

TEACHING IN MEDICAL LIBRARIES – AN ANALYSIS OF PUBLICATIONS FROM EUROPE IN MEDLINE

Leena Lodenius¹, Mari Honkanen¹
leena.lodenius@duodecim.fi

¹ Current Care Guidelines, the Finnish Medical Society Duodecim, Helsinki, Finland

Introduction

Teaching is one of the key functions in medical libraries. Accordingly it can be assumed that there are a lot of publications on teaching in Medline. As members of EAHIL are looking forward to closer cooperation in the educational field, the publication activity in Europe is of special interest.

Methods

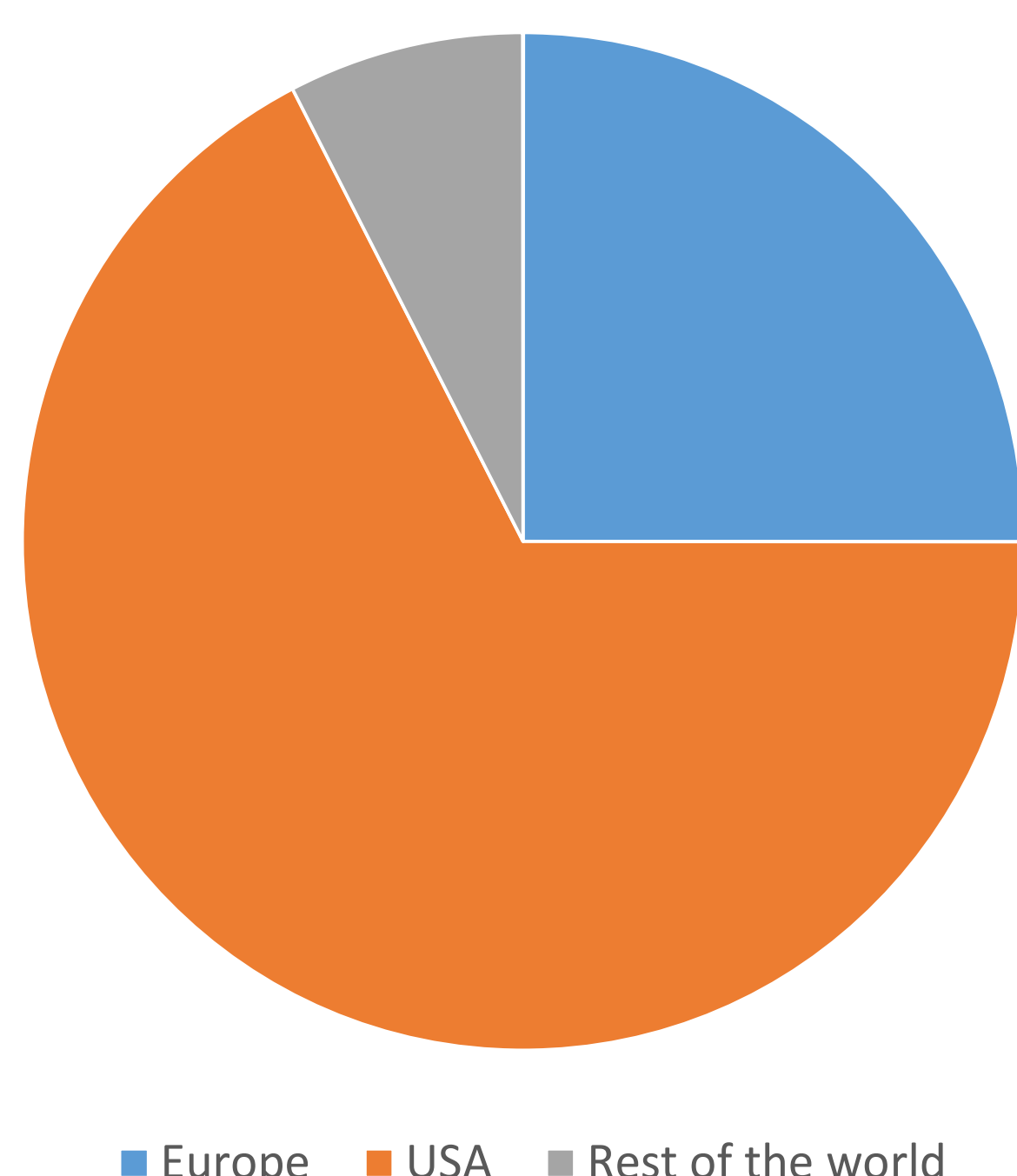
A search in Medline was carried out by using the focused MeSH terms TEACHING and MEDICAL LIBRARIES since

year 2000. The results were sorted geographically (Europe, USA, rest of the world) and analysed by publication types and content.

The contents of the publications was analysed and compared Europe versus the rest of the world by adding to the basic search strategy further restricting MeSH terms such as Librarians, Teaching/methods, Problem-based learning, Distance learning and Communication. The target groups of teaching in medical libraries were also analysed. In addition the journals where the articles were published were examined.

Results

Out of 92 references only 23 were published by Europeans, 62 by Americans and 7 by the rest of the world after the duplicates had been omitted.



■ Europe ■ USA ■ Rest of the world

The contents of the articles on teaching in medical libraries were also analysed and there were clearly popular topics and on the other hand totally missing but important topics. They are described with MeSH-terms as follows:

Most popular topics combined with teaching in medical libraries:	Only a few or totally missing important topics combined with teaching in medical libraries:
+ librarians	+ continuing medical education or postgraduate medical education
+ professional competence or professional role	+ nurses
+ teaching/methods	+ consumer satisfaction
+ distance education or computer assisted instruction	+ staff (about staff development)
+ program evaluation	+ internationality or international cooperation
	+ research or library science

Conclusions

In Medline the proportion of European publications on teaching in medical libraries is quite low. It is remarkable as teaching activities have strongly increased within the last three decades. One explanation is that European library professionals mostly publish articles in their own professional journal JEAHIL that is not included in Medline. However, more active publishing on pedagogical matters would encourage library professionals to experiment with new teaching methods and to implement them into the practice.

Another reason for the low number of European publications on teaching in Medline could be the language barrier. Foreign-language authors often have to use expensive translators to proof-read the language. Perhaps EAHIL could provide support by establishing a register of volunteer translators.

The publishing should be extended beyond the library professional journals such as clinical or pedagogical journals. This would bring more visibility of teaching activities in medical libraries.

The old truth is also true for medical libraries: publish, not perish!