



## Focus on . . . Austria The Austrian Central Medical Library, Vienna



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The Medical Faculty Library, University of Vienna, was founded in June 1986. In the beginning, the head office was located in the main university library. In October 1989, the clinical library moved into the then recently completed building of the University Clinics General Hospital. Essentially, the new library's stock consisted of medical journals and monographs which had been removed from both the main university library's stack rooms and the main reading room. From 1991, medical services relating to outpatient and inpatient care were continually moved into the General Hospital building and by 1995, all clinics and clinical institutes had been transferred to the new building. The holdings of 45 individual clinics and clinical institutes were set up together in the new Central Medical Library. Only preclinical sciences remained with the decentralised institute libraries. The structure of the Viennese Medical Faculty was adapted to European standards.

The institutes and clinics were reorganised to eight special clinical units: internal medicine, pediatrics, gynaecology and obstetrics, radiology, surgery, neurology/psychiatry, clinical institutes, special institutes. The clinical units were split into 25 clinics, 12 clinical institutes, 25 outpatient departments, 300 special outpatient departments. Before reorganisation many branches had been divided into two independent clinics, e.g. 1st and 2nd Surgical Clinic. Each of those had their autonomous book collection of literature and consequently there were numerous duplicate titles. The Central Medical Library cancelled these surplus subscriptions and, in their place, ordered many new titles.

The Medical Faculty Library was designed to function as a central library of medicine for the whole of Austria. In 1994, the library therefore officially became the independent Central Medical Library in Vienna (though legally its new name is the Austrian Central Medical Library). Its mission is to collect, organise and provide access to printed and non-print materials in the field of medicine and related disciplines. The library is the national centre for collection, cataloguing, classification and the document supplier of medical literature.

The library is divided into two sections:

- The stock of the central section of the

clinical library provides primarily clinical materials. These include a student textbook collection of 12,000 items and a reading room has been established in the hospital area.

- The decentralised section comprises five departmental libraries of the following branches: preclinical sciences, brain research, cancer research, dental medicine, history of medicine. 35 institute libraries (unstaffed) feature preclinical and theoretical literature.

The collections of both the main library (central section stocks) and the departmental libraries have over 520,000 volumes and approximately 2,500 current journals which is increased by about 11,000 volumes yearly. Therefore, the Central Medical Library ranks first among Austrian medical libraries.

Statistics of the Central Medical Library:

- There are 400 seats, 250 of them located in the students' reading room.
- The area of the clinical library in the General Hospital covers a total of 5,000m<sup>2</sup>.
- The staff consists of 33 professionals.
- In 1998, the acquisition budget was 26 Million AS.

The clinical library is open-access:

- Monographs are classified using the US National Library of Medicine Classification. They are shelved according to subject fields.
- Journals are shelved in alphabetical arrangement.





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The library is a non-lending though in March 2000, a limited lending service will commence. Photocopying services are provided in the library. Eleven self-operated machines (coins or copy cards copy) are available.

In 1999 the library system ALEPH (developed by the Israeli company Ex Libris) replaced the former library system BIBOS. The ALEPH catalogue is available through a Web search mask ("Web OPAC"). It will be used as an Austrian Central Catalogue (ACC) as well as local system (ZBM). During university terms the reading rooms of the main library and the departmental libraries are open from 9 a.m. from Monday-Friday. The main library closes at 8 p.m., the departmental libraries close at 4 p.m.

Since May 1996 the Central Medical Library has offered a homepage (<http://www.univie.ac.at/ZBMed>) containing information on different services and online access to the catalogues, databases and online journals.

The departmental library for History of Medicine houses a collection of approximately 95,000 volumes. In addition to being the sole Austrian specialist library in this subject it represents a documentation centre of international prominence. Founded by Emperor Joseph II, the present day library was developed from the original teaching library for military doctors. The ancient "Josephinian Library" (7,500 items) accounts for its extraordinary size and the diversity of its valuable collection of old and rare books. Literature from all over Europe dating from the 15th century until the Biedermeier era is represented. The collection includes 20 incunabla and early prints before 1520. However, most items of the collection date from the 17th and 18th century, since these books formed the basis for medical teaching around 1780, at the time when the military academy was founded and is set to

become Austria's central medical archive library.

- The departmental library for the History of Medicine provides also the most comprehensive collection of literature on ethnomedicine.
- About 30 percent of the 2,500 subscriptions of the Central Medical Library are unique in Austria. These holdings have increased the interlibrary loan requests from medical faculties, hospitals, pharmaceutical companies and practitioners. Copies of articles are transmitted via mail or fax, or online by email. In 1997, the Central Medical Library was the first Austrian library to scan and send articles as attachments by email.
- In order to provide all clinics and institutes of the Viennese medical faculty with bibliographic information the library established a network using Electronic Reference Library (ERL) technology from Silverplatter. The network offers access to the following databases: Current Contents, Embase, Medline, PascalBiomed, PsycLit, PsynDexPlus, Serline, ToxlinePlus. A special license agreement for Medline and PascalBiomed enables the Central Medical Library to offer access to these important medical databases to all

Austrian universities. The co-operating partners benefit from the optimal utilisation of the network and a reduction in costs for server maintenance.

- Since 1998 the Central Medical Library has offered access to medical journals for members of the Viennese Medical Faculty. Initially beginning with medical titles from Springer LINK, access now to approximately 250 electronic journals is guaranteed. Last year, the Central Medical Library in co-operation with other university libraries began negotiations concerning an electronic journals consortia with publishers and agencies.

In Austria no specific association for medical librarians exists; they are part of the Austrian Librarians' Association (Vereinigung Österreichischer Bibliothekarinnen und Bibliothekare – VÖB). Some Austrian medical librarians are members of the German Medical Library Association (AgMB: Arbeitsgemeinschaft für medizinische Bibliotheken). The next annual meeting of the AgMB will take place in Vienna from 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> September 2000. (See also the report of Ursel Lux in EAHIL Newsletter nr 50 Feb 2000 p. 17)

