

The library's role in a hospital-based HTA-centre – experiences from Sahlgrenska University Hospital, Sweden

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Today

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Background information

- Region Västra Götaland is the Western Swedish Health Care region and provides health and medical care to 1.5 million residents. 50 000 employees.
Runs a total of 17 hospitals, 134 medical centres and 170 dental clinics
- Sahlgrenska University Hospital consists of three large hospital units as well as several smaller units and clinics in Göteborg and surrounding areas
17 000 employees
Close to 2 300 beds
Total budget SEK 10.9 billion in 2007 (€ 1.9 billion)

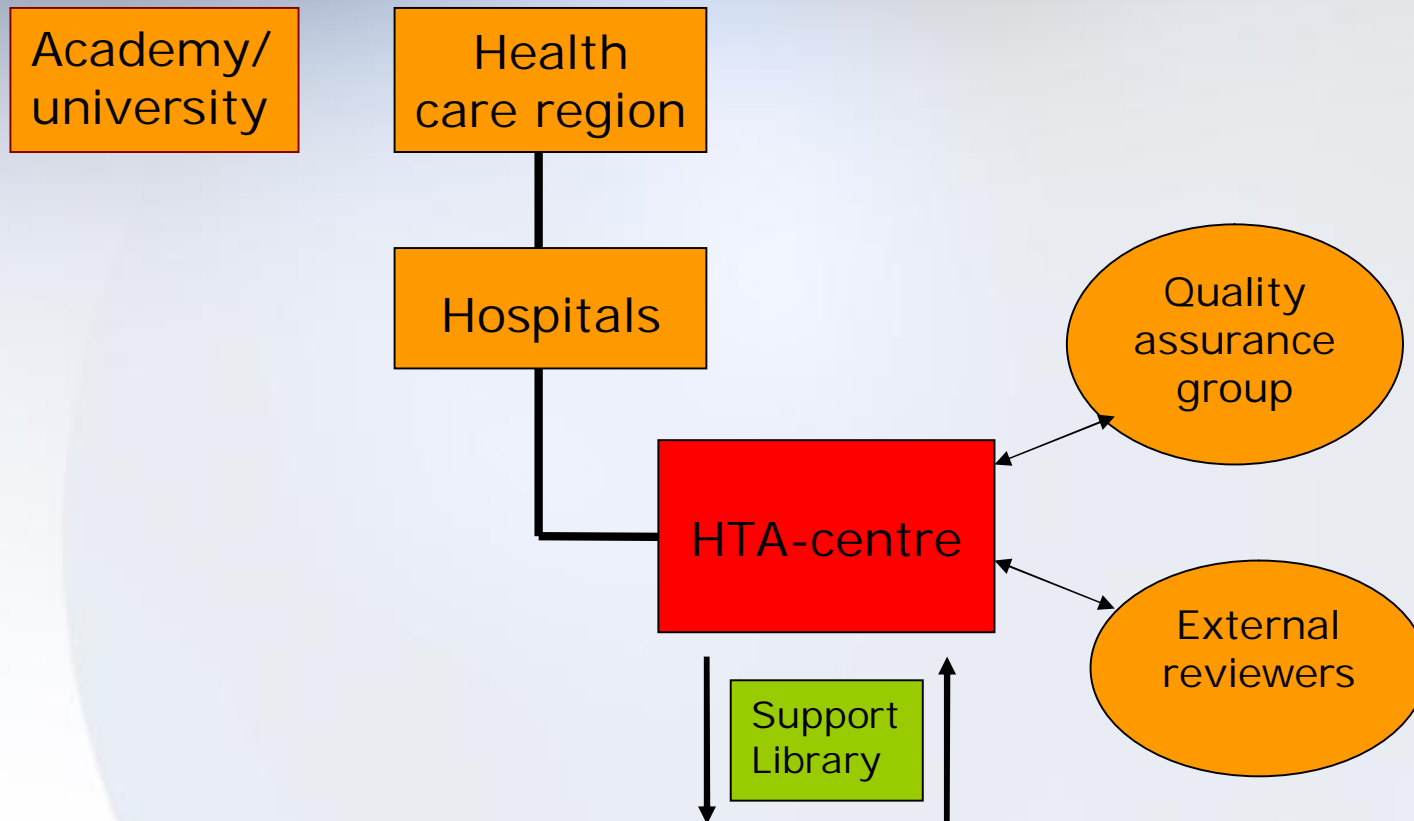
Libraries at Sahlgrenska University Hospital

- Three medical libraries, one at every large hospital unit – Mölndals sjukhus, Sahlgrenska sjukhuset, Östra sjukhuset
- Seven librarians (including chief librarian and IT-librarian), two library assistants
- The libraries support hospital staff in their clinical work, learning and research

What is HTA?

”HTA [Health Technology Assessment] is a multidisciplinary field of policy analysis. It studies the medical, social, ethical and economic implications of development, diffusion, and use of health technology”.
(INAHTA, 2002)

Leads to EBP, with an emphasis on ethical, economical and organizational considerations



Clinicians/project group working with different mini-HTAs throughout the hospital and health care region

HTA-centre at Sahlgrenska

- Project July 2006
- Proper centre October 2007
- 4 part-time project leaders, 1 full-time assistant
- Library support – staff, access to publications, etc.
- Economist
- Quality Assurance Group
- External reviewers

Aims

The HTA-centre aims to:

- support decision making on different levels throughout the organization

(all new methods/technologies with an annual budget of 1 million SEK or more have to go through an assessment process)

- help hospital staff improve knowledge of critical appraisal and levels of evidence

(implementation facilitated by local ownership)

HTA in practice

- A subject for assessment is proposed to HTA-centre
- If accepted, the head of the department in question appoints a small project group – preferably with different professional categories, with different levels of research experience, and if suitable also a multidisciplinary group
- Educational day – research question and PICO decided upon
- Library performs searches, reads and excludes/includes abstracts and articles, sends end result to clinicians for appraisal

HTA in practice - contd

- The clinicians – the project group – fills out a protocol consisting of 23 questions, concerning different aspects of levels of evidence, ethics, organization and economy
- Two independent reviewers review the completed protocol with the literature included
- Final report is approved by the Quality Assurance Group, together with a short résumé and statement
- 6-8 weeks process

Library contribution

Contributes with information specialist expertise

Provides publications needed and normal library services

A combination of information expertise and a proper library facilitates a smoother workflow

Library work in practice

- Before PICO-meeting – preliminary search, getting to know the subject
- At the meeting, which is part of an educational day, the library plays an active role in helping to define the question
- Two librarians devise the search strategy and perform searches in different databases

- Library responsible for reading all the abstracts and relevant articles and for exclusion/inclusion based on PICO
- Relevant articles are sent to the project group for appraisal
- Library appendix – search strategy, graphic presentation of selection process, reference lists, etc.

Quality control - always two librarians working together

What's different?

- Searching, listing references, distributing articles – all business as usual
- Responsibility for reading abstracts & articles and selecting articles to be appraised by the project group – new, different and maybe a little scary

Implications for the library

- New and higher status. Recognition of our services and competence
- Changes the way we have previously worked, and poses new challenges and demands on the individual librarian
- New priorities - e.g. what to do, who should we give service to

What does this mean for the librarian? What's expected of me?

- Knowledge of and belief in HTA
- Knowledge of critical appraisal, study design, what kind of questions different study designs are likely to answer
- Fast reader
- Decent knowledge of English
- Be able to work under pressure of time

What does this mean... contd

- Be confident enough to weed out abstracts and articles, and defend that selection for the clinicians
- Medical background – not really necessary
- Familiarity with medical terminology
- Most important – a willingness to learn new things, and a genuine interest in medicine/nursing

Conclusions

- **Library impact on health care becomes obvious**
- **Beneficial for the library – new challenges and opportunities**
- **Beneficial for the librarian – it's fun and demanding!**
- **Reached our vision:**
Hospital staff should look at the library as a natural partner in their daily work – clinically and during research and education