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# Clinicians' Health Information Access Across Vermont: A Clinical Librarianship Perspective on Inequities and Impact

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# University of Vermont

## Background

Access to accurate, timely, and evidence-based health information is essential for informed and thoughtful patient care. Clinical librarians, as stewards of information equity, play a critical role in identifying and addressing gaps in information access across healthcare settings. This poster explores the differences and disparities in clinical health information access among clinical providers across Vermont.

## Methods

A 10-question survey was sent to selected health care providers in a variety of settings across Vermont. Data was collected and analyzed using Qualtrics. Anonymized clinician profiles were created using the gathered data to illustrate clinical information used by different providers and practice sites. IRB exemption was received for this research.

## Results

Six (6) providers responded to the survey. Practice types included private practice, FHQC, school nursing, hospital inpatient and outpatient clinics, and emergency departments in urban and rural settings. All respondents reported seeking information to inform clinical decisions daily or multiple times per week. Access to subscription reference resources varies greatly between practice sites.

Resource	Times mentioned
UpToDate	5
Open Evidence	3
Professional organization websites	2
Google	2
Peers	2
Epocrates	1
Vermont Dept. of Health	1
CDC	1
RxList	1
NEJM: Journal Watch	1

Table 1. Information resources used by providers for clinical decision making

Frequency of Information Need	Years of Experience		
	3-5	5-10	10+
Multiple times a day	0	2	0
Daily	1	0	2
2-4 times per week	0	0	1

Table 2. Frequency of information seeking by years of provider experience



**Provider Type:** Physician (MD/DO)

**Practice Setting:** Direct primary care in solo private practice (does not accept insurance)

**Who pays for access to information?** Provider does

**How does access influence care?** It's very helpful because medical information changes so quickly

**Greatest information need:** Payment for UpToDate and journal articles



**Provider type:** Nurse (RN)

**Practice setting:** School Nurses' Office in VT public school

**Who pays for access to information?** Employee pays out of pocket

**How does access influence care?** Lack of access slows care down – it takes a long time to research information and assess it for reliability

**Greatest information need?** "Real time quick access to make clinical decisions plus access to clinical information to develop health plans"



**Provider Type:** Mid-level (NP or PA)

**Practice Setting:** Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)/Community Health Center in urban setting

**Who pays for access to information?** CME funds to pay for UpToDate, everything else is out of pocket for employer

**How does access influence care?** It "reinforces evidenced based decision making. Provides the most current recommendations."

**Greatest information need?** Better understanding of what resources are available and how to access them



**Provider Type:** Mid-level (NP or PA)

**Practice Setting:** Rural private primary care practice

**Who pays for access to information?** Employer

**How does access influence care?** It helps to stay current and know the best evidence-based practices; it also helps to expand differentials and consider future treatment options

**Greatest information need:** Access to full-text journal articles



**Provider Type:** Physician (MD or DO)

**Practice Setting:** Emergency departments in rural and urban settings; UVMHC site

**Who pays for information access?** Employer – hospital

**How does access influence care?** "Tremendously important to get access to most up to date treatment guidelines"

**Greatest information need?** Access to PDFs of journal articles



**Provider type:** Mid-level (NP or PA)

**Practice setting:** Outpatient clinic and inpatient unit at UVMHN site

**Who pays for information access?** Employer pays for UpToDate, employee pays for anything else

**How does access influence care?** Restricts ability to access ACOG guidelines, must pay annually to get past paywall

**Greatest information need:** Access to ACOG, Reprotox, Infant risk center, ASCCP app

## Conclusions

Clinicians in Vermont struggle to access reliable clinical health information for a variety of reasons. Clinical librarians can provide support to clinicians through literature searching and resource acquisition. Free, open-access resources curated by librarians are available to health providers.

## References

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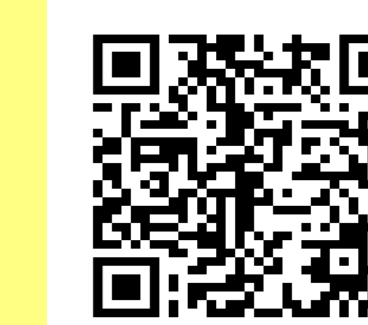
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## Discussion

Access to clinical information is a challenge for providers due to financial burden and time constraints. Some employers provide their clinicians with subscriptions to point-of-care tools and journals, while others are reliant on their professional development and personal funds to pay for clinical health information resources.

## Free Medical Resources to Support Clinical Care



Questions or concerns?  
Contact the Dana Health Sciences Library at [danaref@uvm.edu](mailto:danaref@uvm.edu)

[go.uvm.edu/freemedresources](http://go.uvm.edu/freemedresources)

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The cartoon icons for the profiles were created using ChatGPT.