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Building a Literature Review: A Citation Analysis of Medical Educator’s Research Patterns in Balint Group Studies

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Hypothesis: As librarians highly involved in the research process, an exhaustive, comprehensive literature search is the cornerstone of any project we would undertake. Based on findings in the literature, it has been demonstrated that many medical educators do not use a systematic approach in their pre-intervention reviews. Instead, it is believed that researchers use literature conveniently found and readily available. To test this hypothesis, we conducted a comprehensive review of the literature to relate to Balint theory and then analyzed the citations in papers from the last ten years (2003-2013). The below flow chart demonstrates the methodology used to conduct the review.

Methods

Why study Balint for this analysis?

Balint theory holds interest for both authors. Lee has worked on an extensive systematic review process with an author studying Balint Group utilization. Levin is library liaison to Family Medicine and Psychiatry and works closely with groups where Balint theory is most commonly practiced. Both Lee and Levin work closely with medical educators in their respective institutions where Balint is used in studying health care practitioner communication skills in undergraduate and graduate medical education.

Analysis

Of the 123 unique citations, 31 were books:

- U.S. and international (primarily U.K., Australia and South Africa) resources represented.
- Of these 31 books, 6 were written by Michael or Enid Balint.
- These books represent 34% of the total Balint-related citations (24% of 314).
- The top 10 journal articles cited were cited 94 times (see composite collage with link below).
- This analysis is biased in the journal “Family Medicine,” as this was the journal “Family Medicine,” in which seven of the top ten cited articles in our findings were published.
- Medical educators appear to publish research/case reports on Balint work with medical students and residents in discipline-specific journals as opposed to medical education journals.
- To further test this hypothesis, additional citation analyses on other medical education-related topics need to be conducted with which these findings can be compared.
- Librarians involved in medical education are committed to working with researchers in this field to support education research.

References


Identification of potentially relevant citations in indexed databases:

- PubMed: 124
- Embase: 127
- Web of Science: 22
- CINAHL: 10
- PsycINFO: 61
- ERIC: 21

Papers included: 111

Papers excluded: 223

- Older than 50 years
- Bibliographies
- Opinion-based letters
- Meeting Abstracts
- Dissertations

Additional papers excluded: 35

- Full text not found (e.g., "esoteric" international journals)
- Paper contained no citations

Papers included: Citations from bibliographies examined: 39

Total number of Balint-related citations: 314
Number of unique citations: 123

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