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Position Paper

My work outside of the information science domain includes research, practice, writing, and service in the medical and consumer health domains. Crossing boundaries to use the medical/health domains as arenas to research information science has proven productive. These domains provide milieus in which the use of information can be studied as the information use parallels the episodes of health care from beginning to end.

I am conducting research on the information behavior of physicians, specifically focused on “What is ‘enough information’ for physicians to make clinical decisions?” This question examines factors, especially contextual aspects, that influence judgments of what is “enough information” to make a decision. This research is based on a theoretical framework and a conceptual model drawing on phenomenology, philosophy, clinical medicine, cognitive science; this demonstrates the influence of disciplines other than information science on the study of information seeking and use. This question has important implications for the design of information retrieval systems. It has significance for improving the quality of health care by using medical information more effectively.

My practice in evidence-based medicine includes conducting expert searching of evidence-based resources for the development of systematic reviews and meta-analyses used by governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations to make policy. My work included filtering of primary research and writing reports.

My interest in health care also extends beyond the information and physicians to information and consumers. My research interest in consumer health considers the issues of what consumers should and should not know. While it is important that consumers are informed about their health, this issue also crosses boundaries of ethics, public policy, psychosocial study, and group-based social identities. My work in consumer health also included writing a book titled *The Medical Library Association Guide to Heart Disease Information* (Neal-Schuman Publishers). I am very involved in the Medical Library Association, furthering the theory and practice of health sciences information work, and serve on the editorial review board of the *Journal of the Medical Library Association*. I also work on national and local boards of this association, primarily to plan continuing education programs on informatics and related topics.

Finally, I am working as a research assistant on “Taking Action through Learning and Knowledge Sharing in Diabetes Management,” a project sponsored by The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK).

Trans-disciplinary work provides an opportunity in which to investigate questions of information science and the contributions of information science to improving the practice of health care – and ultimately the health status of consumers. And, of course, being involved in the health/medical domain infuses my information science work with the meaning of making even a small contribution to maintenance and improvement of health.

