

# The clinical informationist as a new member of clinical team

A clinical informationist (CI) is a newly developed term used in a clinical setting for a clinical librarian with more clinical informatics roles and computer skills. These skills include design and evaluation of clinical information systems, ability to teach data environments and clinical databases, a deeper knowledge of medical terminologies, biostatistics, epidemiology, critical appraisal, advanced clinical information searching, and functional ability in technological environments, which support patient care, medical education, and clinical research.<sup>[1-3]</sup> The CI term was first coined by Davidoff and Florance in 2000.<sup>[4]</sup> They describe these new professionals as clinical knowledge workers trained in both information science and clinical science. The CI emerged to overcome the challenges caused to health-care workers due to the remarkable increase of medical information.<sup>[4]</sup> To justify their suggestion, Tahmasebi *et al.* and Davidoff and Florance pointed out that medical information comes in a variety of forms with inappropriate indexing and accessibility which requires time, knowledge, recovery skills, and critical evaluation to get the best out of it.<sup>[4-6]</sup> It is worth noting that the National Library of Medicine and the Medical Library Association supported the idea of CI.<sup>[1]</sup> The concept of CI is believed to be rooted in past libraries' practices, most notably in clinical medical librarian programs. Indeed, evidence-based medicine (EBM) has also played an important role in preparing a new era in librarians and information professionals as CI.<sup>[1]</sup>

There are some gaps in research about operational studies on CI, especially in Persian.<sup>[7]</sup> Since 2014, the CI research unit has been founded at Isfahan University of Medical Sciences to develop many projects focusing on the CI roles for the first time in Iran by Dr. Rahimi and Dr. Adibi. For example, their studies highlighted the CI educational skills needed in clinical teams that can be classified into three main types: general skills, informatics skills, and EBM skills.<sup>[8]</sup> In this respect, we recommend that three categories of competencies/roles were considered for the CIs: educational (communication skills, clinical information literacy training for medical teams, and participation in patient education and provision of consumer health information), research (critical appraisal, facilitating

the development of clinical practice guidelines, clinical protocols, clinical trials, systematic reviews, and other medical evidence), and clinical (clinical data retrieval, clinical informatics skills, and summarizing and representation of clinical information to clinical teams). These skills are acquired mainly through practical training and participation in a clinical team. As a main message, CI is a new term that explains the whole roles of medical librarians, clinical librarians, and health librarians in new environments affected by informatics skills, information, and communication technologies completely. Therefore, CI as a fixed new member of clinical teams who provide and make more information accessible for the clinical team can play an important role to improve clinical decision-making.

## Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

## Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

**Alireza Rahimi<sup>1</sup>, Abolfazl Taheri<sup>2</sup>, Peyman Adibi<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Clinical Informationist Research Group, Health Information Research Center, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran, <sup>2</sup>Department of Medical Library and Information Sciences, School of Management and Medical Information Sciences, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran, <sup>3</sup>Integrative Functional Gastroenterology Research Center, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran

**Address for correspondence:** Dr. Alireza Rahimi, Clinical Informationist Research Group, Health Information Research Center, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran.

E-mail: a\_rahimi@mng.mui.ac.ir

**Submitted:** 18-May-2020; **Revised:** 26-May-2020;

**Accepted:** 01-Jun-2020; **Published:** 31-Aug-2020

## REFERENCES

- Rankin JA, Grefsheim SF, Canto CC. The emerging informationist specialty: A systematic review of the literature. *J Med Libr Assoc* 2008;96:194-206.
- Detlefsen EG. The education of informationists, from the perspective of a library and information sciences educator. *J Med Libr Assoc* 2002;90:59-67.
- Tahmasebi M, Adibi P, Zare-Farashbandi F, Papi A, Rahimi A. The educational role of clinical informationist on improving clinical education among medical students: Based on Kirkpatrick model. *J Educ Health Promot* 2020;9:28.
- Davidoff F, Florance V. The informationist: A new health profession? *Ann Intern Med* 2000;132:996-8.
- Whitmore SC, Grefsheim SF, Rankin JA. Informationist programme in support of biomedical research: A programme description and preliminary findings of an evaluation. *Health Info Libr J* 2008;25:135-41.

6. Tahmasebi M, Adibi P, Zare-Farashbandi F, Papi A, Rahimi A. The educational role of clinical informationist on improving clinical education among medical students: Based on Kirkpatrick model. *J Educ Health Promot* 2020;9:28.
7. Zare Farashbandi E, Zare Farashbandi F, Adibi P, Rahimi A. Prerequisites, barriers and advantages of clinical informationist participation in grand round: A qualitative study. *Health Inf Libraries J* 2020;37:143-51.
8. Tahmasebi M, Rahimi A, Zare-Farashbandi F, Adibi P. The role of clinical informationist in clinical teams: Letter to editor. *J Isfahan Med Sch* 2020;37:813-5.

---

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

Access this article online	
Quick Response Code: 	Website: <a href="http://www.jmsjournal.net">www.jmsjournal.net</a>
	DOI: 10.4103/jrms.JRMS_578_20

**How to cite this article:** Rahimi A, Taheri A, Adibi P. The clinical informationist as a new member of clinical team. *J Res Med Sci* 2020;25:83.

© 2020 Journal of Research in Medical Sciences | Published by Wolters Kluwer - Medknow