Meet Dr. Ellen S. More, Medical History Archivist

Ellen S. More is the Lamar Soutter Library's first head of the Office of Medical History and Archives. This is a new position within the library funded by the medical school administration, designed to record and preserve the history of the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Her interest in the history of the American medical profession—particularly the role of women in the profession, and the history of empathy in the doctor-patient relationship—was an evolutionary departure from her original historical expertise.

Dr. More received her PhD in seventeenth-century English history from the University of Rochester in 1980. While she was employed by the History department, she was asked to teach a course on the History of the American Medical Profession, for the broadening of Pre-med students' understanding of the humanities.

She recalls, 'As I became more involved in this course, many students asked me about the role of women in the medical profession. Using the archives of the Edward G. Miner Medical Library, I was able to use the papers of women physicians of Rochester, New York from the 1870s onward.' The wealth of information that Dr. More garnered from the archives helped her to change her focus of interest in history, and it led to her writing the book, Restoring the Balance: Women Physicians and the Profession of Medicine, 1850-1995 (Harvard University Press: 1999).

In this book, Dr. More focuses on the values and choices that women physicians made, from the nineteenth century forward, that helped to mold both their character and careers. She states, 'I found metaphors involving the concept of balance running through their writings.' These metaphors concern the balance of males to females in the health profession; the balance in a layperson's life to allow sufficient time for personal healthcare; the balance in a physician's life in his commitment to individual patients as opposed to the community; and the balance a physician seeks between professional obligations and the demands of his or her personal life.

The book's first chapter profiles Sarah Adamson Dolley, the third woman in the United States to graduate from a medical school. Dr. More proceeds to tell the story of women physicians from the nineteenth century to the last decade of the twentieth.

Two noteworthy collaborative ventures of Dr. More's have involved work on a book and an exhibit. With Maureen Milligan, she served as co-editor of the book The Empathic Practitioner: Empathy, Gender and Practice (Rutgers University Press), Dr. More wrote the first section, entitled "Empathy Enters the Medical Profession." Dr. More was co-curator of the National Medical Library exhibit Changing the Face of Medicine: Celebrating America's Women Physicians.

After its initial run from 2003-2005, this was transformed into a traveling exhibit, and is on display at the Lamar Soutter Library from May 5 to June 16, 2006. An outgrowth of this is a scholarly symposium, entitled Health Politics, Gender, Performance and Power: American Women Physicians Confront the Masculine Culture of Medicine. Dr. More notes that a book is currently being developed from the symposium papers.

As for her immediate goals for this new position, Dr. More wants to "generate interest and a larger presence for the history of medicine generally and of the role of the University of Massachusetts Medical School, in particular. There are two related strategies that I am hoping to carry out to accomplish this. I want to re-ignite appreciation of the value of preservation of historical records by the members of the UMass community. To do that, I hope to meet with the different departments and to ultimately host History of Medicine events."

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Evidence-Based Practice Project Culminated

Researchers at the Lamar Soutter Library have completed the Evidence-Based Practice for Public Health Project, which addressed the need for access to quality evidence-based public health information. Project team members consisted of Dr. Elaine R. Martin, Principal Investigator; E. Hatheway Simpson, Project Coordinator; and Project Consultants Dr. Roger Luckmann; Dr. Nancy La Pelle; and Dr. Sharon Telleen.

The need for improved access to quality public health information has been recognized by public health practitioners, researchers, policy makers, and information specialists. Evidence-based medicine (EBM) for clinical medicine involves using the best evidence for the treatment and diagnosis of disease in individual patients. Evidence-based public health (EBPH) involves using the best evidence to develop public health policies, health promotion programs, and interventions for public health practice.

In the last decade numerous clinical EBM resources have been developed to assist clinical practitioners find the best evidence for the medical care of individual patients, but few resources are available for population-based public health practice. To explore and address this gap, the project team examined and classified the features of existing clinical EBM models, assessed their potential for improving access to EBPH information, and identified any existing resources for evidence-based public health decision-making.

The project team sought to develop a potential model that could effectively address the unique needs of public health professionals. The major challenge to developing an information resource targeted to provide evidence-based information to the public health workforce is the great breadth of the public health discipline. The public health workforce may be more diverse than any other group of health professionals, and includes practitioners trained in dozens of disciplines—ranging from environmental health to veterinary medicine, from sanitary engineering to epidemiology. Key activities include health monitoring and surveillance, prevention of chronic and communicable diseases, health promotion, disaster preparedness, and the development and application of public health laws and policies.

In an effort to develop a potential EBPH model that could effectively address the unique needs of public health professionals, the research team set out to outline and define the field of public health. They examined sources that represented prominent public health associations, government health agencies, national health objectives, essential public health services, public health occupations, public health literature, and library indexes to identify the knowledge domains of public health. Twenty major knowledge domains and 155 subdomains of public health were identified that represent these subjects of knowledge within the broad field of public health. The project team also identified an extensive list of public health journals and bibliographic databases, including those available for free online access.

The researchers sought to gain a better understanding of the information needs of the public health workforce and undertook a qualitative study to investigate how public health practitioners access information needed for their work, what barriers they face, and what improvements are needed to develop an information system model for access to EBPH information. The project team conducted a qualitative study to determine the information needs of public health professionals working in the areas of communicable disease control and community health promotion in a state health department.

They found that the public health professionals interviewed have a wide variety of needs and use different information sources, depending on the nature of their work. The types of information they used for public health practice ranged from early reports of disease outbreaks to peer-reviewed research papers. The guidelines and other recommendations were informed by those dealing with emerging diseases, to published research reports, systematic reviews, and evidence-based guidelines needed by those working on the prevention and control of well-known diseases and health threats.

The study revealed that public health practitioners face several barriers and limitations to accessing quality information for public health practice. These include unfiltered and often duplicative information from listservs, obtaining irrelevant returns when searching for information on websites and online databases, and having limited access to gray literature, systematic reviews, and full-text journal articles. To address these and other concerns raised by the study, the research team developed a hypothetical model for the delivery and organization of credible and relevant public health information.

An outcome of the project that is particularly beneficial to the public health workforce is the project's website, http://library.umassmed.edu/ebpph, which provides free online access to public health journals, databases, and EBPH resources identified by the research team. The compiled EBPH resources are organized by information type and include evidence-based guidelines, systematic reviews, literature searches, and best practices. The EBPH online resources will continue to be updated with funding provided by the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, New England Region and the Lamar Soutter Library, University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, MA.

—HS

WebCT & PDAs - New Technologies at LSL

In 2005, UMass Medical School embraced two new technologies designed to enhance the learning experience of its students. The first, WebCT, is a learning management tool that allows instructors to make portions of their courses—such as discussions and chats—available online. The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) was the first school to implement WebCT, and the entire UMass campus is expected to be an active participant by fall.

Throughout the clinical healthcare field, the PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) has become a valuable tool that practitioners use to carry up-to-date drug and diagnostic information with them. Beginning in the summer of 2005, all third-year School of Medicine (SOM) students have been required to use a PDA device as part of their clinical training.

With the first year of the PDA requirement for third-year students almost completed, we are reviewing the success of the program over the last year and are planning training and implementation for incoming third-year students. In addition to training and general PDA support, we have set up a "sync station" that generates student and faculty use to quickly download schedules, patient log information, and updates to drug and diagnostic data resources.

As the Lamar Soutter Library seeks to continually be at the forefront of emerging health information technologies, we readily embraced these two new tools. Members of the Library staff were among the first at the School to be fully qualified as WebCT designers.

Since then, we have trained first-year GSBS students and first- and second-year SOM students to use WebCT with their studies. We have also reached out to faculty that have needed assistance in designing instructional resources online. In this issue of the newsletter, we have made available on the Library's website a page that leads students and other PDA users to links for required and other free resources, as well as other helpful PDA information.

—LL
A Dose of Reading—Beyond Dr. Quinn: Memoirs of Women Physicians

Some believe that the protagonist of the tv series Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman was modeled after the life and pioneering career of Susan Anderson (1870-1970) who for many years practiced medicine in the region of Colorado Springs and Cripple Creek, Colorado. (For more on her, see Doc Susie: The True Story of a Country Physician in the Colorado Rockies (1991), Call Number: WZ 100 A545C 1991 by Virginia Cornell.)

The books listed below highlight the role of women physicians in medicine and are featured in conjunction with the exhibition of "Changing the Face of Medicine: Celebrating America's Women Physicians," on display in the Lamar Soutter Library May 5 – June 15. These and other titles have been added to the new, "Women in Medicine Collection" which has been established as a special collection in the Library by the UMass Medical School Women Faculty Committee and the LSL.


Benetar, Judith (pseud.)(1941-). Admissions: Notes from a Woman Psychiatrist (1974). Call Number: WM 100 B465a 1974 Benetar tells of her professional affiliations with a New York City hospital, where she has held the positions of chief resident and supervising psychiatrist.


Harrison, Michelle (1942-). A Woman in Residence: A Physician's Account of Her Training in Obstetrics and Gynecology (1982). Call Number: WZ 100 H321 1982a On her residency rounds, Harrison speaks daily comments into a tape recorder that she carried with her. From this oral record evolved this book, an indictment against various status quo elements of the culture of medicine.

Han, Su Yin (1917-). The Crippled Tree (1965). Call Number: W 21 H233c 1965 A Martial Flower: China (1986); Call Number: W 21 H233m 1972 and Birdless Summer: China (1968). Call Number: W 18 H233b 1966 She was a medical practitioner and writer, who novelized many of her life's experiences in this trilogy of memoirs. Han is best remembered as the author of the 1952 novel A Many Splendored Thing, Call Number: W 21 H233m 1952 which was adapted into the 1955 film Love Is a Many Splendored Thing, which won three Oscars.


La Roe, Else K. Woman Surgeon: The Autobiography of Else K. La Roe, M.D. (1957). Call Number: WO 100 L328w 1957 Born in Heidelberg, Germany, Dr. La Roe recaptures her European childhood and describes subsequent experiences, including those involving her practice in Manhattan.


Parker, Beulah (1912-). The Evolution of a Psychiatrist: Memoirs of a Woman Doctor (1987). Call Number: WZ 100 P238e 1987 Parker's psychiatric practice was based in northern California; she also wrote three other books dealing with psychiatric issues and case histories, and has contributed to medical journals.

Rowland, Mary Canaga. As Long as Life: The Memoirs of a Frontier Woman Doctor, Mary Canaga Rowland, 1873-1966 (1994). Call Number: WZ 100 R883 1994 Covering her years in Kansas, Oregon, and New York, this highly readable memoir tells of Rowland's years driving wagons across the continent, as she practiced her profession across the untamed heartland.


—JL

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The second strategy is to enlarge the presence of History of Medicine in the UMass cultural offerings." Dr. More is also establishing a working relationship with the Worcester District Medical Society to promote the use of the Lamar Soutter Library Rare Books holdings, which include a large number of books belonging to the Society's Worcester Medical Library. Other plans include the establishment of an oral history project by the Library. Dr. More, who also holds the title of Professor, Department of Psychiatry, will deliver a lecture at 6:15 pm on May 9, 2006: Testing the Boundaries: Women Physicians and Sex Education—The Case of Dr. Mary S. Calderone. At this time, she also will sign copies of her book Restoring the Balance. SoutheReview will interview Dr. More in a future issue to share her perspectives on the methodology of historical inquiry.

—IF
LSL Staff Provide Instruction in Graduate Courses

In recognition of their leadership in the medical library profession, several Lamar Soutter Library staff have been chosen to teach and coordinate spring courses in medical/health sciences librarianship, under the auspices of two of New England’s accredited graduate schools of library science.

The University of Rhode Island’s graduate course Health Sciences Librarianship (LSC 537) has been taught here in Worcester at the LSL. Lead Instructor Elaine Martin, DA, has invited staff to participate as guest lecturers, within their respective specialty areas:

Donna Berryman: Searching MedlinePlus®, PubMed®
James Comes: Reference
Javier Crespo: Regional Medical Library
Janet Dadoly: Collection Development
Deb Dulmane-Coonan: Financial Management
Jane Fama: Access Services—Circulation, Document Delivery/ILL
Nancy Harger: Hospital Librarianship
Barbara Ingrassia: Technical Services—Licensing, Open Access
Len Levin: Hospital Librarianship
Lisa Palmer: Cataloging
Mary Piorun: Systems

In addition, Martin has taught Medical Librarianship (LS434) in Boston, for Simmons College’s School of Library and Information Science.

Through these courses, Lamar Soutter Library professionals have trained more than 27 potential future medical librarians.

—BI

The Lamar Soutter Library invites you to experience

CHANGING THE FACE OF MEDICINE:
CELEBRATING AMERICA’S WOMEN PHYSICIANS

an exhibit that celebrates the lives and achievements of women in medicine since they first gained admission to American medical schools 150 years ago.

Join us for a variety of events: tours, speakers, a play, book signings, films, displays and more...

The Lamar Soutter Library at the University of Massachusetts Medical School is honored to be one of only three libraries in New England to host this interactive exhibit, based on a larger exhibit displayed at the National Library of Medicine from 2003-2005.

Free and open to the public during library hours from May 5 through June 15, 2006

Complete exhibit and event details at http://library.umassmed.edu/changingthefaceofmedicine/

*Changing the Face of Medicine: Celebrating America’s Women Physicians* was developed by the Exhibition Program of the History of Medicine Division of the National Library of Medicine in collaboration with the American Library Association Public Programs Office.

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