

Provision of Research Assessment Services in Academic Health Sciences Libraries

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Article begins on next page

Provision of Research Assessment Services in Academic Health Sciences Libraries



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BACKGROUND

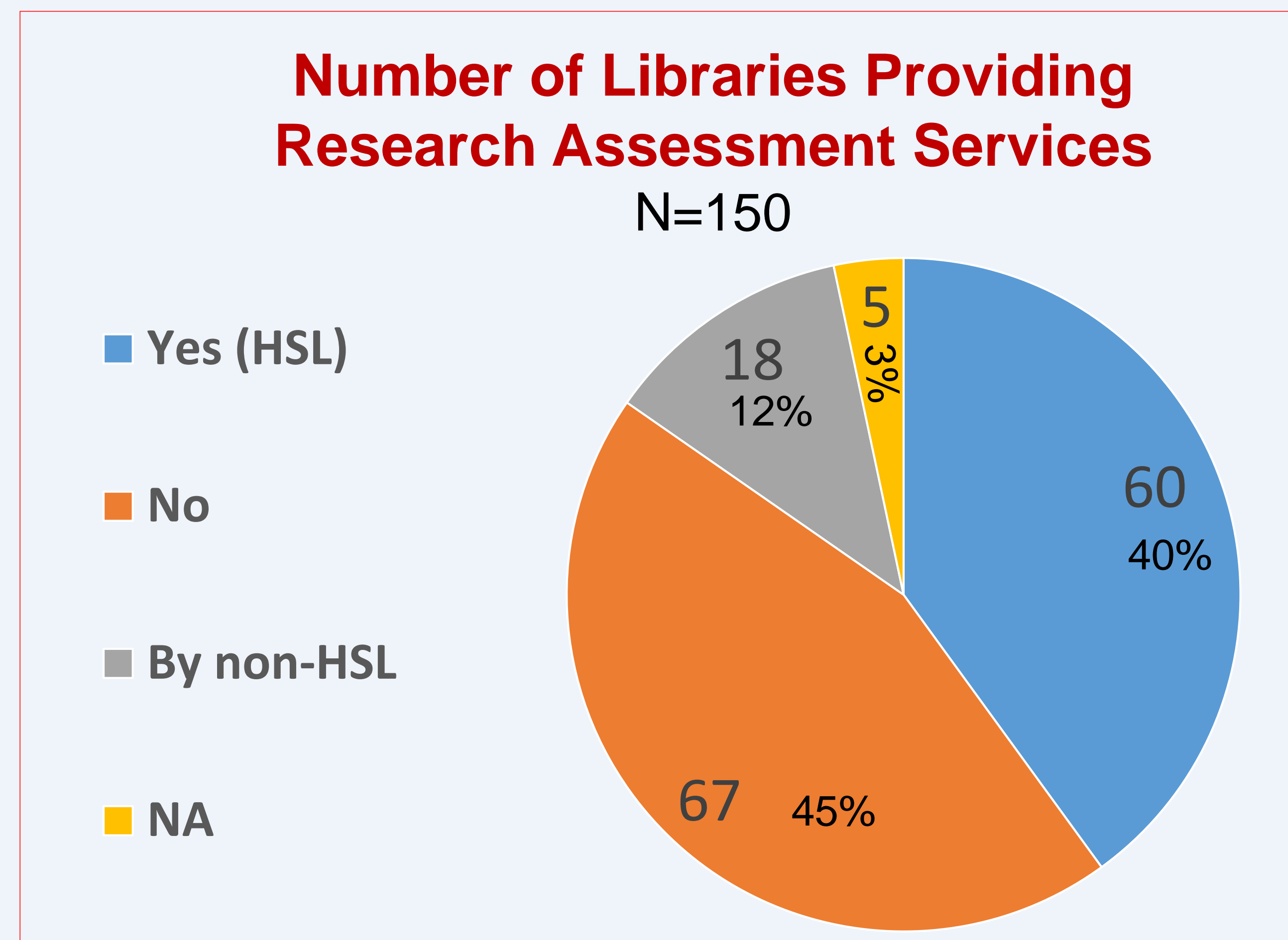
Academic health sciences libraries have been providing research support services. However, most did not include research assessment services until recently when such services become demanded. Research impact has often been measured by traditional metrics such as journal impact factor, citation counts, and h-index. However these factors do not provide a complete picture of the impact of a particular article or a particular researcher. Many questions were raised on the validity of using these metrics alone to measure the research impact. Therefore, alternative metrics, often referred to as altmetrics, emerged to complement the traditional metrics. Measuring research impact is becoming more and more complex yet demanded more and more in the scholarly communications landscape. Librarians are good at adapting to meet the emerging needs of their clients.

OBJECTIVES

This study aims to investigate if, what, and how research assessment services are provided by academic health sciences libraries. The findings will help librarians develop effective research assessment services to meet researchers' needs.

METHODS

A list of academic health sciences libraries (N=150) was downloaded from AAHSL Membership Directory: http://www.aahsl.org/index.php?option=com_community&view=search&searchId=117383 on January 10, 2018. Data were extracted from their websites mainly in the areas of research services, classes, workshops, special programs and library research guides aiming to answer these questions: 1) Are research assessment services being provided? 2) If yes, what levels of assessment services are provided? 3) How are the research assessment services provided? 4) What other research support services are provided? When a website did not post enough or clear information, contacting listed point persons was pursued to acquire additional information and clarification about the service. Data collected were recorded in an excel file and analyzed accordingly.



Level of Research Assessment Services
N=60

Level 1, Basic – Provided basic and brief information on research metrics resources and tools.	N=21, 35%
Level 2, Intermediary – Provided research guides with detailed information and contacts for assistance if help is needed.	N=22, 37%
Level 3, Advanced – Provided dedicated and advanced services on research evaluation by designated professionals.	N=17, 28%



RESULTS

- 60 out of 150 libraries (40%) provided research assessment services at various levels.
- Among the 60 academic health sciences libraries,
 - 21 (35%) libraries provided basic level services with a brief guide on research metrics;
 - 22 (37%) offered intermediary level with trainings or detailed research guides to measure research impact;
 - 17 (28%) provided formal services by designated professionals or via special programs;
- 18 (12%) have access to research assessment services provided by non-health sciences libraries in their academic libraries systems.
- 67 libraries (45%) did not have such services;
- 5 (3%) were excluded due to various reasons.
- The study also revealed other types of research services offered in the studied libraries.

CONCLUSIONS

- More academic health sciences libraries than expected provided services on research assessment or evaluation support in addition to many other types of research support services.
- However, most libraries provided research assessment services at a very limited level except a small number of libraries that offer very formal bibliometric services to their users.
- It would be beneficial for these providers to share what lessons they learned and what programs proved to be effective.
- A subsequent study might be needed to survey these libraries and service providers to make recommendations on best practices.

SELECTED READINGS

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