



*executive committee of  
the directing council*

PAN AMERICAN  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION

*working party of  
the regional committee*

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



66th Meeting  
Washington, D.C.  
July 1971

---

Draft Agenda Item 20

CE66/3, Rev. 1 (Eng.)  
23 June 1971  
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

REGIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE

PROPOSED PROGRAM AND BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE  
REGIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE FOR 1972 AND  
PRELIMINARY DRAFT FOR 1973

I. INTRODUCTION

The Directing Council, at its XIX Meeting held from 29 September to 10 October 1969, decided "to instruct the Director to submit each year to the Executive Committee, the Program and Budget Estimates of the Regional Library for the following year" (Resolution XIX, operative paragraph 3, Official Document No. 99).

This document has been prepared in accordance with those instructions and covers the period 1969 to 31 March 1971. The purpose of the Regional Library of Medicine is to provide the biomedical scientific information needed by professional health workers in Latin America. Its first services were provided in 1969 to Brazil and have gradually been extended to other countries in the Americas.

Studies made in 1965 and 1966 by expert groups brought to light sizeable limitations and gaps in the matter of documentation and scientific communication, as evidenced by the following shortcomings:

- (a) Most of the collections of scientific reviews in medical libraries are incomplete, and, as a rule, there are very few of them.
- (b) Trained librarians are few and far between and poorly paid.
- (c) The accommodation available to libraries is usually insufficient.
- (d) Funds are limited and their payment is frequently delayed, the result being a loss of the issues for the months prior to the release of funds.
- (e) Consequently, libraries are not in a position to plan or organize programs designed to meet the needs of medical education, scientific research, and professional practice.

In March 1967, PAHO concluded an agreement with the Government of Brazil and the Escola Paulista de Medicina for the establishment of the Regional Library of Medicine (RLM), which was to serve as a center for biomedical communications and would use the library and the staff of the Escola Paulista de Medicina, which were to be duly increased. In 1967 and 1968 efforts were made to increase the bibliographical holdings from 1964 onwards, and in 1969 the holdings from 1960 to 1964. It was also decided to include unindexed Latin American reviews and to cover the other health sciences, such as the behavioral sciences, administration of medical

services, medical care, and medical economics. In this regard, valuable assistance has been provided by the United States National Library of Medicine, through its credits with the United States Book Exchange, Inc.

The organizational structure of RLM comprises the administration, regional services, technical services, reference and documentation services, book exchange, and gift services. The staff of the Director's office consists of a trilingual secretary and an administrative assistant.

RLM also has a Scientific Advisory Committee composed of outstanding personalities in the fields of librarianship, the medical sciences, and medical education, from various Latin American countries. The Pan American Federation of Associations of Medical Schools is represented on the Committee by its Associate Executive Director. The Committee is responsible for charting the policy of the library and provides the Director with advice on programs and ways of financing them. At the beginning of September 1968 the Committee met for the first time. One of its recommendations was that a scientific director for the library be appointed without delay, and the person appointed took up his post in early 1969. From that date onwards, the library began to provide services, and its established staff was increased to enable it to achieve the targets established by the Committee. In 1970, a post for a Chief of Technical Services was set up and, at the beginning of 1971, posts for the Chiefs of Regional Services and Reference and Documentation Services.

In mid-1970 the Government of Brazil, through its Ministry of Education and Culture, inaugurated a construction program intended to enlarge the library building. At the present time, about 1,300 square meters is being constructed and will, it is hoped, be completed before the end of 1971. It will then be possible to increase regional services, to install lecture and meeting rooms for the educational program, and to establish a visual aids section and new bibliographical services based on the MEDLARS system and the Abridged Index Medicus.

## II. SUMMARY OF THE PROBLEM

In Latin America at the present time both the amount and quality of scientific information in the biomedical field is poor; there is a lack of manpower and a lack of information about up-to-date reference books, scientific texts, and abstracts, as well as about modern procedures for obtaining bibliographical information.

This problem is compounded by the increasing number of scientific journals and especially of articles being published in various health sciences. This is the result of the great number of research workers whose production is increasing enormously; it is also the result of the increasing

division of knowledge into specialties and subspecialties, and of the emergence of interdisciplinary sciences involving scientists and technicians from very different fields, such as physicists, ecologists, engineers, mathematicians, biochemists, electronic technicians, and computer science technicians.

Accurate information about the extent of the deficit in manpower, bibliographical resources, and funds of biomedical libraries in Latin America is lacking.

### III. PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES

To provide persons in Latin America working in the health sciences, including professional personnel, research workers, and teachers, with greater access to a larger collection of biomedical publications; to train the staff of biomedical libraries; to provide professional health workers with advice; and to undertake research on the use of modern scientific communications media.

To achieve those purposes, the following objectives have been established:

(a) The establishment of a Regional Library of Medicine situated in the Escola Paulista de Medicina in São Paulo, which will serve as a biomedical information center for Latin America and provide professional personnel research workers, and teachers of the health sciences with efficient and rapid services.

(b) Collection of information about manpower, institutional material, and financial resources of biomedical libraries and scientific information and documentation centers in the field of the health sciences, and the administration of health services. In 1970 a start was made with the provision of services to Brazil, and in 1971 they will be extended to other countries in Latin America.

(c) Integration of cooperative service programs with medical libraries in Latin America in a period of four years, beginning in 1969 with Brazil and continuing in 1970-1972 with Argentina, Venezuela, and other Latin American countries. In 1971 a plan for the establishment of a Pan American network of scientific communications in the biomedical sciences will be drawn up.

(d) Help in the training of the staff of biomedical libraries through one- to three-month residencies in the Regional Library of Medicine, continuing education programs, and in-service training.

(e) Creation of a favorable attitude towards the development of biomedical libraries among the administrators, teachers, and research workers of schools and institutions for the health sciences by means of informational seminars and Latin American meetings and interviews with the administrators and faculty members of those institutions.

(f) Assistance to the Pan American Federation of Associations of Medical Schools and the Governments in strengthening biomedical libraries, training staff for them, and helping to define the minimum requirements for organizing and operating them.

#### IV. ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN 1971-1972 AND IN 1973

##### 1. Delimitation of the Problem of Biomedical Scientific Information

Survey of bibliographical resources and manpower. To begin in 1970, with the assistance of the Brazilian Association of Medical Schools and other institutions such as the Pan American Federation of Associations of Medical Schools, a program designed to collect information about manpower and bibliographical resources of biomedical libraries in Latin America with a view to establishing a project for strengthening and regionalizing their services.

##### 2. Programs of Bibliographical Services

2.1 To continue to provide the biomedical libraries of Brazil with services and to gradually extend those services to other countries in Latin America in 1971, 1972, and 1973. For that purpose, photostat copies will be made of scientific articles for which teachers, professional health workers, and researchers have asked their libraries, but which their libraries have been unable to supply because they do not hold the journals in question. Requests for articles which RLM or its network of cooperative libraries in Brazil and other Latin American countries cannot fill will be sent to the National Library of Medicine in Washington, D.C. It is estimated that in 1971 a total of 27,000 photocopies of articles (270,000 pages) will be provided; in 1972 a total of 36,000 photocopies (360,000 pages); and in 1973, about 42,000 photocopies (420,000 pages).

2.2 To provide the biomedical libraries of Brazil with bibliographical reference services and bibliographies and to extend those services to other countries in Latin America. It is planned in 1971 to deal with 150 requests; in 1972 with 200; and in 1973 with 250, as a minimum.

2.3 To request specialized bibliographies from the MEDLARS system of the National Library of Medicine in Washington, D.C. The estimated number of requests is 50 in 1971, 75 in 1972, and 100 in 1973.

2.4 To supply free copies of bibliographies selected by the National Library of Medicine from the requests made by professional health workers and sent to RLM. The estimated number of copies for 1971 is 100, and for each succeeding year, 150.

2.5 To establish on a trial basis services for the diffusion of scientific information on specified branches of the health sciences - in particular, preventive and social medicine, nuclear medicine, family planning, and infectious and parasitic diseases - with effect from 1970 for Brazil and subsequently in 1971 the gradual extension of these services to other Latin American countries.

2.6 To begin studies in 1971 on the setting up of a biomedical scientific search system based on the Abbreviated MEDLARS system of the United States National Library of Medicine, which will provide bibliographical references on specific topics of interest to professional health workers, especially in rural areas.

### 3. Organization and Strengthening of Library Services

#### 3.1 RLM Holdings

3.1.1 To complete and keep up to date the collection of 2,200 journals on biomedical sciences and health services administration covering the years 1960 to 1971, 1972, and 1973, successively.

3.1.2 To increase the collection of scientific and biomedical monographs and monographs on health services administration to 500 books annually, in particular, medical textbooks published in Latin America and Brazil.

3.1.3 To complete and keep up to date the collection of documents of PAHO, WHO, and other organizations, including the proceedings of meetings and seminars, conferences of medical associations, seminars on the administration of medical services, professional training schools, and other similar documents.

#### 3.2 Administrative Structure of the Regional Library of Medicine

To establish and adjust the administrative and technical organization in 1971 and to fill at least two of the key Chief of Services posts and other posts that are indispensable for expanding the services in 1972 and 1973.

#### 3.3 Increasing the Holdings of Other Libraries

To continue to increase the holdings of biomedical libraries in Brazil and Latin America by dispatching in 1971 not less than 10,000 duplicate copies of medical journals to 500 scientific and university institutions in Latin America; 20,000 in 1972; and 30,000 in 1973.

#### 4. Interlibrary Cooperation

4.1 To draw up and carry out a project for assistance to health sciences and health services administration libraries with effect from 1969 for Brazil and to continue to do so in succeeding years for other Latin American countries, and to establish a network of radiotelegraphic communications via Telex in 1971-1972 and via satellite in 1973.

4.2 To consolidate in 1971 the organization of the seven sub-centers and specialized subsystems in Brazil, giving special attention to programs for the regionalization of scientific and continuing education programs for personnel working in libraries in those areas.

4.3 To promote the organization and updating of national and regional union catalogs of biomedical periodicals. Two are planned in 1971 in Brazil; two in 1971 in Venezuela and Chile; three in 1972 in Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador; and three in 1973 in other South American countries.

#### 4.4 Pan American Network of Biomedical Scientific Communications

To draw up in 1971 a project for the establishment of a Pan American network of biomedical scientific communications, which will permit existing bibliographical resources to be shared and services at the local, national, regional, and international levels to be regionalized. To seek financial support for this project from other institutions and to execute it in 1972 and 1973.

#### 5. Educational Program

5.1 To establish a system of one- to three-month residencies in RLM for not more than 12 employees of biomedical libraries in Brazil in 1971-1972-1973. The program was begun in 1970.

5.2 To organize three seminars and meetings of librarians, university faculty members, and research workers, to give them a better idea of a modern library and the operation of it as an educational center: six meetings in 1971 for 72 professional personnel from Brazil; six meetings in 1972 and another six in 1973 for a similar number of persons from other Latin American countries.

5.3 To encourage the organization of conferences and meetings of biomedical and scientific associations to discuss scientific communications and documentation (four in 1971, and four in 1972 and 1973).

5.4 To encourage the use of RLM services by means of personal visits to biological institutes in Brazil and by attendance at scientific and medical education meetings, and to encourage cooperative efforts at