

# Workshop on new strategies and tools for the eHealth library organized by the Andalusian eHealth Library

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### Abstract

*The Andalusian eHealth Library (Biblioteca Virtual del Sistema Sanitario Público de Andalucía, BV-SSPA), was created in June 2006. The 42 librarians who already worked for the Health System were integrated within this new system. The annual library meeting has been held every year since then, and in 2013 the EAHL workshop held in Stockholm was the model to follow.*

*Key words:* digital library, network, librarians.

### Introduction

The Andalusian eHealth Library (Biblioteca Virtual del Sistema Sanitario Público de Andalucía, BV-SSPA) was set up in 2006 under the Government Strategy of Knowledge Management. Andalusia is one of the biggest regions in Spain in terms of population and territory, and of course, the number of public services offered to professionals and citizens. As far as the Public Health System is concerned, it supports more than 8.5 million inhabitants, and is staffed by 95,000 health professionals who work for 43 hospitals, 1,500 primary healthcare centers and other research and training centers.

**A big challenge for a Library:** to provide this huge system with the best scientific resources and services. As well as the effort to centralize purchasing and creating new services (see article published in December 2011 in the *JEAHIL*, Vol. 7(4) [http://www.eahil.eu/journal/journal\\_2011\\_vol7\\_n4.pdf](http://www.eahil.eu/journal/journal_2011_vol7_n4.pdf)) it had the important objective of bringing together the health information librarians within a newly created library network to expand and promote its work. The feeling of belonging to this important project of the Andalusian Government was the engine which motivated the library network staff to actively participate in the creation, development and consolidation of the Andalusian eHealth Library.

Most of these librarians had been working for the Health System for more than 20 years. They worked at their corresponding hospitals or centers without a real connection with their colleagues and above all, without the institutional support to work together and create the necessary network to develop and exchange their professional skills.

The setting up of the Digital Library meant a major challenge and an extraordinary opportunity for them. From the point of view of the managing staff of the new library, their commitment with the project and the involvement in the different work areas were crucial to obtain the desired results. Their experience in dealing with end users and knowing their needs was a solid pillar for the construction of this new model.

Therefore, they were organized in working groups and were trained in accordance with the new necessary requirements. Another important part of this process was the annual library meeting that the Andalusian eHealth Library organized every year where all the new services, projects and devices were presented.

The Digital Library places great importance on being part of national and international associations and increasing participation at international conferences and congresses, both of which constitute an important training resource for our librarians. This is the case

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regarding the conferences and congresses organized by the European Association for Health Information and Libraries. The Andalusian eHealth Library has actively taken part in them since 2006. Last year, we had the opportunity of attending the Workshop organized in Stockholm *Trends for the future – Creating strategies to meet challenges*. Attending this workshop was such a good experience, due to its innovative and participative methods and issues, encouraging everybody to exchange their experiences and knowledge, that we thought it was a good example to copy and implement in the Andalusian Health Library Network.

With the consent and endorsement of EAHIL we organized our *Workshop on new strategies and tools for the eHealth Library* last October 14-15, inspired by the one held in Stockholm, with the attendance of 34 librarians and the financial support of Ovid Technologies.



**Fig. 1.** Course participants

Andalusian health librarians worked on four topics during these two days:

1. responsible use of the e-Library: resources, services, access, content;
2. open access and the Andalusian Health repository;
3. the role of the librarian within the Andalusian Health System: its integration within the organization and the user service;
4. skills and capacities needed for professional profile development: a solution to every issue.

### Methods

1. *Responsible use of the e-Library: resources, services, access, content.*

This session was developed under the gallery method, divided into groups of six or seven

participants, several topics were discussed concerning the use of the resources, services, access and content of the Digital Library: fundraising, ethical and legal use of the electronic resources, quality plan and suppliers.

2. *Open access and the Andalusian Health Repository.*

For this session the opinionator triangle method was used, dividing the groups into three sections which had to take one of three different positions concerning the open access and the Andalusian Health Repository: in favor, against and neutral. The concerns of the Andalusian librarians in terms of open access are peer review, content quality, payment for publishing, copyright, requirements of funders and visibility.

Regarding the Andalusian Health Repository the main issues are the different types of documents and acceptance criteria, information retrieval, free services, legal restrictions and the new competences of the Andalusian Health Ministry.

3. *The role of the librarian within the Andalusian Health System: its integration within the organization and the user service.*

The environment change due to the creation of the central digital library meant for the Andalusian Health Librarians a new paradigm, as they had to acquire new skills to work with the new platform and cooperate within the network. The different roles of the librarian in the Health System could be defined as follows: trainer, digital librarian, manager, clinical research librarian, marketing and public relations manager; these were discussed using the method Knowledge Cafe.

4. *Skills and capacities needed for professional profile development: a solution to every issue.*

Seven years after the setting up of the Andalusian eHealth Library the time had arrived to reflect on the performance of the involved parties, a session of brainstorming using the method Magic Circle was really useful in order to find out what is the real role as librarians, and to answer questions such as:

- a) How do we fulfill our duties as librarians of the Andalusian eHealth Library?

- b) What difficulties do we face in our daily work?
- c) Are we free to develop our performance as librarians or do we have to carry out other tasks?



**Fig. 2 . Trying out the different methods**

### Conclusions

The management of the Library in terms of subscriptions, service development and budgetary issues is carried out at the Central Unit of the Andalusian eHealth Library and its staff have the appropriate skills to deal with publishers, to manage the general budget, to create technological applications and to be in charge of the platform maintenance and updating. Nevertheless contact with the end user and daily work at hospitals, training or research centers is the way our library has to integrate itself into the system, and is the means to have feedback on our work. This is the reason the library network is so important in this project.

The conclusions of this meeting were mainly focused on measures such as:

- the creation of a quality plan for the library network;

- the establishment of a procedure to communicate user needs in terms of resources;
- the implementation of a procedure to participate in research groups as librarians of the Health System and contribute to improve the scientific production of the organizations, giving information about where to publish, open access resources and carry out the scientific production studies;
- the availability of the terms of use for every resource to be sure that our users are aware of the importance of fulfilling the legal requirements;
- the development of a professional profile to contribute to our careers;
- the creation of an official training plan for librarians;
- the development of a training plan for users in order to make them more and more autonomous;
- the contribution to the use and promotion of our Institutional Repository in order to gather most of the scientific production of the Health System, as one of the best ways of giving visibility to the Andalusian Healthcare professional work, facilitating knowledge management and experience transfer within the Andalusian Public Health System;
- the guarantee of the best interaction with our end users at our workplaces but also through our social media, according to the user profile.

Summarizing, the importance of having these kinds of sessions and developing working groups in order to create common policies to deal with the daily tasks of the librarians under the umbrella of the Andalusian Health Library was highlighted. At this time of crisis, the feeling of belonging to a bigger organization and networking makes the librarians stronger and more respected at their individual organizations.

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