

Evidence Search Service

Results of your search

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Sources searched: Core Content, Duck Duck Go, Google and Google Scholar.

Time taken: 14 hours

Date Range: 2018 preferred, some older material included if no more recent examples could be found

Other Limits: Anglophone and European evidence preferred

Search terms and notes: See below

Search requested by:	
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Date(s) search carried out:	01/06/23 – 05/06/23

Attached/enclosed are the results of your recent evidence search request. This form provides an outline of the search which was performed on your behalf. The results contained within are a list of signposts and search *results* offering a snap shot of information based on the subject areas you specified.

Please credit Knowledge Services in any final report or equivalent publication that an information gathering search was carried out in order to assess the current state of evidence/resources in this area. We may also come back to you for some feedback/evaluation on this search.

Many thanks

Quick Links:

[Systematic and Meta Reviews](#)

[Evaluations](#)

[Proposals](#)

[Training](#)

[Blogs and other commentary](#)

Hierarchy of Evidence

Results are provided in order in which they should be weighted starting with systematic reviews as the most trustworthy and useful and terminating at blogs which should be treated as opinion pieces only.

Commentary

As always proposals for studies and interventions outweigh evaluations.

The majority of studies I found focussed on training public library staff to use online resources (chiefly Medline/PubMed and often run by the American National Library of Medicine (NLM)) on behalf of their patrons; following that were descriptions of interventions to measure or increase health literacy in libraries and lastly there were studies discussing the inherent qualities of libraries to increase health and wellbeing – that is focussing on the library as a place of leisure and relaxation as well as a place to gain information and knowledge. Part of that is the library as a place to access telemedicine.

Studies that were directly and only about the COVID-19 pandemic were ignored. As was the bibliotherapy (Books on Prescription, Reading Well and other similar interventions), while this is a good example of partnership working of health and library settings it is passive in nature.

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The resources presented here are not exhaustive. I have included examples of all types of studies I found but am able to share more on request.

There seems to be a consensus that the library as a place is a useful site for health interventions due to it being neutral and trusted. Confidence and knowledge from library staff is often flagged up as a limiting factor.

Limitations

This search was “quick and dirty” to meet a deadline.

If I had more time I could have followed up on unfamiliar phrases such as “consumer health” and followed up on references.

It is provided “as if” and with no claims to be exhaustive or systematic.

Systematic and Meta Reviews:

I couldn't find any systematic reviews on this topic however there were a couple of literature reviews which may be helpful.

Amanda J. Wilson et al

Libraries advancing health equity:a literature review

2022

<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/RSR-09-2022-0037/full/pdf?title=libraries-advancing-health-equitya-literature-review>

Progress toward health equity is necessary to reduce health disparities, and health literacy is key to achieving this goal. Because libraries provide access to knowledge and insights about their communities, they are effective partners in advancing health equity and implementing programs to reduce health disparities. A literature review on library programs and activities that focus on promoting health equity was conducted.

Evgenia Vassilakaki and Valentini Moniarou-Papaconstantinou

Librarians' support in improving health literacy: A systematic literature review

2022

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/360399822_Librarians'_support_in_improving_health_literacy_A_systematic_literature_review

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Main findings showcase that libraries as secure and trusted places can play a key role in developing and promoting health literacy to different groups; new job titles emerge for librarians (consumer health librarian, health information services librarians, health literacy librarian); whereas collaboration is a key element for developing and offering health literacy training programs to diverse group of users as well as the public.

Mary L. Klem

Librarians and health literacy: A scoping review

2019

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0740818819300337#preview-section-abstract>

Given their interest in and involvement with promotion of health information, librarians are well poised to add to the knowledge base on health literacy, and recent reviews have highlighted librarians' involvement in a variety of health literacy initiatives, including training programs, research studies, and advocacy projects.

Evaluations:

The idea of health-hubs or co-locating of services is discussed. From the UK the Scottish evidence is by far the strongest and most numerous some of which is also quite old. There is also some evidence of productive partnerships between public and academic (medical?) libraries, mostly from the US.

Health Literacy Programs in Public Libraries [US]

n.d

Case studies.

<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/health-literacy/2/community/public-libraries>

Amy Hammock et al

Understanding how suburban public librarians respond to the health and social needs of communities

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2023

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0740818822000809>

Library staff described responding to patrons' intersecting health and social needs despite not having had formal training to do so. Engaging social workers, public health educators, and health care professionals in the public library space may be one way for librarians to respond to the health and social needs of patrons using evidence-based tools and best practices.

Pamela B DeGuzman

Extending health care access via telemedicine in public libraries.

2023

<https://web.s.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=f42c274f-2133-4f32-917d-c9e0e9c0782a%40redis&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWF0aGVucyZzaXRIPWVob3N0LWxpdmU%3d#AN=36538416&db=cmedm>

Given the importance of expanding access sites for telemedicine, NPs should consider partnering with libraries in their catchment areas where broadband access is sparse and patients must travel long distances to care.

Abe Oudshoorn et al

Supporting Mental Health in a Public Library Context: A Mixed Methods Brief Evaluation

2022

<https://web.s.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=0b114292-56cd-4a04-a4fa-4dfbf3efa8b7%40redis&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWF0aGVucyZzaXRIPWVob3N0LWxpdmU%3d#AN=160887186&db=cin20>

An ongoing consideration of community mental health services is how to optimize outreach to best support a wellness approach. Public libraries provide a potential site for mental health services due to use by a diverse range of patrons. The purpose of this study was to explore a mental health wellness hub situated in a core urban library. Following a mixed methods approach, the study explores: (1) the desirability of this form of co-location; (2) the impact on library staff; and (3) how this hub integrated, or not, with the broader mental health system. Ultimately, findings demonstrated a significantly positive experience by patrons, mental health hub staff, and library staff.

Stephanie M Swanberg et al

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A health education outreach partnership between an academic medical library and public library: lessons learned before and during a pandemic.

2022

<https://web.s.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=d001474f-4c11-4b47-8ee9-e03bc8560ac8%40redis&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWF0aGVucyZzaXRIPWVob3N0LWxpdmU%3d#AN=35440901&db=cmedm>

Melinda Hodges

Public Libraries as Community Health Partners

2022

<https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=cpmar>

This article researches the basic tenets of public health and identifies areas that public libraries could participate in productively. This article also reviews literature about the potential of public libraries as health partners, as well as what is already being accomplished from the perspective of both library/information sciences and public health studies.

Sara Valadi-khorram et al

Evaluating the quality of health information services in public libraries: an experience from Iran

2021

<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/LM-01-2020-0001/full/html?skipTracking=true>

The results of this research can help managers and librarians of public libraries in measuring the quality of health information services and improving the quality of services provided by libraries. Besides, they can take a more accurate planning and pathologic approach, to eliminate the gap between minimum and desired expectations of users and libraries' real services.

Nancy Kranich

Health Literacy in Diverse Communities: The Strength of Weak Ties—An Exploration between Academic Researchers and Public Libraries in Central New Jersey

2021

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2557065201?accountid=26452>

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Between 2015 and 2018, Rutgers University librarians, scholars, and students worked with public librarians in three communities adjoining their flagship campus in New Brunswick, New Jersey, to investigate underlying conditions that shape how their different populations approach health and wellness.

Scottish Library and Information Council

HEALTH ON THE SHELF: Health and Wellbeing in Public Libraries in Scotland

2020

<https://scottishlibraries.org/media/3899/health-on-the-shelf-executive-summary.pdf>

This research report investigates the health and wellbeing offer from public libraries in Scotland and uncovers the large scale of services and activities that are available. Many schemes have been developed in partnership between libraries and health services...

Jennifer R Banas

A Public Health Approach to Uncovering the Health-Related Needs of Teen Library Patrons

2020

<https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/public-health-approach-uncovering-related-needs/docview/2543843964/se-2?accountid=26452>

As libraries are re-envisioned as community centers and resource providers, librarians are well positioned to help patrons overcome health literacy challenges by helping them to search for and use health information.

Scottish Library and Information Council

Public Library Improvement Fund: Evaluation of health-related projects

2016

<https://scottishlibraries.org/media/3867/plif-evaluation-of-health-related-projects.pdf>

Our evaluation has found clear evidence that the Public Library Improvement Fund has achieved what it set out to through the library-based, health-related projects described in this report. With relatively small investment, these projects have achieved positive outcomes for libraries, staff and service users. Libraries have attracted new users, established beneficial new partnerships, developed innovative ways of working, developed new dementia-friendly resources, and demonstrated the contribution they can make to health and wellbeing outcomes.

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Fiona Cassie

One-stop-shop for books, coffee... and child health.

2015

Ask Knowledge Services if you would like to access the full text of this article.

The article provides insights from Gary Lees, director of nursing for Lakes District Health Board, on the first combination of a child health hub and a public library in the city of Rotorua in New Zealand.

Kathleen Gray

**A community education initiative to improve using online health information:
Participation and impact**

2013

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.3109/17538157.2012.705201>

This paper reports on the evaluation of a community education program, in which a team of clinicians and consumer representatives from a large metropolitan hospital partnered with a major public library to provide free interactive workshops for the general public. The aim of the workshops was to improve participants' ability to find and use evidence-based health information on the Internet. The aim of the evaluation reported here was to study participation in and impact of these workshops.

Fred B. Wood et al

Public library consumer health information pilot project: results of a National Library of Medicine evaluation

1998

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC35252/pdf/i0025-7338-088-04-0314.pdf>

The results of the evaluation indicated that participating public librarians were enthusiastic about the training and information materials provided as part of the project and that many public libraries used the materials and conducted their own outreach to local communities and groups. Most libraries applied the modest funds to purchase additional Internet-accessible computers and/or upgrade their health-reference materials. However, few of the participating public libraries had health information centers (although health information was perceived as a top-ten or top-five topic of interest to patrons). Also, the project generated only minimal usage of NLM's consumer health database, known as MEDLINEplus, from the premises of the monitored libraries (patron usage from home or office locations was not tracked).

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Proposals

Public Health Scotland

Co-creating libraries for wellbeing

n.d

<https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Co-creating-libraries-for-wellbeing-Final-Report.pdf>

A number of proposed projects.

Public Libraries Victoria and State Library Victoria [AUS]

Libraries for Health and Wellbeing: A strategic framework for Victorian public libraries towards 2024

2021

Strategy for public libraries to contribute towards Health and Wellbeing outcomes.

https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/LFHAWB-vFIN-web_0.pdf

Training

E. Kiscaden et al

Impact of a consumer health information specialization (CHIS) sponsorship program on the ability of public library staff to provide consumer health information.

2021

<https://web.s.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=fc14c786-13b0-4e29-8f03-c5b3da9455f4%40redis&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWF0aGVucyZzaXRIPWVob3N0LWxpdmU%3d#AN=34285669&db=cmedm>

Findings indicate that NNLM sponsorship of the CHIS specialization was successful in increasing the capacity of public library staff to provide health information to their communities.

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Jessica A Koos et al

**A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC LIBRARIANS: “WHAT THE HEALTH”
WORKSHOP SERIES**

2019

<https://jmla.pitt.edu/ojs/jmla/article/view/564>

The authors created and delivered three workshops to public librarians in Suffolk County, New York, highlighting several National Library of Medicine resources.

Based on attendance and participant feedback, this model of health information outreach appears to have been successful in furthering the educational needs of public librarians and may be useful to others in creating a similar program in their communities.

Mary L. Klem et al

Librarians and health literacy: A scoping review

2019

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0740818819300337>

Calls for more and better conducted research to establish how librarians should be empowered and upskilled to deliver better health literacy outcomes.

Ellen L. Rubenstein

**“I Want to Provide Patrons with Good Information”: Public Library Staff as Health
Information Facilitators**

2018

<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/696579>

This study examined how public libraries and library staff in two systems in a midwestern state provide health information, particularly because of the state’s low health ranking. This article focuses on a subset of the study’s findings, highlighting staff preparedness to offer health information, perceptions about health literacy, and the role of the Medical Library Association’s consumer health information specialist (CHIS) certification in contributing to knowledge and understanding of health information issues.

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Blogs and other commentary

Five Ways Public Libraries Have Become Community Health Libraries [US]

n.d

<https://www.elevancehealth.com/our-approach-to-health/community-health/five-ways-public-libraries-have-become-community-health-libraries>

3. Serving as Community Health Hubs

Healthcare organizations are using libraries for pop-up clinics and mobile preventive care services, including screenings for diabetes, blood pressure, cholesterol, and depression; immunizations; and mammograms.

The Pima County Public Library takes this a step further. Through a partnership with the county health department, [public health nurses rotate through library branches](#), and one works in the library full-time.

As a central meeting place, libraries are a common venue for a range of health support groups, such as for:

- *Stroke*
- *Chronic illness and disability*
- *Alzheimer's Disease and dementia caregivers*
- *Breast and cervical cancer*
- *Weight loss*