This study seeks to identify challenges facing health sciences librarians who work in general academic libraries and determine whether membership in professional associations could provide needed support.

Methods
A web-based descriptive survey with closed- and open-ended questions was used. Participants were identified and invited from the NAHRS (Nursing and Allied Health Resources Section) and invited to participate were also sent to MLCA-L and discussion lists affiliated with MAA, AHA, and AGA.

Participants were given the opportunity to provide an email address for further contact and were assured of confidentiality. Open-ended questions asked for personal and institutional information.

The survey was open for seven weeks and was sent to 453 people. The survey was completed by 154 respondents, resulting in a 34.1% completion rate.

47% of respondents were female, and 20% worked in a university library. 27% (42) of respondents indicated that they serve as mentors (N=154) and 20.9% (32) of respondents reported that they have a mentor (N=153). Most mentoring activity reported was intra-institutional.

Discussion list moderators who facilitated the use of their lists to publicize the survey: Alison Bobal (STS-L), Cynthia Geremia (SLA-DPHT), Christine Marton (PHHA-LIB), Frank Mason (DENTALIB), Kenley Neufeld (CJC-L), Mary Piorun (MEDLIB-L), Erika Sevetson (PSS), and Carol Vreeland (SLA-DBIO)

Ian McCall and Sharon Granderson of Instructional Support Services at Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale for poster layout and design

We wish to thank the following people for their assistance with this study and poster:

Kate Corcoran for her helpful suggestions about the survey and for providing electronic access to the NAHRS Membership Directory

The NAHRS Executive Board for giving us permission to use the NAHRS Membership Directory in order to contact NAHRS members for this survey

The survey participants

The survey was sent to 453 people, 154 responded, resulting in a 34.1% completion rate.

Most respondents (94.1%) belong to a professional association (N=153). 134 reported belonging to more than one library professional association.

Mentoring
27.3% (42) of respondents indicated that they serve as mentors (N=154) and 20.9% (32) of respondents reported that they have a mentor (N=153). Most mentoring activity reported was intra-institutional.

Support for Diverse Subjects and Functions

How does your support for health sciences patrons differ? (N=142)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching evidence-based searching is more demanding/stressful</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patron's need/demand more individualized attention and services</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrons require up-to-date information</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collections must be up-to-date/weeded</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More requests for instruction sessions</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' research requirements are more intense</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The health sciences as a whole are more specialized/intense</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Budgetary Support
Approximately 80% of respondents rated their library’s budget for both health sciences and non-health sciences materials as good to excellent. However, adequate budgetary support for health sciences materials was the second most frequently mentioned challenge.

Challenges
Must support a large number of health sciences and non-health sciences programs (breadth)
Spend the greatest portion of their time supporting health sciences programs (depth)
Provide virtually all support functions for health sciences programs (breadth and depth)

Time management challenges due to breadth and depth of their duties
Could benefit from engaging in mentor/mentee relationships with other health sciences librarians in general academic libraries

Conclusions About Health Sciences Librarians in General Academic Libraries Based on This Survey

A greater percentage of librarians who work in general academic libraries face challenges related to budgetary support and time management than those who work in health sciences libraries.

We should consider mentor/mentee relationships as a means to promote the professional development of health sciences librarians in general academic libraries.

Librarians Supporting Health Sciences Programs in General Academic Libraries

Differences Between Supporting Health Sciences and Non-Health Sciences

Provide different kinds of service to health sciences programs.
Face greater challenges and stress meeting needs of health sciences programs.
Spend 60.1% more time serving health sciences compared to non-health sciences (42.1% vs. 26.3%)

Approximately 80% of respondents rated their library’s budget for both health sciences and non-health sciences materials as good to excellent.
However, adequate budgetary support for health sciences materials was the second most frequently mentioned challenge.

Must support a large number of health sciences and non-health sciences programs (breadth)
Spend the greatest portion of their time supporting health sciences programs (depth)
Provide virtually all support functions for health sciences programs (breadth and depth)

Analyzing the data from the survey, it appears that health sciences librarians in general academic libraries face greater challenges and stress meeting the needs of these programs compared to non-health sciences programs. They spend a significantly greater amount of time supporting health sciences programs, and many report budgetary constraints as a major challenge.

The typical respondent is a female working full-time in a university library as a liaison and choosing to be a health sciences librarian. They have median age of 51 years, median years since library science masters of 15, median years in current position of 10.

Median age: 51 years
Median years since library science masters: 15
Median years in current position: 10

Support for diverse subjects and functions

The survey results show that health sciences librarians in general academic libraries face significant time management challenges due to breadth and depth of their duties. They could benefit from engaging in mentor/mentee relationships with other health sciences librarians in general academic libraries.

The survey was conducted among 154 health sciences librarians in general academic libraries. The survey sought to identify challenges facing these librarians and determine whether membership in professional associations could provide needed support.

Numerous challenges were reported, including budgetary support, time management, and professional development opportunities. The survey findings suggest that mentor/mentee relationships could be beneficial for promoting the professional development of health sciences librarians in general academic libraries.

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Professional Association Membership

96.1% of respondents belong to a professional association (N=153)
134 reported belonging to more than one library professional association

Mentoring
27.3% (42) of respondents indicated that they serve as mentors (N=154)
20.9% (32) of respondents reported that they have a mentor (N=153)
Most mentoring activity reported was intra-institutional