

AEBPLI goes to NZ

This year the 8th Australian Evidence Based Practice Librarians' Institute (AEBPLI) will be held for the first time in New Zealand! What an exciting opportunity to collaborate with our international colleagues. You may be thinking about attending, or perhaps sending a staff member along and wondering what to expect. Bryan Chan is a Reference Librarian from Murdoch University in Perth and attended the 2018 intensive course in Sydney...



ABOVE – Bryan Chan, Reference Librarian at Murdoch University in Perth, responsible for the Chiropractic, Counselling, Exercise Science and Psychology subjects.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The AEBPLI is an ongoing, educational project coordinating an international team of library educators to provide a residential training program for librarians working in healthcare settings located throughout Australia and surrounding countries. The Institute has successfully conducted workshops in Brisbane, Darwin, Sydney, Perth, Melbourne and Adelaide. The Institute is an intensive four-day course designed and taught by health sciences librarians. Through discussion and hands-on learning, participants acquire skills needed to support evidence-based practice and systematic reviews. A hallmark of this Institute is the low student to faculty ratio and individual attention each participant receives. In 2014, the Institute received the HLA/HCN Health Informatics Innovation Award for its impact on health information professionals.

REFLECTIONS ON THE 2018 INSTITUTE

Set in the picturesque Mary McKillop Place in North Sydney, the Australian Evidence-Based Practice Librarians' Institute (AEBPLI) drew 24 participants and 7 instructors from across the university and health sectors in Australia and three other nations. There were many opportunities for networking, as all attendees lived on-site and shared meals together. Social activities included the welcome dinner, a walk in Wendy's Secret Garden, and Jeopardy Night. The idyll was only disrupted by bad weather that cancelled the Harbour Bridge walk, and construction work (which also broke the Wi-Fi—don't blame that on Ralph).

But make no mistake, this was no conference. Also known as "Boot Camp for Health Librarians", AEBPLI is a gruelling four-day crash course in evidence-based health practice – the same material delivered to medical students, but adapted for librarians. Topics included study design, PICO questions, randomised controlled trials, qualitative research, grey literature, and the systematic review with all its cousins. And let's not forget database searching, text mining and visualisations – no decent librarians' workshop can exist without that!

As a new health librarian, I was anxiously awaiting this opportunity – in the sense that I was looking forward to it, and also because I didn't know what to expect. Despite having a detailed course schedule and description, I erroneously expected a strong emphasis on systematic reviews (the horror!) – and was pleasantly surprised to find it the focus of 'only' one day. Perhaps it is symptomatic of being an academic librarian who supports research more than practice. I expect hospital librarians get a whole different set of queries. That in itself was an eye-opening experience.

But there were plenty of other things to learn. The format was a mix of large group 'lectures' and small group workshops, providing ample opportunity to get our hands dirty analysing PubMed query translations, parsing MeSH headings, and debating the effectiveness of acetazolamide versus budesonide for acute mountain sickness. When many of us started losing the forest plot, a diagnosis (remember: 'sensitivity' and 'specificity') of qualitative data saturation was made, and we were prescribed umbrella reviews, which are believed to have a relative risk reduction of 50%. This still left me pondering the meaning of life and the meaninglessness of "double blind", but a healthy diet of FRISBE and Bourke Street Bakery case studies pushed me across the line of no effect.

If any of the above made sense to you, you've probably been through the Institute. But if not, AEBPLI 2019 is just around the corner!