

Research protocols

Rick Wallace, MA, MDiv, MAOM, MSLS, MPH, EdD, AHIP

See end of article for author's affiliation.

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To the editor, I always thought it would be a good idea if we could get research skilled people together in our profession to work together to develop research protocols on important topics. If we could develop protocols on important topics, perhaps these could be implemented through a new position created at all the Regional Medical Libraries (RMLs). The RMLs could each hire a research coordinator, and there could also be a national level office for all RMLs staffed with biostatisticians and methodologists. Or each RML could be required to provide these services as part of their contract from the National Library of Medicine (NLM).

The protocols could be applied for like National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) grants are now. Recipients would have to follow the protocol exactly like in large randomized controlled drug trials. For example, if there were a protocol on

clinical librarianship, then libraries, both academic, and hospital, could apply to participate. If there were 5 participants from each region, there would be a total of 45 participating libraries. If each of the 45 libraries obtained results from at least 100 clinicians, that would equal more than 4,500 participants. The results would be sent to the biostatistician to analyze and compile. This plan would involve many librarians in research who are not currently involved and would create studies of higher quality than we normally produce. The protocols could be designed to be service or research so as to stay in sync with the current NN/LM grant funding program.

Perhaps this is a pipe dream, but it is food for thought.

AUTHOR'S AFFILIATION

Rick Wallace, MA, MDiv, MAOM, MSLS, MPH, EdD, AHIP, wallacer@etsu.edu, Assistant Director, Quillen College of Medicine Library, East Tennessee State University, Memphis, TN