



Trinidad and Tobago's Contribution to BIREME's MedCaribe Database

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Abstract

BIREME's MedCarib is an Open Access database comprising health information publications from the English-speaking Caribbean and Suriname. This database functions under the umbrella of a network of Latin American and Caribbean health libraries of which The University of the West Indies, (UWI) Medical Sciences Library (MSL) is a member.

This presentation will highlight important aspects of some strategies adopted by Trinidad and Tobago that have facilitated its continued support to the development, growth, and robustness of the MedCarib database.

At a workshop held on Thursday 22nd June, 2017 at the Faculty of the Medical Sciences Library (FMS) entitled, *MEDCARIB - Reviewing Progress and Charting a Way Forward Medical/Health Literature in the English-speaking Caribbean*, participants of the MedCarib network who were present outlined many challenges they experienced while supporting the MedCarib initiative.

The greatest challenge expressed by members was the loss of personnel initially sensitized and trained in implementing the MedCarib initiative methodology. This exodus, though gradual, led to a loss of personnel with the skill set to continue with the work of the MedCarib database. Therefore, guidance and peer support were not readily available at all MedCarib Centres. Other challenges included active coordination for the review of output from the Centres, the allocation of resources to support the work of the MedCarib initiative and the marketing of this valuable resource.

Despite these challenges, Trinidad and Tobago, through its contributions made mainly from the TT5 Centre at The UWI's MSL continued to add quality records annually helping to grow and strengthen the MedCarib database. In an attempt to face these challenges, two main

strategies were adopted at Center TT5. These were, integrating the MedCarib database into the Indexing Unit at Center TT5 and continuous training of staff with the MedCarib Methodology. These measures led to the addition of 3407 entries and training ensured there was personnel with the necessary knowledge and skill set.

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