CILIP Health Libraries Group Conference 2018
14th - 15th June 2018
Keele University, Stoke-on-Trent
#HLG2018

Note:
Most of the presentations (keynotes and workshops) can now be found here, and recordings of the keynotes are available here.

I would recommend attending the HLG conference because …

As I am still fairly 'new' to the Health Libraries landscape, I found the HLG conference to be a really valuable experience for getting to know people from across the country, and from a range of backgrounds. (That said, even if you have never attended the HLG conference, you are likely to recognise a number of names from mailing lists!)

The most useful thing that I learnt was ….

I found it really useful to see so much discussion of research, and likely biased my conference experience to signing up to as many of these sessions as possible! I have assisted with literature searches in my Traineeship, but have never created a research project from the ground up; this is something I need to gain more knowledge of before I start a postgraduate qualification (especially if I choose to do the MA option), so these workshops really did help me understand the research landscape better.

The workshop I found most useful was …

Dr Ruth Carlyle's session on health literacy was really valuable for understanding the statistics we see about how well people actually understand their health. These are foundation skills that a significant proportion of the population lack; as part of the workshop, we were asked to evaluate a medicine leaflet and collectively feedback on how well we felt we were able to understand this, and where the leaflet failed to provide adequate information. (The range of responses in the room really demonstrated how poor some of these leaflets are, so it's no wonder that people struggle with health information!)

The most engaging speaker was …

I really enjoyed the second keynote, which was delivered by Dr Mark Murphy. This was a rather different perspective on health information, coming not from a librarian/information professional but from a clinician's experience around Evidence-Based Medicine, and it contained such gems as discussion on "evidence-based metaphor" as a form of linguistic deceit.
Andy Wright and Rachel Heydecker's talk on *Engaging Libraries* was also a really interesting topic, and explored the Public Library Universal Health Offer: supporting and promoting the health and wellbeing of communities.
I was particularly interested in this keynote because of partnership working opportunities between health libraries and public libraries, and our own work with Leeds Libraries during Health Information Week 2018.

The presentation that really struck me was …

Dr Catherine Ebenezer (PhD graduand at the University of Sheffield) gave a really fascinating presentation on her research into information barriers within the NHS, and the difficulties that staff can face when trying to access the up-to-date information that they need.
We've all run foul of the restrictions that IT firewalls throw in our paths, and to see this explored in depth and some of the trends involved was really fascinating. I would love to read about this in more detail!

I felt that the key theme of the conference was …

There seemed to be a few different key threads to the conference: there was a definite undercurrrent of hands-on engagement with research, alongside rumination on the #AmillionDecisions campaign that was launched in 2017.

Health literacy and general health & wellbeing were also highlighted, along with the new toolkit!

Jennifer Roberts @bookstitcher · Jun 14
Looking to do more with Health Literacy? There's a toolkit for that!
hee.nhs.uk/our-work/healt… #HLG2018

Health literacy
With Public Health England, NHS England and Community Health and Learning Foundation, we have invested in an innovative project to develop, test and im...
hee.nhs.uk

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The conference venue …

Keele University has a beautiful campus, which felt quite remote and peaceful—even if there were villages practically on the doorstep! However, I was somewhat less enamoured with the Chancellor's Building itself. The workshop rooms all felt a bit 'on top of each other', and the exhibition areas likewise felt cramped and fairly difficult to navigate (especially when queuing for lunch in the same space!)

I was also underwhelmed with the booking system for the parallel sessions. There was no opportunity to amend any session choices, other than "wait to see if there's space"; also, at least a few people had booked sessions in advance only to find they were not included on the list. There was no room for error (whether human or system), nor for any change in interests or priorities. I would have hoped to see a little more leeway here.

My conference highlight …

It's hard to beat a pair of ducks showing up for morning t'ai chi…

Maria José Simões @MariaJSimoes · Jun 15

Tai Chi first thing, on the beautiful grounds of Keele Hall on a beautiful morning. Even the ducks joined in! #HLG2018