



Tribute to Lynn Dunikowski and the Canadian Library of Family Medicine

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Dear Colleagues,

Soon after I began as Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer, Lynn Dunikowski, Director of the Canadian Library of Family Medicine (CLFM), informed me that she planned to retire at the end of June this year. It was only then that I realized that our association with Western University in London, Ont, had been in existence and flourished for nearly 40 years—and Lynn was a part of that for more than 30 years. A lot has happened during this time; Lynn has been kind enough to share some important milestones.

At the time, the association between the CLFM at Western and the CFPC was a bold move. In the mid-1960s, family medicine as an academic discipline was in its earliest stages of development. Western was the first university to create a residency in family medicine in 1966 (3 years' duration at the time). Dr Ian McWhinney (to whom Lynn credits her good understanding of family medicine) and others at Western had begun to develop the intellectual and practical foundations of our discipline. Although not an unlikely marriage, it was a long-distance one.

Lynn started at the CLFM as an indexer for FAMILI (Family Medicine Literature Index), which she later edited. She took the helm as Director in 1983. Reminiscing with Lynn reminded me of how far we have come. Literature searches in the early days were done using the print Index Medicus volumes and MEDLARS, the early version of MEDLINE. There were no monitors. "One had to look at the paper scrolling down off the DECwriter to see search results," Lynn remembers. The next innovation was CD-ROM searches, with a monthly subscription service to Index Medicus CD-ROMs and, at the end of each year, a pile of outdated, unusable disks. This is a far cry from Web-based searching today through PubMed, which is user friendly and free to anyone with Internet access. Although so much more information is easily accessible, finding the right information is, if anything, harder today.


More recent trends in library services, according to Lynn, include the open-access publishing movement, the increasing value of social media, the rise of institutional repositories, and the changing role of systematic reviews.

During her time with the CLFM, Lynn is particularly proud of 4 accomplishments.

- Her involvement with *Canadian Family Physician* (CFP). She helped to guide CFP through 2 applications to be indexed in Index Medicus, a process that was ultimately successful in 1993. This initiative gave CFP worldwide visibility in the family medicine community.
- Her work to get CFP into the US National Library of Medicine's free digitization program. As a result, complete, high-quality digital versions of the journal back to 1967 can now be accessed on PubMed Central. There were 90 149 downloads in the first 3 months of 2015.¹
- Her development of the CLFM website. The library had a website before the CFPC did.
- Her participation in the development of Pearls.ce, the program for those who choose to obtain their Certification in Family Medicine through the practice-eligible route. This program was created as evidence-based medicine was coming of age, and when critical appraisal of the literature to inform clinical decisions became better defined. Searching the literature is a key component of the Pearls program, so a librarian's input both in the development stage and in ongoing support for members was essential.

What has given Lynn the most satisfaction over the years has been the opportunity to work for and with members of the College, either through individual requests for searches or through her work on committees. As she points out, "It's very satisfying to be able to get the right information to the right person at the right time I've made a lot of real connections with College members across the country—most of whom I've never met in person." She also notes of working with committees, "being in a room with a lot of smart, talented, and often funny people, when the ideas start to roll, is a great privilege."

In addition to Lynn, we want to also thank Lorraine Schoel and David Le Sauvage, 2 library assistants who have worked closely with Lynn over much of her time at Western.

Besides her many professional achievements, Lynn's kindness, warmth, intelligence, and sense of humour will also be greatly missed. Lynn, it is a privilege to take this opportunity (there will be others) to thank you for supporting us over 3 decades during a period of incredible transformation in how knowledge is accessed and disseminated. Best wishes as you begin this new phase of your life. 

Reference

1. PubMed Central Publisher Services [website]. Canadian Family Physician statistics. Bethesda, MD: US National Library of Medicine; 2015.

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