# The Development of Medical Library Consortia in Taiwan

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### Abstract

#### Objectives:

In recent years, medical libraries in Taiwan are facing challenges of budget reducing but cost increasing. Also, the development and widespread use of e-journals have facilitated hospital libraries to build up digital library consortia. The Medical Library Committe, Library Association of the Republic of China (Taiwan), which is also known as LARMLC, provides comprehensive services to medical libraries. According to the nature of each medical library consortia, LARMLC assists on presenting and promoting consortia, disseminate their missions and visions to libraries, and also encourage libraries to join consortia that would meet their needs. This article introduces the history, resources, and current situation of the largest medical library consortia in Taiwan, compares their differences, and then describes the role and potential functions of the LARMLC. At the end, the authors propose suggestions for future development.

#### Method:

Review related literatures, websites, and internal documents of famous medical library consortia in the US and Canada; Survey the history, resources, and current situation of the largest medical library consortia in Taiwan; Suggest the role and functions of the LARMLC.

#### Results:

Demonstrate the status of famous medical library consortia in the US and Canada, and then focus on the development of medical library consortia in Taiwan, by introducing and comparing the start up, electronic resources, and current status of the largest medical library consortia in Taiwan.

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- 1. Consortium for Medical Electronic Resources in Taiwan (MERIT) National Taiwan University Medical Library, 2000
- 3. Taipei Medical University Digital Library Consrotium (TMU DiLib) Taipei Medical University, 2003
- 5. Project of united purchasing of core biomedical science journals and databases

National Taiwan University Medical College, 2004

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- 2. Electronic Library of the Department of Health, Executive Yuan Department of Health, Executive Yuan, 2003
- 4. Digital Medical Resources Cooperative Network of Veterans Hospitals Taipei Veterans General Hospital, 2003
- 6. Armed Forces Hospital Digital Library
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  National Defense Medical Center, 2005
- 7. United purchasing consrotium of electronic resources in cetnral and southern Taiwan

  National Cheng Kung Unviersity Medical Library, 2005

#### LARMLC

Medical Libraries in Taiwan, other than those under research institutions and medical universities, there are still nearly around 400 mid or small sized ones across the medical centers, regional hospitals and district hospitals. Due to the situation that 7 main consortia all operate independently, library funds and resource collections have been shared out scattered, hence such disadvantage disables the chance for the libraries from having the sufficient budget to effectively bargain with vendors who carry information resources such as database and e-journals. As a result, in 2007, the LARMLC (Library Association of Republic of China Medical Library Committee) came up with a solution called "united purchasing", the LARMLC represent all medical libraries in Taiwan to deal with all of the procurement activities. In September 2007, on the LARMLC annual meeting, Micromedex and LWW sales representatives were invited to state their global pricing and marketing plans toward Taiwan market. On the meeting, the LARMLC decided to conduct a survey at the medical libraries about the price that the medical libraries were charged for before and the user demand in regards with those two above mentioned resources, so that the LARMLC could use it as a reference for further price negotiation. After a convincing and intensive negotiation, Micromedex agreed to raise 5% from the last year price only, which is the first time in history that Micromedex had yielded, surrendering extra 10% increase it usually required. LWW also offered a consortium special discount for all libraries in Taiwan. Such accomplishment brings the medical libraries the benefits of lower the procurement expenses and fasten procurement precesses.

#### Conclusions:

- 1. Introducing diverse types of resources
- 2. Expanding the cooperative levels
- 3. Strengthening the cooperation with consortia of medical societies
- 4. Establishing communication channels among consortia
- 5. Pursuing sustainable development of consortium operation