Objective

• To identify why librarians with a health sciences background chose librarianship as a second career and to determine if their background had been advantageous in their work as a librarian.

Methods

• Survey was created in Survey Monkey and piloted.
• Survey received IRB approval in May, 2009.
• The survey was sent to over 20 health sciences librarian or association listserve from May to July 2009.
• The survey had questions regarding:
  • The respondents’ former health sciences careers.
  • Reasons for career change.
  • Impressions of librarianship.
  • Impact of health sciences background on current career.

Results

• There were a total of 274 responses to the survey.
• 260 responses met the criteria of the survey as having a health sciences degree and a library degree.
• It was difficult to gauge the survey’s exact response rate because it was sent to multiple listservs.
• 212 (86.2%) respondents were female. 34 (13.6%) respondents were male.
• The average age of the respondents was 47.
• 66 (26%) respondents worked as librarians for 6-10 years.
• The majority of respondents, 68 (26.2%), decided to change careers during the first 5 years of their health sciences career.
• 145 (55.8%) did not consider other careers besides their work as a librarian.

Conclusion

• The majority of librarians with a health sciences background were satisfied with their career move.
• They felt their background gave them an advantage in certain areas of librarianship such as research and teaching.
• The librarians’ choice in revealing their health sciences background to patrons or colleagues depended on their experience. Those who had revealed their background had encountered curiosity, respect, and jealousy.
• To gauge the contributions of these librarians to the profession, further research should be conducted.

References