysis is outside the scope of the present study. On the other hand, there is great variation in size among the society-sponsored libraries, themselves. Chaves County Medical Society Library has 150 bound volumes and no subscriptions, while the New York Academy of Medicine Library has over 346,000 bound volumes and 3,850 journal subscriptions.

#### SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF MEDICAL SOCIETY LIBRARIES

All medical society libraries indicated that they served their entire membership regardless of hospital affiliations, type of practice, and specialization. The objective is an ambitious one, and historically, the medical society library has been active in fulfilling it. Without commenting on the enormous increase in output of medical literature today, the growth of medical library resources, or changes in user requirements, we will now provide present-day data on the characteristics of these libraries.

We have, so far, identified seventy-eight general-purpose medical society libraries and their sponsoring agencies. For intensive study of this

group, we shall further eliminate two classes of libraries: "marginal libraries" and libraries jointly supported by a school and a society.

There are eighteen "marginal" libraries which maintain collections of from 0 to 500 bound volumes and/or from 0 to 50 journal subscriptions. Financial support of this group ranges from no guaranteed budget (donations) to under \$1,000 annually. Only seven libraries indicated some form of paid or voluntary part-time clerical assistance. We have merely identified this group of libraries and, because their status and contribution are not well established, will eliminate them from further consideration in this study.

The joint society-school supported library falls in a category by itself, inasmuch as a different set of purposes, support, and sponsorship is operating. Inclusion of this group would therefore bias this study, as they would introduce a number of uncontrolled variables.

After elimination of these groups, there is left a population of fifty-one relatively substantial medical society-sponsored libraries which serve a general physician population within a defined geographic area (see Table IV). Data on this group of libraries have been analyzed. Briefly, the findings are as follows:

#### *Types of Media*

The book and the journal are still the chief media for communication of medical information. Fifty of the fifty-one libraries maintain both book and journal collections. Pennsylvania State Medical Library provides a research and loan service on the basis of a journal collection alone. Films, pamphlets, tapes, and pictures are maintained by less than 10 percent of the libraries.

#### *Subject Areas*

All libraries, with the exception of California State Medical Association, maintain a collection of materials in clinical medicine. CMA Library is a special one which confines its collection to the sociology and economics of medicine. Fifty-one percent of the libraries maintain a historical collection, general or of local interest. It is interesting to note that only 20 percent of the libraries support collections in the social, legal, and economic aspects of medicine, even though these subject areas are central to the operations of most medical societies. Forty percent of the libraries maintain archives, and 28 percent have some kind of museum collection.

#### *Groups Served*

All society libraries indicated that they serve their entire membership, and some provide services to physicians beyond the society boundaries.



TABLE IV  
MEDICAL SOCIETY-SPONSORED LIBRARIES: SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Library	Bound volumes	Journal Collection subscr. begins	Other media	Type of collection	Staff		Budget	Groups served	Type of service	Support
					Prof.	Cler.				
I. NATIONAL MEDICAL SOCIETY LIBRARIES										
1. American Med. Assn. Chicago, Illinois	30,000†	2200	Microfilm Artifacts Pamphlets AMA Archive Pictures Tapes	History Biography Legal med. Archive Clinical med. Socioeconomics Museum	12	11	\$ 16,500 Bk-Jrnl. 40,000 gifts, ex- changes 130,000 Sal.	Members AMA staff Librarians	Lit. search Editing Indexing Abstracting Writing Photocopy Interlibrary Scanning- reporting Book reviews	Members
II. INDEPENDENT LOCAL MEDICAL SOCIETY LIBRARIES										
1. Delaware Acad. of Medicine Wilmington, Delaware	10,000	200	-----*	Clinical med.	2	1	\$ 3,500 Bk-Jrnl. -----	Members	Lit. search Photocopy Interlibrary	Lay contrib.
2. Acad. of Med., New Jersey Bloomfield, New Jersey	40,000	550	---	Local history Clinical med.	1 3/4	1	5,000 Bk-Jrnl. 6,500 Sal.	Medical, dental, Students	Lit. search	Other organiz. donations
3. New York Acad. of Med. New York, N.Y.	346,000	3850	1847	Local history Biography Legal med. Archive Clinical med. Socioeconomics Museum	17	11	60,000 Bk-Jrnl. 308,800 Sal.	All groups: public, students	Lit. search Photocopy Interlibrary	Members
4. Rochester Acad. of Medicine Rochester, N.Y.	17,000	150	1850	Local history Biography Archive Museum	1	1	\$ 2,000 Bk-Jrnl. -----	Members and County Society	Lit. search	Members
5. Cleveland Med. Library Cleveland, Ohio	100,000	1003	---	Local history Archive Clinical med. Socioeconomics	4	4	25,000 Bk-Jrnl. 50,000 Sal.	Medical and paramedical community of Cleveland	Lit. search Photocopy Interlibrary	Members Endowments
6. Toledo Med. Library Assn. Toledo, Ohio	10,000	200	---	Clinical med.	1	1	4,000 Bk-Jrnl. 8,000 Sal.	Medical and Students	Lit. search Interlibrary	Members Grants

7. Coll. of Physicians of Phila., Penn.	223,656	2642	1787	321,466 theses, reports, pamphlets and reprints	Local history Biography Legal med. Archive Clinical med. Socioeconomics Museum	7	13	\$ 29,474 Bk-Jrnl. 97,269 Sal. ---	Medical and paramedical personnel in Delaware Valley area and State of Pennsylvania	Lit. search Editing Indexing Abstracting Translations Book review Photocopy Interlibrary Scanning - reporting service	Members, Endowments Gifts	
8. Pittsburgh Acad. of Med. Pittsburgh, Penn.	24,000	188	1900	---	Medicine and surgery	1	1	16,000 Bk-Jrnl. 5,000 Sal.	Physicians Medical students Lawyers	Lit. search Interlibrary	Members	
III. AMA STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY LIBRARIES												
1. Hawaii Med. Library Honolulu, Hawaii	12,590	348	1913	---	Local history Clinical med.	1	3	\$ 4,225 Bk-Jrnl. 17,068 Sal.	Physicians in state	Lit. search	Members Donations	
2. Med. Chirurgical Faculty Baltimore, Maryland	87,000	431	1830	---	Local history Biography Archive Clinical med. Socioeconomics	1	2 p.t.	8,700 Bk-Jrnl. 18,500 Sal.	Members Visiting physicians Others - reference only	Lit. search Book reviews Photocopy Interlibrary	Members Endowment	
3. Rhode Island Med. Soc. Providence, R. I.	44,473	479	1879	Portraits Society records	Local history Biography Legal medicine Archive Clinical med. Socioeconomics Instruments Writings by and about physicians	2	---	---	Physicians Allied profess. Students Public Veterinarians Dentists Others on permission	Lit. search Editing Indexing Book reviews Exhibits Photocopy Interlibrary	Members Investments	
4. Texas Med. Soc. Austin, Texas	36,000	820	1920	Films and tapes	Local history Biography Archive Clinical med.	2	1 2 p.t.	12,000 Bk-Jrnl. ---	Members Am. College of Surgeons	Lit. search Book reviews Photocopy Interlibrary	Members	
5. Pennsylvania Med. Soc. Harrisburg, Penn.	---	100	Past 5 years	Reprints Tear sheets	Clinical med.	---	2	500 Bk-Jrnl. 9,000 Sal.	Physicians Nurses Students Lay public	Lit. search	Members	

TABLE IV—Continued

Library	Bound volumes	Journal subscr.	Collection begins	Other media	Type of collection	Staff Prof.	Cler.	Budget	Groups served	Type of service	Support
6. California Med. Assn. San Francisco, Calif.	100	225	1960	---	Socioeconomics	1	1	---	Members Allied assoc. in state CMA Bur. of Research and Planning Other committees	Photocopy Interlibrary Lit. search	Members
IV. AMA COUNTY SOCIETY LIBRARIES											
1. Mobile Co. Med. Soc. Mobile, Alabama	1,300	75	---	---	Clinical med.	1	0*	\$ 2,500 Bk-Jrnl. 4,800 Visiting Staff Sal.	Members House staff	---	Members
2. Maricopa Co. Med. Soc. 2025 N. Central Ave. Phoenix, Arizona	15,600	275	---	---	Local history Biography Archives Clinical med. Surgical instruments	2	1 p.t.	3,000 Bk-Jrnl. 14,000 Sal.	Members Hospital staff Graduate students Local Bar Assn. Community	Editing Photocopy Lit. search	Members
3. Los Angeles Co. Med. Soc. Los Angeles, Calif.	92,000	850	1870	---	Local history Archive Clinical med. Osleriana Med. history	6	8	21,000 Bk-Jrnl. 68,000 Sal.	Members Lawyers Pharmacists California State Bibliographies Interlibrary	Editing Lit. search Translation Bibliographies Interlibrary	Members and Calif. State Med. Soc.
4. Alameda Contra Costa Med. Soc. Oakland, Calif.	16,000+	300	1915	---	Local history Clinical med.	2	1½	4,000 Bk-Jrnl. 22,000 Sal.	Members Qualified scientific workers	Lit. search Photocopy Interlibrary	Members
5. Stanislaus Co. Med. Soc. Modesto, Calif.	15,000+	100	1957	---	Clinical med.	1	0	2,250 Bk-Jrnl. 3,500 Sal.	Members	Photocopy	Members and Hospital
6. Santa Barbara Co. Med. Soc. Santa Barbara, Calif.	6,500	200	---	---	Local history Biography Archive Clinical med. Socioeconomics Museum	1	4 p.t.	1,500 Bk-Jrnl. 7,000 Sal.	Members Hospital Nursing college Laymen with permit Technicians	Lit. search Editing Translation Indexing Abstracting Book reviews	Members

7. San Diego Co. Med. Soc. San Diego, Calif.	14,000	125	1915	---	Biography Medicine	1	2	\$ 2,900 Bk-jrnl. 12,600 Sal.	Members Dentists Attorneys Students	Lit. search Book reviews Photocopy Interlibrary	Members
8. Denver Med. Soc. Denver, Colo.	30,722	620	1893	---	Med. history Biography Archive Clinical med. Dentists Veterinarians Evans collect. Med. classics	1	0	6,200 Bk-jrnl. 13,755 Sal.	Students Members Veterinarians Nurses Dentists Paramed. groups Attorneys	Lit. search Photocopy Interlibrary Bibliographies	Denver Med. Soc. Colorado Med. Soc. Colorado Dental Soc.
9. Wild Co. Med. Soc. Greely, Colo.	1,350	55	1928	---	Clinical med.	1	0	2,000 Bk-jrnl. ---	Physicians and ancillary groups	Interlibrary	Members and Med. Staff Found.
10. Hartford Co. Med. Soc. Hartford, Conn.	27,043	170	---	Manuscripts	Local history Clinical med.	1	2	3,800 Bk-jrnl. 4,600 Sal.	Community	Lit. search Interlibrary	Members
11. Hillsborough Co. Med. Assn. Tampa, Florida	758	39	varies	---	Clinical med.	1	0	1,000 Bk-jrnl. ---	Members Hospital staff Incarns, Residents	Lit. search Photocopy Interlibrary	Members and hospital
12. Winnebago Co. Med. Soc. Rockford, Ill.	4,900	50	1930	---	Archive Clinical med. Rate med. books	1	1	1,000 Bk-jrnl. 3,900 Sal.	Members	Interlibrary Photocopy Editing Lit. search	Members
13. Muscatine Co. Med. Soc. Muscatine, Iowa	2,000	50	1954	---	Clinical med. Socioeconomics	0	0	200 Bk-jrnl. ---	Members	Photocopy Lit. search	Members
14. Shawnee Co. Med. Soc. Topeka, Kansas	6,371	195	1889	---	Archive Clin. medicine	1	Volun- teer	1,500 Bk-jrnl. 5,000 Sal.	Physicians Paramed. groups Students	Lit. search Interlibrary	Members and hospital
15. Worcester Co. Med. Library Worcester, Mass.	30,000	50	1798	---	Medical history Biography Archive Begin medical museum Clinical med.	1	1	900 Bk-jrnl. ---	Members Public	Interlibrary Lit. search	Members

TABLE IV—Continued

Library	Bound volumes	Journal subscr.	Collection begins	Other media	Type of collection	Staff	Budget	Groups served	Type of service	Support
16. Hennepin Co. Med. Soc. Minneapolis, Minn.	50,000 (est.)	500	1823	Pamphlets	Clinical med.	1 Prof. 1 Cler. 2 p.t.	\$ 4,000 Bk-jrnl. —	Physicians Residents Interns	Lit. search Editing Indexing	Members
17. Ramsey Co. Med. Soc. St. Paul, Minn.	32,271	253	1897	---	Local history Museum and Med. Americana Clinical med.	1 1	3,300 Bk-jrnl. 8,700 Sal.	Members Doctors	Bibliographies Interlibrary Limited lit. search	Members
18. St. Louis Co. Med. Soc. St. Louis, Mo.	46,282	267	1899	---	Local history Biography Archive Clinical med. Museum Paracelsiana	1 1	3,000 Bk-jrnl. 12,000 Sal.	Members	Lit. search Book reviews Bibliographies	Endowment
19. Jackson Co. Med. Soc. Kansas City, Mo.	31,780	300	1915	Pamphlets (drug, pharmac.)	Local history Clinical med. Museum	2 2 1 p.t.	2,800 Bk-jrnl. 13,870 Sal.	Members Interns Residents Student nurses Paramed. groups	Lit. search Bibliography Book ordering	Members
20. Hall Co. Med. Soc. Grand Island, Neb.	1,108	15	---	---	Clinical med.	--- 1	--- Bk-jrnl. Volunteer Sal.	Hospital medical staff	Bibliographies Interlibrary	Hospital staff
21. Med. Soc. Co. Queens Forest Hills, N.Y.	23,500	250	1934	---	Clinical med.	2 ---	3,300 Bk-jrnl. ---	Members Students Individuals & organizations in Queens	Lit. search Photocopy Interlibrary	Members
22. Broome Co. Med. Soc. Binghamton, N.Y.	8,000	126	1940	---	Local history Biography Museum	1 ---	---	Members Hospital staff	Lit. search Interlibrary	Members Hospital
23. Nassau Co. Med. Garden City, N.Y.	3,000	400	---	---	Clinical med.	1 ---	10,000 Bk-jrnl. 15,000 Sal.	Physicians Paramedical groups Public	Lit. search	Members
24. Med. Soc. Co. Kings Brooklyn, N.Y.	210,000	2300	1846	---	Local history Biography Archive Clinical med.	3 7	31,000 Bk-jrnl.	Physicians- N.Y. State Local Dentists	Lit. search Book reviews Photocopy Interlibrary	Members State society

25. Westchester Acad. Med. Purchase, N.Y.	8,500	400	1938	---	Archive Clinical med.	1	1½	\$ 5,500 Bk-Jrnl. 20,000 Sal.	Members Public	Lit. search Photocopy Book reviews Interlibrary	Members
26. Central N.Y. Acad. Med. Utica, N.Y.	1,500	---	1920	---	Clinical med.	1	---	Donated	Members College and nursing students	---	Members
27. Rowan-Davie Co. Med. Soc. Salisbury, N. C.	1,200	47	1940's	Tape record- ings Audio-digest	Biography Legal med. Archive Clinical med.	1	p.t.	365 Bk-Jrnl. 360 Sal.	Medically trained persons	Lit. search Photocopy Interlibrary	Members
28. Mecklenburg Co. Charlotte, N.C.	12,000	325	1909	---	Clinical med.	1	2	3,000 Bk-Jrnl. 8,600 Sal.	Physicians. Nurses Dentists Students Other med. personnel	Lit. search Bibliographies Photocopy Interlibrary Handle referrals, employment	Members
29. Tulsa Co. Med. Soc. Tulsa, Okla.	15,000	150	1900	Reprints Films Bibliographies	Local history Biography Legal med. Socioeconomics Museum Clinical med.	1	1	3,000 Bk-Jrnl. 12,000 Sal.	Physicians	Photocopy Lit. search	Members Grants
30. Luzerne Co. Med. Soc. Wilkes-Barre, Pa.	31,185	100	1600's	Rare books Instruments	Local history Biography Legal med. Archive Clinical med.	---	1	1,000 Bk-Jrnl. 1,607 Sal.	Members 4 local colleges	Lit. search Reference: 6th grade postgrad. med. Photocopy Interlibrary	Endowment
31. Chattanooga-Hamilton Co. Med. Soc. Chattanooga, Tenn.	9,018	133	1772	Archive Clippings Reprints Tapes	Biography Archive Clinical med. Basic sciences	1	1	2,500 Bk-Jrnl. 7,560 Sal.	Physicians Hospital Students Attorneys	Lit. search Indexing Abstracting Photocopy Interlibrary	Members
32. Knoxville Academy of Medicine Knoxville, Tenn.	9,000	75	---	---	Local history Archive Museum Med. instruments Clinical med.	1	---	1,150 Bk-Jrnl. 4,800 Sal.	Physicians Lawyers Nurses Students	Lit. search Bibliographies	Members

TABLE IV—Continued

Library	Bound volumes	Journal subscr.	Collection begins	Other media	Type of collection	Staff Prof.	Cler.	Budget	Groups served	Type of service	Support
33. Bexar Co. Med. Lib. San Antonio, Texas	11,000	264	1827	---	Local history Biography Clinical med. History med. Med. instruments <sup>5</sup> Rare books	1	---	\$ 1,500 Bk-Jrnl. 4,800 Sal.	Medical schools Public Membership	Lit. search Interlibrary	Members
34. Norfolk Co. Med. Soc. Norfolk, Virginia	6,400	58	1735	---	Clinical med.	1	---	---	Physicians Hospitals Students	Interlibrary	Members
35. King Co. Med. Soc. Seattle, Wash.	18,512	300	---	---	Clinical med.	1	1½	2,200 Bk-Jrnl. 13,200 Sal.	Physicians	Lit. search	Members Northwest Med.
36. Spokane Medical Library Spokane, Wash.	15,000	150	1917	---	Local history Biography Archive Legal med. Clinical med.	1	p.t.	1,700 Bk-Jrnl. 6,000 Sal.	Physicians Nurses	Lit. search	Members

\* --- indicates data not given.

Statistics are not available on the amount of use and the nature of inquiries. Almost a half, 48 percent, allow allied health groups to use their facilities. Medical students and lay persons are permitted access to approximately 30 percent of the libraries.

*Types of Services*

Eighty-six percent of the libraries indicated that they conduct literature searches; eight smaller libraries (1,200–3,000 bound volumes) did not respond to this question. Sixty-three percent of the libraries provide interlibrary loan services, and 49 percent provide photocopy services. Other activities are editing, abstracting, indexing, translating, and book reviewing.

*Staff and Salaries*

Comparisons of the number of professional personnel are meaningful only in relation to size of collection, type of program, and population served. Medical society-sponsored libraries exhibit vast variations in relation to each of these variables. The American Medical Association Library, for example, maintains a staff which would be disproportionately large for the size of its collection if it provided only the typical services of a medical society library. However, it maintains a large indexing, abstracting, and editing program, as well as special services to a staff of over 900 persons. Similarly, salary is dependent upon a number of variables, and measures of range or central tendency are comparable only in a relatively homogeneous group. Size of staff and salaries are therefore indicated only in the tabulation for individual libraries.

*Book and Journal Budget*

Of the forty-three libraries (84 percent) which responded to this category, 25 percent have book and journal budgets under \$1,500. The median is \$3,000, and the 75th percentile is \$5,600. Six libraries (13 percent) exceed the median figure of \$19,000 for medical school libraries:

New York Academy of Medicine . . . . .	\$60,000
American Medical Association . . . . .	56,500
Medical Society of the County of Kings and Academy of Medicine of Brooklyn . . . . .	31,000
College of Physicians of Philadelphia . . . . .	29,474
Cleveland Medical Library . . . . .	25,000
Los Angeles County Medical Association . . . . .	21,000

SUMMARY

A survey of 468 medical societies in the United States (as defined in this study) has been conducted to identify those which sponsor medical



libraries. The survey yielded a total of seventy-eight medical society-sponsored libraries, which included eighteen "marginal" libraries and nine joint school-society libraries, leaving a population of fifty-one relatively "substantial" libraries whose major support is through the society membership.

Data clearly indicated similarity of purpose, but great variation with regard to other characteristics measured. Of the "substantial" group, all indicated that they provide for information needs of their entire membership, and with the exception of one library all maintain collections in the area of clinical medicine. Yet even within this group of larger libraries, book and journal budgets range from \$200 to \$60,000; journal subscriptions range from 15 through 3,850 titles; and size of book collection ranges from under 50 to 346,000 volumes.

An examination of the data raises a large number of questions. Very little is really known about the information needs of the 270,000 physicians in the United States and the role of published information in satisfying these needs. A question may be raised, for example, on the meaning of the finding that 50 percent of medical society libraries receive under 126 subscriptions and 75 percent receive under 300 subscriptions. Does this mean that there can be identified a small, manageable group of publications that will satisfy the information needs of most practicing physicians? If this hypothesis is proved valid, then what are the characteristics of these publications and what basic requirements do they satisfy? Or do the data point to other variables which are yet to be isolated?

The information and skills required by a physician in his professional activities are acquired, in large part, through a lengthy period of formal education, which may last from twenty-one to twenty-six years. After this training, he participates in a world in which new information is being generated at a rapid rate. On the assumption that information is required by the physician as a tool in decision-making (9), what are his needs in terms of access time, depth or specificity, and form of product? For example, are references or copies of articles usually satisfactory or does the concept of an "information center" best fill his needs by not only identifying publications but selecting, evaluating, and summarizing the data (10, 11)? What should be the role of the medical library as one institution which participates in the continuing education of the physician?

The medical society-sponsored library in this study is seen as a solution conceived by the society to meet the information needs of its members. This study is a first step in identification and in provision of an overview. Findings have been incorporated into a larger and continuing study by the National Library of Medicine to derive a clearer picture of

the total medical library complex of today. It is obvious that many questions must be answered before assumptions can be made concerning the best social arrangements for communication of information to the medical profession.

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