

Collection Development Manual of the National Library of Medicine

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National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services

Collection development manual of the National Library of Medicine, 4th ed. Bethesda, MD : National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2004. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/tsd/acquisitions/cdm/>

Preface

The research environment in medicine, health care and the life sciences has changed markedly in recent years. Emerging scientific disciplines and new technologies, increasing emphasis on basic life sciences and physical sciences research, the growth of global health initiatives, new strategies for addressing health disparities, the trend toward interdisciplinary studies, and the rise of electronic publishing -- these epitomize vibrant change and development in contemporary health research and practice.

The National Library of Medicine has long been committed to anticipating and addressing such emerging trends and changes. That commitment is renewed in this latest version of the *Collection Development Manual of the National Library of Medicine* (CDM), which captures the Library's collecting policies in many new and changing areas of biomedical information.

Historically, the CDM has strongly influenced international biomedical collecting, scholarship and scientific research. Its parameters shape the internationally renowned collection of the National Library of Medicine, the world's largest medical library and the nation's library of record for biomedicine and health care. This is a substantial endeavor, since the collection includes materials from every country, in most written languages and in many formats -- from ancient manuscripts to born-digital publications. These all are collected with the intent to improve health, to further health care thought and practice, to support life sciences research, and to deliver biomedical information to the widest possible audience. NLM also assumes the critical and unique responsibility of preserving the biomedical literature, both to safeguard biomedical knowledge and to serve the needs of future researchers - always a daunting task, one which has become an even greater challenge in the electronic era.

This publication supersedes the *Collection Development Manual of the National Library of Medicine*, 3rd edition (1993); and is the latest in a series of collection development policy documents dating back to 1951. The Manual's uses have expanded over the years, and it has come to have a diverse international audience. At NLM, the Manual is used as a working reference for bibliographers; but the Library also employs this policy document to evaluate the effectiveness of its collection activities, and for the development of cooperative programs and services with collaborative associations and institutions. Book dealers, publishers, and donors from around the world refer to the Manual to determine subjects and literature types of collecting interest to NLM. Researchers in numerous disciplines consult the Manual to learn about the Library's history and collections. Librarians use the CDM as a model for their own collection development policymaking and planning. In collaboration with NLM, the Library of Congress and National Agricultural Library review the policies in this document to determine collection boundaries among the three national libraries.

Beginning with this version, the Manual will be available electronically. We hope that in this more widely accessible format, it will inform new audiences about the collection development policies and initiatives of the National Library of Medicine.

Many individuals contributed to this new edition. Special thanks go to the Oversight

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9/10/2004

Table of Contents

About the NLM Collection Development Manual	9
The Collection Development Policy of the NLM	10
Board of Regents Policy	10
Audience for the NLM Collection	12
Collections Overview	13
The NLM and Coordinated Collection Development	15
The NLM and Other Biomedical Libraries	15
History of the NLM Collection	17
NLM Retention Policy	20
Selection Guidelines by Subject	22
Addiction Medicine	23
Aerospace Medicine	23
Allergy and Immunology	23
Anatomy	24
Anesthesiology	24
Anthropology	25
Behavioral Medicine	25
Biochemistry	26
Bioengineering	26
Bioethics	27
Bioinformatics	27
Biological Sciences	28
Biomathematics	28
Biomedical Imaging	29
Biomedical Research	29
Biophysics	30
Cardiology	30
Cell Biology	30
Chemistry	31
Clinical Laboratory Science	32
Cognitive Science	32
Communication Disorders	33
Complementary and Alternative Medicine	33
Cytology	34
Dentistry	35
Dermatology	35
Disaster Management	35
Education for the Health Professions	36
Embryology	37
Emergency Medicine	37
Endocrinology	37
Environmental Health	38
Exercise Science	39

Family Practice 39
Forensic Medicine 39
Gastroenterology 40
Genetics 40
Geriatrics 41
Gynecology 41
Health Communication 41
Health Economics 42
Health Facilities 43
Health Occupations 43
Health Policy 44
Health Sciences Librarianship 45
Health Services Research 45
Hematology 46
Histology 46
History of Medicine 46
Human Nutrition 47
Infectious Diseases 48
Internal Medicine 49
Laboratory Animal Science 49
Medical Botany 49
Medical Genetics 50
Medical Humanities 50
Medical Informatics 51
Medical Sociology 51
Medicine 52
Microbiology 52
Military Medicine 53
Molecular Biology 53
Molecular Medicine 54
Nephrology 54
Neurology 55
Neuroscience 55
Nursing 55
Obstetrics 56
Occupational Health and Safety 56
Oncology 57
Ophthalmology 57
Optometry 57
Orthopedics 57
Otolaryngology 58
Parasitology 58
Pathology 58
Pediatrics 59
Pharmacology 59
Pharmacy 59

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	60
Physiology	60
Plant Biology	61
Podiatry	61
Preventive Medicine	61
Primatology	62
Psychiatry	62
Psychology	62
Public Health	63
Pulmonary Medicine	64
Radiology	65
Religion and Medicine	65
Reproductive Medicine	65
Rheumatology	66
Space Life Sciences	66
Sports Medicine	67
Surgery	67
Therapeutics	67
Toxicology	68
Urology	69
Veterinary Medicine	69
Selection Guidelines by Format and Literature Type	71
Academic Dissertations	72
Alumni and Student Publications	72
Annual Reports	72
Atlases	73
Audiovisual Materials	74
Bibliographic Works	75
Biographical Works	75
Catalogs	76
Collected Works	76
Conference Publications	76
Consumer Health	77
Continuing Education Publications	77
Datasets	78
Developing Countries Publications	78
Dictionaries and Encyclopedias	79
Digital Images	79
Directories	80
Drafts	80
Electronic Resources	81
Ephemera	83
Examination Review Guides	84
Fact Sheets	84
Fiction and Poetry	85
Government Publications	85

Grey Literature	86
Handbooks and Manuals	86
Humorous and Satirical Works	87
Journals	87
Juvenile Literature	88
Laboratory Manuals	88
Limited Distribution Materials	88
Looseleaf Service Publications	88
Manuscripts	88
Market Research Reports	89
Monographs	89
Newsletters and Newspapers	90
Pamphlets	90
Patents	91
Pharmacopoeias and Formularies	91
Posters	91
Popular Literature	92
Practice Management Tools	92
Prints and Photographs	93
Reprints and Facsimiles	93
Standards and Guidelines	93
Statistical Works	94
Technical Reports	94
Tests	95
Textbooks	95
Translations	95
Working Papers	96
Index	97

About the NLM Collection Development Manual

The *Collection Development Manual of the National Library of Medicine* (CDM), fourth edition (2004), establishes boundaries for the Library's permanent collection and provides a conceptual and philosophical framework for the selection of biomedical materials. Defining the boundaries of the NLM collection is complicated by the interdisciplinary nature of biomedicine, the prominence of political, ethical, economic and social issues in contemporary biomedical practice and research, rapid advances in health care technology and the proliferation of information sources and formats.

The CDM is based on the [Collection Development Policy adopted by the NLM Board of Regents](#) in 1976 and amended in 1983 and 1992. It is intended primarily as a working document for NLM staff, but also may be of interest to a wider community of users including the staffs of other health science and research libraries. Like its predecessors, the CDM defines the range of subjects to be acquired and the extent of the Library's collecting effort within these subjects. It also addresses selection issues presented by a range of formats and literature types. The Manual does not present principles for the selection of materials temporarily retained for the use of on-site users; nor does it describe the full range of information resources, including databases, to which NLM provides access.

Policy for Updating the NLM Collection Development Manual

The Library plans to conduct a major review of the *Collection Development Manual of the National Library of Medicine* every five to eight years. The Director of the National Library of Medicine will appoint an external review panel of subject experts and librarians to advise on each major revision.

To ensure that the Manual does not become outdated, NLM will make minor updates to the text during intervening years. In support of this objective, NLM collection development staff will review annual changes to the MeSH vocabulary, attend meetings of the Literature Selection Technical Review Committee, identify significant new health initiatives (such as the creation of new NIH Centers), and monitor scientific and professional literature to identify emerging disciplines in biomedicine and public health. Recommendations for CDM updates will be referred to an internal NLM Collection Development Manual Review Committee charged with approving interim revisions. Committee membership will consist of the Chief, Technical Services Division; Executive Editor, MEDLINE; Head, Selection Unit, Selection and Acquisition Section; Head, Medical Subject Headings Section; and Chief, History of Medicine Division. The committee will seek the advice of outside consultants as needed.

Beginning with this edition, the CDM will be published electronically, enabling the Library to update individual portions as needed and link to other Web documents.

Please submit comments and suggestions to custserv@nlm.nih.gov.

The Collection Development Policy of the NLM

The National Library of Medicine was established “to assist the advancement of medical and related sciences and to aid the dissemination and exchange of scientific and other information important to the progress of medicine and to the public health...” ([42 U.S.C. 286](#)) Central to this mission is the development of a collection that supports contemporary biomedical and health care research and practice as well as future scholarship.

To this end, NLM attempts to aggregate and to maintain for permanent access library materials that:

- Record progress in research in biomedicine and the related areas of the life sciences,
- Document the practice and teaching of medicine broadly defined,
- Demonstrate how health services are organized, delivered and financed,
- Chronicle the development and implementation of policy that affects research and the delivery of health services, and
- Illustrate the public perception of medical practice and public health.

The decision to select a title for NLM generally also implies a responsibility to preserve the material. For more information, see [the NLM Preservation Policy](#).

Board of Regents Policy

Building on its congressional mandate, the National Library of Medicine's Board of Regents, an advisory body to the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) on matters affecting the Library, adopted a collecting policy in June 1976. This policy was subsequently updated in 1983 and most recently in October 1992 as follows:

This Collection Development Policy is established for the National Library of Medicine (NLM) pursuant to the authority contained in the National Library of Medicine Act of 1956. (P.L. 84-941).

Since every area of human activity may affect or be affected by the health of the human community, NLM cannot presume to collect all literature that has some relevance, however remote, to health. In its collecting practices, NLM shall concentrate on the biomedical literature without being limited by present perceptions, recognizing that the boundaries of that literature are constantly changing.

The National Library of Medicine has the responsibility for acquiring the biomedical literature in any format deemed appropriate to the fulfillment of its mission.

Coverage of the scholarly biomedical literature shall be comprehensive; coverage of other biomedical literature may be more selective. The intent is to ensure that the collection represents the intellectual content and diversity of the world's biomedical literature. In determining coverage, NLM will take into consideration its role as the national resource for the provision of biomedical literature not otherwise readily available, and as the

national bibliographic center for biomedical literature for the health professions.

The healing arts can only be understood in their cultural context; therefore, collection development criteria will be interpreted with flexibility in acquiring literature relating to the history of medicine.

NLM is aware of the acquisitions policies and collection emphases of the Library of Congress and the National Agricultural Library. While a certain amount of duplication of collections among the three national libraries is inevitable, and indeed necessary, NLM recognizes the ultimate interdependence of these libraries, and its collecting policies will reflect this.

Nothing in this policy statement should be construed to require the disposal of any literature previously acquired by NLM that would not be eligible for acquisition under this policy or under any present or future collection development document, nor should this policy statement be construed to limit the acquisition by NLM of literature that may be needed by NLM staff in the fulfillment of their duties, or that may reasonably be provided for the reference convenience of NLM reading room users.

Guidelines for the scope and coverage of acquisitions for the NLM collection shall be detailed for operational purposes in a document to be developed and amended from time to time in a manner to be determined by the Director. A group of senior NLM staff should be designated by the Director for the purpose of meeting regularly to consider the need for changes and to recommend appropriate changes to the Director.

Definitions

Biomedical: pertaining to health care, to the practice of the science and art of medicine broadly conceived, and to those branches of the life sciences which are fundamental to that science and art.

Collect: to acquire for inclusion in the literature holdings of NLM.

Coverage: the extent of the Library's collecting effort within the biomedical subjects.

Health Professions: includes persons engaged in health policy and health services research, the administration of health activities, the provision of health services, or in research, education, or information dissemination concerned with the advancement or history of medicine or with other health related sciences.

Literature: organized information in the form of written, printed, or non-print works, including audiovisual materials, computer files, and other electronic formats.

Scholarly: resulting from professional study or research.

Scope: the range of subjects which NLM collects.

Audience for the NLM Collection

Traditionally, the primary audience for the collection of the National Library of Medicine has consisted of biomedical and public health professionals. This diverse audience includes not only clinical practitioners such as physicians and nurses, but also those engaged in scientific research, scholarly inquiry, policy making, management, education, and communication in areas related to health. NLM has developed its collections with the research needs of this professional audience in mind, and regularly seeks the opinion and expertise of professional, scholarly, and scientific stakeholders in the Library's collection development program planning efforts.

In recent years, NLM has expanded its services to address the general public's increased interest in health information, without compromising the Library's mission to serve as the library of record for biomedicine. Rather than expand the print collection of consumer health materials, the Library's strategy is to provide free and instantaneous Web access to authoritative information and consumer health content. Examples of such Web initiatives include the Library's consumer database, [MedlinePlus](#), which provides access to full-text health information from NIH and other authoritative sources; [NIHSeniorHealth](#), developed in collaboration with the National Institute on Aging; and [ClinicalTrials.gov](#), a registry of federally and privately funded trials of experimental treatments. The Library continually seeks the advice and assistance of consumer health experts in order to improve quick access to health information for the public.

Collections Overview

The National Library of Medicine is the world's largest and most comprehensive medical library, with rich collections in virtually every written language and from every country. The Library collects materials in all areas of biomedicine, health care and the history of medicine as well as works on biomedical aspects of the humanities, physical, social and life sciences.

The Library's collection is constantly growing. At the end of FY 2003 the Library's collection numbered just under 7.5 million items. The collection of printed materials totaled approximately 2.5 million monographs, bound serial volumes, pamphlets and dissertations. There were also 58,000 prints and photographs and 4.3 million manuscript pieces in the Library's historical collection. The collection of non-print materials included approximately 73,000 audiovisuals, 2,258 items in electronic format, and 585,000 microforms.

The Library's acquisitions program is international in scope, including hundreds of arrangements with book dealers, subscription agents, media producers, publishers, governments, societies, and libraries worldwide. NLM also receives donations from around the world.

The Library's collection may be consulted in the on-site [Reading Rooms](#), requested via [interlibrary loan](#) or, in some cases, accessed electronically.

In the [main reading room](#) users have immediate access to commonly used medical journals, the principal indexes and abstracting resources, reference works representing all areas of biomedicine, and some general reference works. The [History of Medicine Division](#) also maintains a [reading room](#) housing a reference collection containing the major bibliographic resources necessary for historical research, as well as standard works in the history of medicine.

GENERAL COLLECTION

The General Collection contains the majority of monographs published in 1914 forward and serials published in 1871 forward. Interactive and electronic materials and audiovisuals produced since 1970 also are housed in the general collection. Titles may be identified through [LocatorPlus](#) or the [NLM Catalog](#), both of which provide access NLM bibliographic data for over 1.2 million journals, books, audiovisuals, computer software, electronic resources, and other materials.

HISTORICAL AND SPECIAL MATERIALS

The History of Medicine Division (HMD) is responsible for historical and special materials as described below. See the [HMD Home Page](#) for additional information.

Printed works: The historical collection includes all book-length material in NLM printed before 1914, thousands of later pamphlets and dissertations, and all pre-1871 journals. NLM holds not only many of the great landmark works in medicine such as William Harvey's *De motu cordis*, 1628, but also the many works of lesser authors necessary for historical research and scholarship. Of particular interest are reprints of more than 1,300 important Chinese medical works dating

from before the Han dynasty.

Early Manuscripts: The Library holds 90 early western manuscripts (before 1600), microfilm copies of about 600 manuscripts held by European libraries, and collections of 139 Arabic and Persian medical manuscripts.

Modern Manuscripts: This collection comprises an estimated 3,100 linear feet or approximately 4.3 million pages in more than 900 collections. The modern manuscript collection is particularly rich in eighteenth and nineteenth century American and British materials and is also quite strong in twentieth century American medicine. Areas of special strength and interest include biochemistry, biotechnology and molecular biology; surgery; pediatrics and child development; medical informatics; the history of medicine; military medicine; and the Public Health Service (including the National Institutes of Health and the National Library of Medicine).

Oral History: The oral history collection consists of about 200 memoirs of important figures in the health sciences. The collection comprises audiotapes and unpublished or restricted transcripts of potential value to scholars. Interviews in other formats (e.g., video recordings) or published personal narratives are housed in the general collection.

NLM Archives: The NLM Archives contain the internal records of NLM and its official publications. Internal records consist of the papers of the Library's Directors (including [John Shaw Billings](#)), Board of Regents meeting minutes, annual reports, selected administrative records from the Library's operational divisions, archival copies of NLM publications and some oral histories. The Archives also include electronic copies of NLM Web site documents and files that are no longer current but are considered to be of permanent value.

Most internal records of the [National Institutes of Health](#) are in the [National Archives and Records Administration](#).

Prints and Photographs: The prints and photographs collection, consisting of some 58,000 items, illustrates social and historical aspects of medicine. It ranges from 15th century woodcuts to 21st century photographs. The collection includes many individual portraits of physicians, pharmacists, nurses, dentists, and others who have contributed to the health services and professions. Visual sources also represent health care facilities and laboratories, medical procedures and equipment, and other images which document the practice of medicine. The visual formats include fine prints, historical and contemporary photographic processes, posters, and visual ephemera such as patent medicine trade cards. The Library owns over 3,000 fine prints, including several hundred caricatures on medically related subjects. Artists represented in the collection include Goya, Daumier, Gillray, Hogarth and Rowlandson.

Historical Audiovisuals: In addition to current audiovisuals, the Library's collection includes approximately 4,000 historical audiovisuals consisting of films, videocassettes, slide-tape programs, film strips, and audiocassettes produced between 1917 and 1970.

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The NLM and Coordinated Collection Development

The Library of Congress (LC), the National Agricultural Library (NAL) and the National Library of Medicine (NLM) strive to keep collecting duplication to the minimum necessary to serve their diverse user populations. A dialogue is maintained among these national libraries, and joint collecting statements are developed to define areas of mutual collecting interest. Over the years, cooperative statements on [Veterinary Science](#), [Human Nutrition and Food](#), [Biotechnology](#), and the [AIDS literature](#) have been developed.

The principal areas of mutual collecting interest between NLM and the Library of Congress are the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of health care and health care delivery systems. NLM assumes responsibility for collecting the research and professional literature of the health sciences; LC primarily collects health-related literature addressed to general audiences, and such works as are deemed necessary to support its Congressional mission. LC also collects works in non-traditional medicine, public health, and other areas of cultural, social, and economic scholarly interest. As the broadest in scope of the national libraries, it assumes responsibility for maintaining a comprehensive collection in the physical and natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. For more information, see the Library of Congress [collections policy statement on Medicine](#).

The principal areas of significant overlap between NLM and the National Agricultural Library (NAL) collections are in biotechnology, [human nutrition](#), [laboratory animal science](#) and [veterinary medicine](#). NLM's collecting emphasis in these areas centers on topics that comparatively, experimentally, theoretically, or directly affect or advance either human health care or biomedical research. The NAL, on the other hand, focuses collecting effort on those materials that relate experimentally, theoretically, or directly to the production of agricultural commodities, agronomy, consumer nutrition education, food safety, food science, animal husbandry, animal health and animal culture. For more information, see the [Collection Development Policy of the National Agricultural Library](#).

The NLM and Other Biomedical Libraries

Beyond the national libraries are important and rich collections in other federal agencies, academic institutions, public libraries, special libraries, museums, archives and research centers. Many of these collections are important in their own right in that they contain unique materials and special collections not held by the national libraries.

The centrality of the NLM collection to the concept of a national collection in biomedicine and the complementary nature of other library collections is well recognized. NLM, in its [1987 Long Range Plan](#) describes a "distributed library of record" for the biomedical sciences and acknowledges that "even within any narrowly identified scope of biomedical materials, there is more than any single library can acquire. Indeed, among the Nation's biomedical libraries are many collections of unique materials."

The national collection in any discipline is not limited to the holdings of a single national library; nor is it simply the sum of all titles on a given subject. It is a composite of individual titles and

important special collections located in many different institutions. NLM seeks to identify existing strengths in other collections and to encourage other libraries to collect unique materials, particularly state and local biomedical literature, manuscripts, and items of strong local interest.

History of the NLM Collection

The National Library of Medicine has evolved from a small collection of books and journals in the Office of the Surgeon General in the Medical Department of the Army to the world's largest biomedical library. The Library was begun by Joseph Lovell, Surgeon General from 1818 to 1836, and grew slowly at first. The first request for funds -- \$150 to buy books -- appeared in the 1836 estimate of expenses for the Medical Department. In 1840, the first Catalogue of Books in the Library of the Surgeon General's Office was prepared. This handwritten list records only 134 titles representing about 200 volumes, considerably smaller than the personal libraries of many mid-nineteenth century physicians, and far exceeded by those of established medical schools, medical societies and institutions.¹

Although the medical advances and concerns of the Civil War stimulated use of the Library, its collection had grown to only 1,800 volumes by 1864. In that year, Surgeon General Joseph K. Barnes published the first printed catalog. It listed books alphabetically by author under nine subject headings: anatomy; physiology; materia medica; pharmacy and therapeutics; general pathology and practice of medicine; surgery; midwifery and diseases of women and children; medical jurisprudence and medical policy; natural philosophy; chemistry, etc. It also listed miscellaneous journals, reviews, reports, encyclopedias, etc.

After Lee's surrender at Appomattox, the Army closed all temporary military hospitals, dismantled their libraries and sent the most valuable of their works to the Army Medical Library in Washington, D.C. In October 1865, John Shaw Billings, then an assistant to the Surgeon General, was given responsibility for building and managing the growing collection of medical books and journals. Under Billings' leadership, acquisitions expanded dramatically. By 1870, the Library was among the largest medical libraries in the United States, exceeded only by those of the Pennsylvania Hospital and the College of Physicians in Philadelphia.

Sometime during 1871, discussions between Billings and Surgeon General Barnes led to a decision to broaden the objectives of the Library to include the development of a collection to serve the entire American medical profession, rather than the military exclusively. Their vision was to develop a "National Medical Library" with a collection of medical literature that would contain "every medical book published in this country and every work relating to public health and state medicine."²

Billings was indefatigable in his pursuit of this aim. Although he collected all types of medical publications, Billings concentrated on acquiring and maintaining complete files of American medical journals. During his tenure the Library also made its first significant efforts to acquire rare books, manuscripts, visual records of the history of medicine, and to develop literature exchange programs with domestic and foreign institutions.

1. Miles, Wyndham D. A history of the National Library of Medicine, the nation's treasury of medical knowledge. Washington, D.C. : Government Printing Office, 1982, p.5.

2. Ibid, p. 36. Letter, Surgeon General Barnes to Rep. J.A. Garfield, Jan. 6, 1872; also letter, Barnes to Sen. L.M. Morrill, February 9, 1872: NA

In the twentieth century, the collection continued to expand. However, by World War II, the collection's growth rate, which had been the fastest in the nation under Billings, had declined because of low appropriations, low staffing levels and insufficient space, becoming the slowest among America's large research libraries. Wartime demand for medical information gave rise to a survey of the Library's operations and management. The subsequent report recommended an aggressive acquisition program, including a larger book budget and an active gift and exchange program.¹

After the war, the Library set out to remedy the deficiencies in its collection. The Library initiated programs to acquire U.S. works published during the depression, to secure literature published in enemy countries during the war, and to reestablish relations with book dealers in all areas of the world. As wartime Army hospitals were closed, their books and journals were shipped to the Library in Washington.

In 1949, Library Director Frank Bradway Rogers established the first internal committee on scope and coverage. The aim of the committee was: "to define the subjects to be collected and the degree of collecting within each subject."²

Its report was in essence a basic guide for materials selection, which has since been refined numerous times to reflect contemporary collecting policy and the growth and specialization of biomedicine.

Billings' dream of a true national library was realized in 1956 when Senators Lister Hill and John F. Kennedy submitted to Congress a bill "to promote the progress of medicine and to advance the national health and welfare by creating a National Library of Medicine."³

On August 3, 1956, the National Library of Medicine Act was signed into law. The Library is an official part of the National Institutes of Health within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Since that time, the collections of the library have grown considerably. Collection development and expansion in the area of manuscripts, historical and contemporary audiovisuals and posters has been especially notable.

In 1976, NLM was officially designed a U.S. Government Partial Depository for biomedical information. In 1986, the Library established a [Preservation Section](#) to develop and implement a national plan for the preservation of the biomedical literature.

At the end of the twentieth century, NLM embarked on an initiative to improve access to health

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1. The National Medical Library: Report of a survey of the Army Medical Library. Chicago : American Library Association, 1944.
 2. Report of [the] Committee on Scope and Coverage: Army Medical Library. Presented to [the] Association of Honorary Consultants to [the] Army Medical Library, 20 October 1950. Appendix 1. Authorization for the Committee.
 3. 34th Congress. 2nd Sess. Bill S.3430. 1955.

information for the general public. The decision was made to develop a Web-based resource, [MedlinePlus](#), as the primary vehicle for providing access to consumer health information. The Library also began collecting and indexing selected consumer health periodicals for PubMed. NLM continued its existing policy of adding to the collection only representative examples of other consumer health publications.

The Library continues to add to its outstanding collection of early printed works and manuscripts and to develop its modern manuscript collection emphasizing twentieth-century U.S. medicine, public health and health care advocacy. The papers of Nobel laureates are featured on the Library's Web site [Profiles in Science](#)TM. This site celebrates twentieth-century leaders in biomedical research and public health. It makes the archival collections of prominent scientists, physicians, and others who have advanced the scientific enterprise available to the public through modern digital technology.

In addition to collecting and preserving the print biomedical literature, NLM is exploring ways to fulfill its archival and service mission for electronic resources. As outlined in the [NLM Long Range Plan for 2000-2005](#), the Library's general approach to addressing these challenges is to use its own electronic services and publications as test-beds and to work with its sister National Libraries and other organizations to develop and test strategies for ensuring permanent access to electronic information. [PubMed Central](#), a digital archive of life sciences literature developed by the [National Center for Biotechnology Information](#) (NCBI), is the Library's primary initiative for ensuring permanent access to electronic journals.

NLM Retention Policy

As a national library and the library of record for biomedicine in the United States, NLM builds its collection for the long term. With few exceptions, the Library retains material it acquires, although not necessarily in its original format. As collection development policies change over time, NLM does not remake the collection in the image of the newer policy.

In some instances, the Library may remove materials from the collection, according to the following guidelines:

1. **Withdrawal** is the removal of a title from the NLM collection. Withdrawal follows a prescribed and rigorous review process. Justification for and approval of withdrawal is formally recorded in the Library's catalog.

- a. **General withdrawal principles.** Withdrawal may be recommended on one or more of the following grounds:

Subject: Under current and former collecting policies, the work is not within the subject scope of the NLM collection. It may fit more properly within the collecting responsibility of another institution.

Coverage: The work does not meet coverage criteria for the collection.

Deterioration or damage: The print, audio or visual content has deteriorated to the extent that copying or retention is not practical, and replacement with a better copy is not feasible.

- b. **Withdrawal of audiovisual and electronic works on physical media.** The long-term value of some audiovisual and electronic works on physical media may be difficult to determine at the time of selection. Changes in technologies, resources, and user demands may warrant the revisiting of some earlier selection decisions. Withdrawal of such works also may be based on the following grounds:

Significance or relevance: The audiovisual or electronic work is of lesser significance or relevance compared with other works held in the subject or genre.

Representation: The Library holds more audiovisual or electronic works than is judged necessary to represent the subject area or genre.

2. **Weeding** is the removal of surplus copies, or supplementary material acquired for temporary, onsite use. Except for rare and valuable materials, the process is less rigorous

than the withdrawal process. The following categories of material are candidates for weeding:

Duplicate copies: Duplicate copies are candidates for weeding when the level of use no longer justifies their retention, or when a copy or copies of a particular work are inferior to other copies of that work held at NLM. The weeding of duplicates of rare or valuable works requires approval by the NLM Director.

Publications that are cumulated: After cumulated volumes (e.g., of bibliographic and reference works) are received, NLM may weed the now-superseded individual issues.

Obsolete or less desirable formats: If a work is held in multiple formats, NLM may consider weeding the format that is less desirable from an access or preservation viewpoint.

3. **Disposal** is the physical process of properly disposing of items withdrawn or weeded from the collection. NLM has statutory authority (42 USC section 286) to discard materials from its collection, but prefers, whenever possible, to make withdrawn or weeded material available to the Library of Congress or another institution where the material would more appropriately reside. When material is no longer useable because of condition or obsolescence, it may be discarded.

5/7/04

Selection Guidelines by Subject

This section contains guidance for the selection of contemporary materials by subject. Subject descriptions are based on a current understanding of the trends in biomedical research, health care practice, and associated issues. They are organized alphabetically according to subject category and apply to selection of post-1913 materials. Selection decisions for historical materials are based more broadly on the importance of a discipline to the historical practice of medicine and public health. Selection guidance for some specific literature types is found in the section [Selection Guidelines by Format and Literature Type](#).

The Library collects works on all aspects of biomedicine and health care, and many areas of the life sciences. This section of the Manual is not intended to be an exhaustive description of every subject collected, nor has there been any attempt to establish mutually exclusive subject categories. Since it would be impossible to discuss all topics that fall within the Library's collecting scope, this section focuses on subjects that:

- represent emerging disciplines,
- present complex selection challenges,
- require additional elaboration as to the Library's collecting interest, or
- constitute an especially large body of literature.

Subject categories are subdivided as follows:

Definition: Most terms are consistent with the [Medical Subject Headings](#) (MeSH), the Library's controlled vocabulary. In some instances, non-MeSH terms, derived from authoritative sources, are used.

Discussion: For subjects that present selection difficulties. This section provides additional context to the Library's described collecting interest. It may include representative subtopics which provide additional guidance to the selector.

Scope and emphasis: This section defines the Library's collecting interest in a subject, and the level of intensity at which it is applied. "**Collected comprehensively**" signifies that the Library collects at the highest level of intensity, according to generally accepted collection development standards, as follows: The NLM collection serves as a national and international resource in the fields of medicine, health and related life sciences. NLM strives to assemble a subject collection that is as exhaustive as is reasonably possible, including works from all countries and in all applicable written languages. The Library's collection of significant published materials is exhaustive; collections of manuscripts and other relevant formats and literature types are very extensive; and NLM retains and systematically preserves older material to serve the needs of historical research.

Special considerations: Where applicable, this section provides information about collecting policies of other national libraries, major initiatives at NLM, and/or formats which are especially pertinent to a subject.

See also references: Refer users to topics which may offer additional guidance.

7/22/04

Addiction Medicine

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the study, prevention and treatment of addictive diseases and the physiological and psychological disorders associated with substance dependence.

Discussion:

The major focus of addiction medicine literature is the study and treatment of alcoholism and drug abuse, but the field also addresses other addictions.

Scope and emphasis:

The emphasis of the collection is on works of basic science; pharmacology; clinical diagnosis and therapy; epidemiology and public health aspects; health policy; and ethics. NLM generally does not collect the criminological and sociological literature of substance use and abuse, except when it pertains to health.

See also:

Medical Sociology
Psychology
Public Health

12/15/03

Aerospace Medicine

Definition:

The fields of medicine concerned with the maintenance of health, safety and performance of those involved in aviation or space activity.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Space Life Sciences

12/15/03

Allergy and Immunology

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the hypersensitivity of the individual to foreign

substances and protection from the resultant infection or disorder (adapted from [MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

7/8/04

Anatomy

Definition:

The study of the structure of the body and the relation of its parts.

Scope and emphasis:

The NLM collecting emphasis is on the anatomy of humans, other primates, and laboratory animals.

Special considerations:

The Library has an extensive collection of historical anatomical works. Anatomy textbooks are selectively acquired, with emphasis on those most widely used in education for the health professions in the United States.

See also:

Atlases
Textbooks
Veterinary Medicine

12/3/03

Anesthesiology

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the relief and prevention of pain during and following surgical, obstetric, therapeutic and diagnostic procedures.

Discussion:

Anesthesiology has expanded to include neuroscience and other basic scientific research on pain. Anesthesiologists increasingly are engaged in interdisciplinary clinical fields such as pain management, intensive care, and palliative care.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

7/8/04

Anthropology

Definition:

The study of the origin, development and nature of the human species through biological, sociocultural, archaeological and linguistic perspectives.

Discussion:

Physical or biological anthropology traces the biological origins, evolutionary development and genetic diversity of humans and other primates. Subdisciplines include osteology, primate paleobiology, and paleopathology. Cultural anthropology uses ethnographic methodology to study activities and beliefs of peoples within particular cultures or societies. Linguistic anthropology studies the history, evolution and internal structure of human languages. Medical anthropology uses a variety of anthropological techniques to investigate ways in which cultures define, experience, and manage health and illness; it includes subdisciplines such as ethnomedicine.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM comprehensively collects physical, biological and medical anthropology. The Library is interested in medical belief systems (e.g., medical astrology) and healing modalities (e.g., herbalism) from all cultures. NLM collects cultural and linguistic anthropology research related to health and medicine, such as studies of practices surrounding birth, death, and diet, and the relationship between language and cognition. The Library does not collect works on archaeology.

See also:

Complementary and Alternative Medicine
Human Nutrition
Medical Sociology
Psychology
Academic Dissertations

4/29/04

Behavioral Medicine

Definition:

The interdisciplinary field concerned with the development and integration of behavioral and biomedical science, knowledge, and techniques relevant to health and illness and the application of this knowledge and these techniques to prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation ([MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Psychology

2/11/04

Biochemistry

Definition:

The chemistry of living organisms and of vital processes.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Chemistry

2/21/04

Bioengineering

Definition:

The application of experimental and analytical techniques based on the engineering sciences to the development of biologics, materials, devices, implants, processes and systems that advance biology and medicine and improve medical practice and health care.

Discussion:

Bioengineering is a growing and increasingly interdisciplinary area of research and practice. Recent technological advances have revolutionized the diagnosis and treatment of disease, and provided unprecedented opportunities for conducting biological investigations and improving understanding of fundamental biological processes. Typical areas of research include artificial organs and bionic medicine, tissue engineering and transplant medicine, bioinstrumentation, clinical engineering, biomechanical engineering, biomaterials, nanomedicine, biomolecular engineering, electromagnetic fields in biology and medicine, lasers and optical applications, and ultrasonic applications.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM comprehensively collects works in theoretical, experimental and applied studies in bioengineering that further the understanding of living systems or relate directly to or provide models for improvements to human health and health care delivery.

The [Library of Congress](#) and the [National Agricultural Library](#) assume responsibility for environmental and agricultural bioengineering.

See also:

Biomedical Imaging

Biophysics

Toxicology

8/26/04

Bioethics

Definition:

A branch of applied ethics that studies the value implications of practices and developments in life sciences, medicine, and health care ([MeSH](#)).

Discussion:

Bioethics includes literature on the legal and public policy issues surrounding health care and biomedical research.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

Special considerations:

NLM provides access to the bioethics literature in conjunction with the [Kennedy Institute of Ethics](#).

See also:

Medical Sociology
Religion and Medicine
Government Publications

11/26/03

Bioinformatics

Definition:

The organization and analysis of biological and related information, usually involving the use of computers to develop databases, retrieval mechanisms, and data analysis tools, especially in the fields of molecular biology, structural biology, and genetics (adapted from Dorland's illustrated medical dictionary. 29th ed. Philadelphia: Saunders; c2000. p. 212).

Scope and emphasis

NLM is interested in applications of bioinformatics to biomedical research and the fundamental biological sciences. The Library collects works in environmental, industrial or agricultural research only as applied to biomedicine.

See also:

Biomedical Research
Medical Informatics
Molecular Biology

1/7/04

Biological Sciences

Definition:

The scientific study of living organisms.

Scope and emphasis:

The Library's collecting emphasis in the biological sciences is on research that probes the underlying mechanisms of human life. [Biochemistry](#), [molecular biology](#), and [genetics](#) are central to this effort and therefore are of major importance to NLM.

Biological research on higher levels of organization including [cellular processes](#), developmental biology, physiology and biological systems is selected if the emphasis of the work pertains to humans, to organisms related to human disease, or to species used as models for humans or comparative study. NLM also selects works on the origin of life, evolutionary processes and the interaction of humans with other organisms when they make a significant contribution to understanding the broader context of human life, health and illness.

The [Library of Congress](#) and the [National Agricultural Library](#) assume responsibility for the areas of natural history, systematics and speciation.

See also:

Physiology
Microbiology
Plant Biology

4/6/04

Biomathematics

Definition:

Biomathematics is the application of mathematics to problems in biology and medicine.

Discussion:

Biomathematics is an essential tool in fields such as population genetics, cellular neurobiology, comparative genetics, biomedical imaging, pharmacokinetics, and epidemiology. It plays an increasingly vital role in the effort to understand diseases and disorders, and to improve therapies.

Scope and emphasis:

Theoretical and applied biomathematics are comprehensively collected.

See also:

Biomedical Research

9/30/04

Biomedical Imaging

Definition:

The science and the branch of medicine concerned with the development and use of imaging devices and techniques to obtain internal anatomic images and to provide biochemical and physiological analysis of tissues and organs.

Discussion:

The field of biomedical imaging utilizes advanced technologies to capture, store, analyze and display images at the organ, tissue, cellular, and molecular level. Modalities such as computed tomography, magnetic resonance imaging, molecular imaging, and scanning microscopies play an increasingly important role in clinical practice and basic life sciences research.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Bioengineering
Biophysics
Radiology

8/24/04

Biomedical Research

Definition:

Research that is conducted to increase fundamental knowledge and understanding of the physical, chemical and functional mechanisms of human life processes and diseases.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM comprehensively collects works on the organization, management, and funding of biomedical research; on research design, tools, methods and models as applied to biomedical research, including analytical, statistical and computational techniques; on research ethics and scientific fraud; and on the interrelationship between the biomedical research community and government or other organizations concerned with research outcomes and public policy.

See also:

Bioethics
Health Policy
Laboratory Animal Science

1/20/04

Biophysics

Definition:

The discovery and application of physical principles, methods and theories relevant to the study of living organisms and life processes.

Discussion:

Biophysics has been described as a subject lying at the borders of biology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, engineering, genetics, physiology and medicine. Studies include the biophysics of movement, electrophysiology, membrane physics, the three-dimensional structure of proteins, protein-DNA interactions, glycoprotein structure and function, gene expression, and network theories applied to cellular metabolism and macromolecular interactions. The study of biophysics has led to the development of new instrumentation and methods of discovery that have had profound effects on our understanding of chemistry, biology and medicine, including light microscopy, X-ray crystallography, nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, and circular dichroism spectroscopy.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM collects works in biophysics, including theoretical and computational biophysics, as applied to molecular biology, biochemistry, physiology (from the cell to the organism), and any research with implications for the practice of medicine, biomedical engineering or biomedical research.

See also:

Bioengineering
Biomedical Imaging
Molecular Biology

1/2/04

Cardiology

Definition:

The study of the heart, its physiology, functions and the diseases that affect it ([MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Cell Biology

Definition:

Cell biology is the study of the structure and function of the basic unit of living organisms, the cell.

Discussion:

Cell biology includes the study of the cell life cycle (including cell death and cancer), cell differentiation (including stem cell research), cell motility and behavior, and organelles and other cellular structures in the growth and functioning of the cell (including membrane transport and signaling).

Scope and emphasis:

NLM comprehensively collects cell biology resources.

See also:

Cytology
Microbiology
Plant Biology

6/25/03

Chemistry***Definition***

The physical science that investigates the composition, structure, properties, and transformations of substances and elementary forms of matter, primarily at the molecular level ([National Science Foundation](#)).

Discussion:

The science of chemistry is historically and conceptually fundamental to many disciplines in the physical, biological and medical sciences. The principal areas of study within chemistry include organic chemistry, inorganic chemistry, physical and theoretical chemistry, biochemistry, and analytical chemistry. There are many subdisciplines, such as chemical engineering, electrochemistry, industrial chemistry, computational chemistry, crystallography, spectroscopy, and nuclear chemistry. As interdisciplinary research has grown in importance, the boundaries among different areas of chemistry, as well as those among chemistry, biology and physics, have become less well defined. There is heightened biomedical interest in many areas (such as surfaces and polymers) that formerly appeared to have little relevance to biomedical research.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM collects works in areas of chemistry that are pertinent to biomedical and life sciences research, notably biochemistry; biochemical engineering; biophysical chemistry, chemical toxicology; computational chemistry; and medicinal, pharmaceutical, and natural products chemistry. NLM is particularly interested in studies conducted at the chemistry/biology interface, which focus on the fundamental underlying chemical principles governing biological processes. Typical areas of research include chemical biology, structural biology, molecular recognition, complex biomolecules, signal transduction, metalloproteins, and synthesis of novel biopolymers.

Special considerations:

The Library's historical collections (pre-1914) are broader in scope in this area than are the

modern collections. Works on alchemy, Paracelsianism and the emerging science of chemistry are well represented in the historical collection and continue to be acquired because of their influence on the development of medicine and pharmacy.

NLM Division of Specialized Information Services develops and makes available [several chemical databases via its Web site](#).

See also:

Biochemistry
History of Medicine
Pharmacology
Toxicology

4/6/04

Clinical Laboratory Science

Definition:

The use of laboratory techniques in diagnosis, patient monitoring and therapeutic problem-solving. It involves the selection, performance and interpretation of laboratory tests for patient care, and the testing and analysis of pharmaceuticals used in medical treatment.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

11/12/03

Cognitive Science

Definition:

The study of the functional processes of the mind, and the operations of the brain that enable these processes to be performed.

Discussion:

Cognitive science combines the research of cognitive psychology and the neurosciences with research in computer science, artificial intelligence, philosophy, mathematical logic and linguistics to study knowledge representation, memory, language, learning, thinking, and perception.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM comprehensively collects in all areas of cognitive science research, including, for example, computer modeling of cognition and of neurological systems; the development of biological-computer interfaces; and psycholinguistics (the study of language acquisition, development, production and processing in the individual).

See also:

Neuroscience
Psychology

4/6/04

Communication Disorders***Definition:***

Disorders of verbal and nonverbal communication caused by receptive or expressive language disorders, hearing disorders, cognitive dysfunction, or other neurological or psychiatric conditions.

Scope and emphasis:

The NLM collecting emphasis is on works on the anatomical, physiological and cognitive basis of communication and the diagnosis and treatment of communication disorders. The Library does not collect works on sign language, language education, or the social, political, or cultural aspects of deafness.

See also:

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

11/26/03

Complementary and Alternative Medicine***Definition:***

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is a group of diverse medical and health care systems, practices, and products that are not presently considered to be part of conventional medicine ([National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine](#)).

Discussion:

The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) classifies CAM therapies into five categories or domains: 1) alternative medical systems, or complete systems of therapy and practice; 2) mind-body interventions, or techniques designed to facilitate the mind's effect on bodily functions and symptoms; 3) biologically-based systems, including herbalism; 4) manipulative and body-based methods, such as chiropractic and massage therapy; and 5) energy therapies. For a description of each of these categories, [see the NCCAM Web site](#).

CAM therapies are termed as Alternative when used in place of conventional treatments and Complementary when used together with conventional treatments. Integrative medicine combines mainstream medical therapies and CAM therapies for which there is some high-quality scientific evidence of safety and effectiveness (NCCAM).

Scope and emphasis:

NLM comprehensively collects research publications that describe, analyze or evaluate the delivery, safety or efficacy of complementary and alternative systems, practices or products; official guidelines or policies for the use of CAM therapies or products; and authoritative works on the education, training and certification of CAM practitioners. Of particular interest are works documenting the clinical and economic impact of CAM therapies on U.S. health care and consumers and works tracing the trajectory of acceptance or rejection of various historical and contemporary therapeutic systems.

Special considerations:

CAM generates a large body of literature not specifically addressed to professional health practitioners or scholars. NLM collects such materials selectively, emphasizing works that characterize diverse viewpoints, those chronicling the public response to CAM therapies, and those documenting the CAM health information disseminated to the U.S. public at large. Academic Dissertations on complementary and alternative medicine, especially by medical anthropologists, may be of interest.

See also:

Anthropology
History of Medicine
Medical Botany
Human Nutrition
Preventive Medicine
Therapeutics

10/8/03

Cytology***Definition:***

The study of cells, their origin, structure, function and pathology.

Discussion:

Cytology is the branch of biology dealing with the morphology, structure, ultrastructure, life cycle, and pathology of cells. Historically cytology has referred to the study of the microscopic appearance of cells and cell structures, especially for the diagnosis of abnormalities and malignancies.

The function and life history of cells is discussed under the topic of [cell biology](#).

Scope and emphasis:

NLM collects materials on normal and abnormal cytology. Emphasis is on materials that relate to human health and disease.

See also:

Cell Biology

10/29/03

Dentistry

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the teeth, oral cavity, and associated structures, and the diagnosis and treatment of their diseases including prevention and the restoration of defective and missing tissue (adapted from [MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Dermatology

Definition:

The study of the skin, its structure, functions, diseases, and treatment (adapted from [MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

Special considerations:

Since the visual aspect is so important in dermatology, audiovisual media are especially valuable in this area of medicine.

See also:

Audiovisual Materials

12/15/03

Disaster Management

Definition:

Disaster management is the body of policy, administrative decisions and operational activities required to prepare for, mitigate, respond to, and repair the effects of natural or man-made disasters (adapted from definitions by the [United Nations Development Programme Disaster Management Training Program](#) and the [Federal Enterprise Architecture Program Management Office](#)).

Discussion:

Topics of interest within disaster management include health planning and policies, health

facilities management, public health workforce training, communicable disease control, emergency medical services, psychological preparedness and response, risk management, health information systems (including early warning, surveillance and communication systems), and laboratory diagnosis and characterization.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM collects scholarly and professional works on the health aspects of disaster management, including the management of man-made threats to the public such as bioterrorism and the use of chemical weapons. NLM may select examples of broader works on disaster management to document the public response to specific events or the social, political and cultural context of public health. See the policy statement on Public Health for a complete discussion.

Special considerations:

NLM collects examples of rescue literature (handbooks, guides, etc.) written for first responders.

See also:

Emergency Medicine

5/2/03

Education for the Health Professions

Definition:

Education and training of physicians, nurses, and other health practitioners.

Discussion:

This field includes practical and theoretical inquiries into all aspects of education and training for the health professions. Typical areas of research include quality of education; innovations in teaching; academic leadership; curricular matters; diversity and other recruitment and admissions policies; economics of education for the health professions; role of teaching hospitals in public health; student and resident issues; integration of teaching, research, and health care practice; and the future of academic medicine.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Biomedical Research
Health Occupations
Medical Sociology

6/21/04

Embryology

Definition:

The science dealing with the formation, development, structure and functional activity of the embryo.

Scope and emphasis:

The NLM collecting emphasis is on human and comparative embryology.

See also:

Biological Sciences

12/15/03

Emergency Medicine

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the provision of immediate treatment to the acutely ill or injured.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

Special considerations:

NLM collects examples of literature (handbooks, guides, etc.) written for first responders.

First aid materials intended for the public are collected very selectively, with emphasis on authoritative U.S. or international manuals.

See also:

Disaster Management

12/15/03

Endocrinology

Definition:

The branch of medicine and science concerned with the physiology and disorders of the endocrine system.

Discussion:

NLM comprehensively collects basic endocrinological research in any species, as well as clinical studies in all areas of endocrinology and metabolism.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

7/21/04

Environmental Health

Definition:

The study of the influence of physical, biological, chemical, and psychosocial factors on human health.

Discussion:

Environmental health is concerned with the influence of natural factors (e.g., climate), as well as those of human origin (e.g., noise, the built environment). The field is broad and draws upon research in many disciplines, such as molecular biology, toxicology, clinical medicine, population genetics, epidemiology and public health. An emerging area of importance is the application of genomics techniques to study gene-environment interactions.

Scope and emphasis:

Collecting emphasis is on life sciences research that elucidates the relationship between environment and health; the clinical diagnosis and treatment of environmentally related diseases; environmental health policy; bioethics of environmental health research and practice; and the history of environmental health.

NLM generally does not collect works in other areas of environmental science and technology unless they have biomedical application or public health content.

NLM produces and organizes numerous electronic resources related to environmental health. See the [NLM Specialized Information Services Web site on Toxicology and Environmental Health](#).

Special considerations:

The [Library of Congress](#) and the [National Agricultural Library](#) have substantial holdings in environmental science and technology.

See also:

Chemistry
Occupational Health and Safety
Public Health
Space Life Sciences
Toxicology

11/5/03

Exercise Science

Definition:

The scientific study of human movement performed to maintain or improve physical fitness.

Discussion:

Exercise science includes such subjects as biomechanics, exercise physiology, exercise psychology, cardiac rehabilitation, athletic training, and fitness for special population groups.

Scope and emphasis:

The NLM emphasis is on scholarly works written for the exercise science or other health professional. Scientific studies of yoga, tai chi, and other movement-based systems and practices for health and fitness are of interest. The Library does not collect material on physical education or instructional works for personal fitness.

See also:

Complementary and Alternative Medicine
Sports Medicine

11/26/03

Family Practice

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the provision of continuing, comprehensive primary health care for the entire family.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Forensic Medicine

Definition:

The application of medical knowledge to questions of law ([MeSH](#)).

Discussion:

Forensic medicine encompasses several specialties, such as forensic pathology, odontology, and psychiatry. A major focus is medicolegal death investigation, but medical forensic specialists also work in areas such as malpractice, investigation of human rights violations, and litigation related to occupational and environmental health issues.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/4/03

Gastroenterology

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the physiology and diseases of the digestive system and related structures.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Genetics

Definition:

The study of genes and their heredity.

Discussion:

Includes but is not limited to medical genetics, population genetics, cytogenetics, immunogenetics, behavioral genetics, genomics, and proteomics.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM is interested in research that explores the mechanisms of gene inheritance, mutation, regulation and expression, and the applications related to human and comparative biology and the biology of disease-related organisms. Studies of population genetics and evolution that improve our understanding of human health and disease are also important.

The genetic basis of human disorders, immune response, and mechanisms of mutagenesis are of particular collecting interest, as are works on applied genetics, including genetic disease prevention, screening and counseling.

NLM collects works concerned with genetic engineering of animal species, excluding those that focus on animal culture, breeding or agronomy. Plant sequencing is acquired as a basis for the understanding of fundamental biological processes. Research on the genetic engineering of plant species is collected only when research addresses nutritional or health implications for animals, especially humans.

Special considerations:

[Genetics Home Reference](#) is the Library's Web site for consumer information about genetic conditions and the genes or chromosomes responsible for those conditions.

DNA sequencing and other molecular, genetic and structural information is available through the [NCBI](#) and other data depositories. Literature regarding the history of the [Human Genome Project](#) and other collaborative efforts is also collected.

See also:

Bioinformatics
Cell Biology
Medical Genetics
Molecular Biology

4/6/04

Geriatrics

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the health of the aged and the process of aging.

Discussion:

The closely related field of gerontology is the study of the biological, psychological, sociological, health, and economic aspects of aging.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM comprehensively collects geriatrics, and the biological, psychological and health aspects of gerontology.

See also:

Medical Sociology

11/26/03

Gynecology

Definition:

The study of the physiology and disorders of the female genital tract and related reproductive physiology and endocrinology (adapted from [MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Health Communication

Definition:

The study or use of communication strategies to inform and influence individual and community

decisions that affect health (adapted from [Healthy People 2010](#)).

Discussion:

This field encompasses many areas of research and practice, such as health risk communication, health literacy, mass communication of health and medicine, patient-professional communication, and the development of telemedicine applications.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Medical Informatics
Public Health

7/23/04

Health Economics

Definition:

The economics of the provision of healthcare services, their delivery, and their use, with special attention to quantifying the demands and measuring outcomes for such services, the social, financial and opportunity costs of such services, and of their delivery, and the benefits obtained (adapted from Slee's health care terms, 4th ed. St. Paul : Tringa Press, 2001).

Discussion:

Health economics is commonly regarded as an applied field of economics, focusing on the costs and benefits of health care to a population. Health economics looks at the value of health, the demand for health care (including barriers to access), the supply of health care (including human resources issues, equipment, costs of production, etc.), and influences on health other than direct care (e.g., education, income, genetics). Research in the field encompasses economics, epidemiology, management, operational research, psychology, sociology, and studies of health care outcomes and effectiveness. Some examples of subjects studied in health economics include the economics of health care technology; consumer behavior; advertising and marketing of health care; health care financing (including public and private programs); insurance; and benefit and cost analysis.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

Special considerations:

Working papers are important sources of economics research, and are selectively acquired.

See also:

Health Policy
Health Services Research

Medical Sociology
Government Publications
Statistical Works
Working Papers

9/30/04

Health Facilities

Definition:

Institutions that provide medical or health-related services.

Discussion:

This category includes not only hospitals and clinics, but also other facilities where health services are offered, such as imaging centers, long term care facilities, tissue and blood banks, and laboratories. Typical areas of research include performance measurement and accreditation, costs and utilization of services, infection control and other safety issues, staffing effectiveness, and disaster preparedness.

Scope and emphasis:

The Library maintains an extensive international collection of works about health facilities, including organizational and financial management, design and construction, legal and ethical aspects, patient care management, and services such as pharmacy, rehabilitation, laboratories, records management, and libraries.

Special considerations:

NLM acquires significant standards, guidelines and codes related to health facilities, with emphasis on issuances of major U.S. and international organizations and agencies.

The Library selectively acquires practical works regarding topics such as housekeeping, food service, and physical plant maintenance in health facilities, with emphasis on those likely to be of widespread interest in the U.S. health services community.

See also:

Health Economics
Health Services Research

10/7/03

Health Occupations

Definition:

All health and allied health professions and the professional issues related to them.

Discussion

The health occupations encompass a broad spectrum of activities directed to the cure and prevention of disease; the provision, administration and management of health services; the development of policy; and biomedical research, scholarship and education.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively. This includes but is not limited to topics such as recruitment, training, and compensation; characteristics and behavior of health professionals; patient-provider relationships; practice management; professional associations and organizations; standards and ethics.

See also:

Education for the Health Professions
Practice Management Tools

4/6/04

Health Policy

Definition:

The development by government and other policy makers of present and future objectives pertaining to health care and the health care system, and the articulation of arguments and decisions regarding these objectives in legislation, judicial opinions, regulations, guidelines, standards, etc. that affect health care and public health.

Discussion

Health policy literature includes works that describe the roles played by both government and non-governmental entities and individuals in the policy process; studies of economic, technological, social, cultural and other influences on policy development; and the effects of resulting policies, guidelines, standards and protocols.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

Special considerations:

See statements on Government Publications and Grey Literature .

See also:

Health Services Research
Medical Sociology

4/6/04

Health Sciences Librarianship

Definition:

The application of library and information science principles and practices to collecting, organizing, managing, providing access to and preserving biomedical and health related information services and resources, and providing assistance and instruction in the location and use of these resources.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Health Communication
Medical Informatics

4/6/04

Health Services Research

Definition:

The multidisciplinary field of scientific investigation that studies how social factors, financing systems, organizational structures and processes, health policies, health technologies and personal behaviors affect access to health care, the quality and cost of health care, and ultimately the health and well-being of individuals, families, communities and populations (adapted from [AcademyHealth](#), 2000).

Discussion:

Health services research involves the integration of statistical, epidemiological, and social and behavioral research techniques in the study of health services, including randomized controlled trials, qualitative research, health care surveys, systematic reviews and meta-analysis. Examples of research topics include evaluation of practice variations, guideline adherence, and diffusion of innovation; quantitative and qualitative analysis of inequalities in health status and health care; assessment of patient attitudes to health, health seeking behavior, acceptance of health care, willingness to pay, and compliance with treatment.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

Special considerations:

NLM develops and makes available numerous resources on health services research through its [National Information Center on Health Services Research and Health Care Technology Assessment](#).

See also:

Health Economics
Health Policy
Medical Sociology
Grey Literature
Statistical Works
Working Papers

9/10/04

Hematology

Definition:

The study of the morphology, physiology, and pathology of the blood and blood-forming tissues.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Histology

Definition:

The study of the structure, composition and function of tissues.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM collects materials on normal and pathologic histology. The emphasis is on human and comparative histology.

See also:

Cell Biology
Cytology

3/5/04

History of Medicine

Definition:

The history of medical thought and practice.

Discussion:

The selection of the secondary source literature for the history of medicine, that is, for interpretive, analytical and biographical studies of the medicine of the past, requires a broad interpretation of medical thought and practice, and a recognition that the boundaries of medicine change over time. Further, an understanding of the impact of social, political, economic and

religious factors on medical practice is essential for research in the history of medicine.

Scope and emphasis:

The scope of the Library's collecting effort in the history of medicine is broad, including such topics as the history of the biological sciences; all aspects of the practice of medicine; medical and allied professions; histories of selected hospitals, schools of medicine, medical museums, and other health-related institutions; public health; biographies of medical figures; medicine as depicted in art, stamp and coins; medical theories and philosophies; popular and folk medicine; quackery; and the sociology of medicine. NLM also selectively acquires significant works in related subjects to document the sociocultural context of a particular era. Scholarly works are collected without regard to their language or geographical origin.

Selected related works are acquired as needed to provide a cultural context for the study of medical history, as are the reference and bibliographical tools of historical scholarship deemed most important for the NLM mission.

Special Considerations:

Because the Library of Congress comprehensively collects [reference and bibliographic tools](#), NLM collects only those which are most critical to the support of scholarship in the history of medicine.

See also:

Academic Dissertations
Bibliographic Works
Biographical Works
Manuscripts
Medical Sociology

7/30/04

Human Nutrition

Definition:

The science of food, the nutrients and other substances contained therein, their action, interaction, and balance in relation to health and disease ([MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

NLM collects research and clinical literature in every aspect of human nutrition including normal nutrition (caloric and nutrient requirements throughout the life cycle and for specific populations), clinical nutrition (nutrition intervention aimed at the treatment or prevention of disease or illness), and nutritional epidemiology. The Library also collects literature on public policies that affect nutrition and health.

Because of the library's emphasis on biomedical research, NLM is particularly interested in works dealing with the physiology and biochemistry of nutrition. Works on nutrition as a health care

profession are collected, as are works on nutrition education written primarily for those engaged in or preparing for careers in nutrition research, clinical nutrition, or nutrition in a health care setting. A limited number of instructional works written for general audiences or patients may be selected for their historical value, to chronicle public health outreach efforts, or to represent materials available to health providers for direct patient care. Such materials are collected very selectively with the emphasis on authoritative materials likely to be widely used in U.S. health care.

NLM collects more narrowly in food-related subject areas. The Library's primary interests are food composition, foodborne illness and food toxicology, including bioterrorism. NLM also collects works that emphasize the public health aspects of food labeling and food inspection, rather than the management or techniques of dairy, meat, fish or other food inspection programs. NLM collects works on dietary habits and customs when the content is related to health. NLM collects works on food service management in health care facilities, but not those on general food service management. NLM does not collect works on the food industry, food technology, food supply (including food consumption, food security and food economics), or home food preparation and handling.

Special considerations:

Together the NAL, NLM, and LC attempt to collect, retain, and preserve all significant information on nutrition and food; however, aspects of the subject areas are collected and treated differently at each institution depending upon its mission and the needs of its users. See the NAL, NLM and LC Joint Collection Development Policy Statement on [Human Nutrition and Food](#). The subject of animal nutrition is addressed in the statement on [veterinary medicine](#).

4/6/04

Infectious Diseases

Definition:

Disease caused by agents such as bacteria, protozoa, fungi, or viruses.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

NLM and LC's Joint Collection Development Policy Statement: [AIDS and HIV](#)

Microbiology

Parasitology

4/6/04

Internal Medicine

Definition:

A medical specialty concerned with the diagnosis and non-surgical treatment of diseases of the internal organ systems of adults (adapted from [MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Laboratory Animal Science

Definition:

The science and technology dealing with the procurement, breeding, care, health, and selection of animals used in biomedical research and testing ([MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

NLM collects all aspects of laboratory animal science and welfare including the legal, ethical and public policy issues related to laboratory animal welfare and alternatives to animal testing.

See also:

Bioethics
Veterinary Medicine

11/26/03

Medical Botany

Definition

The study and use of plants in biomedicine.

Discussion:

Includes the effect on human health of injurious, remedial, and psychoactive plants, fungi, and microorganisms. Currently there is great interest in testing the use and efficacy of traditional botanical remedies as a basis for the development of new therapies and pharmaceutical agents.

Scope and emphasis:

Medical botany including medical ethnobotany is comprehensively collected. Materials on the cultivation of medicinal plants are not collected.

See also:

Complementary and Alternative Medicine
Pharmacology

Plant Biology

1/7/04

Medical Genetics

Definition:

The branch of medicine specializing in the application of genetic research to human health.

Discussion:

In addition to clinical diagnosis and management, the field includes genetic counseling services.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Genetics

7/8/04

Medical Humanities

Definition:

The study of the intersection of medicine and humanistic disciplines such as philosophy, religion, literature, and the fine and performing arts.

Discussion:

This field emphasizes the humane aspects of medicine and health care and has expanded to include research in social sciences disciplines that are informed by humanistic scholarship, such as cultural studies, anthropology, and medical sociology. The literature is diverse, and includes scholarly research, reflective essays, and critical interpretations of artistic and literary works.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Anthropology

Bioethics

History of Medicine

Medical Sociology

Religion and Medicine

Audiovisual Materials

Fiction and Poetry

7/30/04

Medical Informatics

Definition:

The field of information science concerned with the analysis, use and dissemination of medical data and information through the application of computers to various aspects of health care and medicine ([MeSH](#)).

Discussion:

“Medical informatics attempts to provide the theoretical and scientific basis for the application of computer and automated information systems to biomedicine and health affairs . . . medical informatics studies biomedical information, data, and knowledge - their storage, retrieval, and optimal use for problem-solving and decision-making” (Lindberg, D.A.B., [NLM Long Range Plan. Report of the Board of Regents](#), 1987, p. 31).

This category includes consumer health informatics, dental informatics, nursing informatics, and all other applications of computers to health.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Bioinformatics

Health Sciences Librarianship

1/7/04

Medical Sociology

Definition:

Medical sociology is concerned with the relationship between social factors and health, and with the application of sociological theory and research techniques to questions related to health and the health care system.

Discussion:

Typical areas of research include the influence of ethnicity, gender, age, or socioeconomic status on the access to and quality of health care; health and risk taking behaviors; social constructs of illness; health beliefs and perceptions; health effects of sociocultural changes; the role of health institutions and health professionals in society; the social implications of biomedical innovations, education, and communication; and other sociological aspects of medical organization and practice.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

Selection questions sometimes arise because of the characteristically multidisciplinary nature of

the field, especially in such areas as life course research (childhood, aging), crime, substance abuse, sexuality, and gender issues. When reviewing interdisciplinary works, NLM bases selection decisions on the extent of a work's health related content.

Special considerations:

The [Library of Congress](#) maintains an extensive collection of works on sociology and related fields.

See also:

Anthropology
Health Policy
Health Services Research
Psychology

4/6/04

Medicine

Definition:

The art and science of preventing, diagnosing, and treating disease, as well as the maintenance of health.

Scope and emphasis:

The Library comprehensively collects works on all areas of medical practice, research, and thought; and on all medical specialties and subspecialties.

See also:

Education for the Health Professions
Health Occupations
History of Medicine

7/21/04

Microbiology

Definition:

The study of microorganisms such as fungi, bacteria, archaea, protozoa, and viruses ([MeSH](#)).

Scope and Emphasis:

NLM collects research on the basic biology of microbes, including molecular structure and function, genetics, biochemical composition, physiological and biochemical processes, and the distribution and evolution of microorganisms, including adaptation to extreme environments such as hot springs, glaciers, space, etc. NLM emphasizes the applied research related to human disease, especially emerging infectious diseases. Studies of host-microbe relationships, microbial pathogenicity and virulence in humans and animal models are of particular interest. Applications

to agriculture and environmental science, including food and soil microbial ecology, are included only when related to public health.

See also:

Infectious Diseases
Space Life Sciences

7/10/03

Military Medicine

Definition:

The organization and delivery of health care in the uniformed services and the practice of medicine as applied to special circumstances associated with military operations.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Disaster Management

10/19/03

Molecular Biology

Definition:

Molecular biology is the study of the structure and function of molecules and macromolecular systems associated with biological processes, especially the molecular basis of inheritance and protein synthesis.

Discussion:

Includes mechanisms of gene expression and regulation, especially DNA replication, transcription, translation, and protein synthesis. Applications use recombinant DNA technology, including plasmid construction, vectors, cloning, and transfection. Also includes genomics, proteomics and structural biology.

Scope and emphasis:

The Library's interest in molecular biology is broad. Basic research in molecular biology and applications to medicine are collected. Research on any organism that elucidates the molecular basis of biological functions is of interest.

Special considerations:

The [NCBI](#) develops a variety of resources (databases including nucleotide, single nucleotide polymorphisms, genome, structure, protein, taxonomy, etc.) for molecular biology information.

See also:

Chemistry
Bioinformatics
Biophysics
Genetics
Microbiology
Molecular Medicine

6/25/03

Molecular Medicine

Definition:

A science that seeks to comprehend disease causes and mechanisms at the molecular level, and to apply this basic research to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases and disorders.

Discussion:

Typical applications in molecular medicine include gene therapy, molecular structural analysis, genetic epidemiology, and molecular and clinical pharmacology.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Molecular Biology
Genetics

12/15/03

Nephrology

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the anatomy, physiology, and pathology of the kidney.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Urology

12/15/03

Neurology

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the anatomy, physiology and pathology of the brain and nervous system.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Neuroscience
Cognitive Science

12/15/03

Neuroscience

Definition:

Neuroscience is the study of the physiological, cellular, molecular and genetic processes underlying the function of the brain and nervous system.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM comprehensively collects all aspects of neuroscience as applied to any species.

See also:

Psychology
Psychiatry
Cognitive Science

10/8/03

Nursing

Definition:

A health profession concerned with the promotion of health, prevention of illness and the care of the sick, disabled and dying.

Discussion:

Contemporary nursing literature increasingly emphasizes nursing research, advanced nursing practice, nursing policy, technological developments such as nursing informatics, and innovations in nursing education.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

Special considerations:

The [History of Medicine Division](#) maintains notable manuscripts in nursing.

See also:

Education for the Health Professions

Health Occupations

8/26/04

Obstetrics

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the management and care of women during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum (adapted from [MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Occupational Health and Safety

Definition:

The study of the relationship between work and human health, the promotion of health in the workplace, and the prevention, diagnosis, and management of occupation related diseases, disorders and injuries.

Discussion:

Work health and safety issues include concerns about biological, chemical and physical hazards; diseases, disorders and injuries related to or affecting work; health issues involving the physical space of work; types of occupations and their effect on health; job stress, work schedules, and other psychosocial issues in the work environment affecting health.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM is interested in works on all aspects of occupational health and safety written for the health professional. Information on design and engineering for safety and ergonomics is generally not collected.

Special considerations:

Current guidance on specific occupational health and safety issues is available through the [National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health](#).

See also:

Environmental Health

Public Health
Toxicology
Posters

3/4/04

Oncology

Definition:

The branch of medicine and the science concerned with neoplasms.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Ophthalmology

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the structure and function of the eye and the medical and surgical treatment of its defects and diseases.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Optometry

Definition:

The professional practice of primary eye and vision care that includes the measurement of visual refractive power and the correction of visual defects (adapted from [MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Orthopedics

Definition:

A surgical specialty that utilizes medical, surgical, and physical methods to treat and correct deformities, diseases, and injuries to the skeletal system, its articulations, and associated structures ([MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Surgery

12/15/03

Otolaryngology

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the study and treatment of disorders of the ear, nose, and throat and related areas of the neck and head.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/4/03

Parasitology

Definition:

The study of parasites.

Discussion:

Parasitology includes the study of human and animal parasites, and the physiological, metabolic, immunological, biochemical, nutritional, and chemotherapeutic aspects of parasites and host-parasite relationships.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM comprehensively collects works in all aspects of parasitology with potential application to biomedical research.

See also:

Microbiology
Infectious Diseases

4/6/04

Pathology

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the nature and cause of disease as expressed by changes in cellular or tissue structure and function caused by the disease process (adapted from [MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Clinical Laboratory Science

12/15/03

Pediatrics

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with maintaining health and providing medical care to children and adolescents (adapted from [MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Pharmacology

Definition:

The study of the origin, nature, properties, and actions of drugs and their effects on living organisms ([MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

Special considerations:

Examples of trade publications from the pharmaceutical industry are collected to track trends and innovations, and to document the impact of the industry on health care around the world.

See also:

Pharmacy
Toxicology

9/24/03

Pharmacy

Definition:

The practice of compounding and dispensing medicinal preparations ([MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Pharmacology

1/5/04

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation***Definition:***

Physical medicine and rehabilitation, also referred to as physiatry or rehabilitation medicine, is a branch of medicine concerned with evaluation and treatment of, and coordination of care for, persons with musculoskeletal injuries, pain syndromes, and/or other physical or cognitive impairments or disabilities. The primary focus is on maximal restoration of physical and psychological function, and on alleviation of pain (adapted from definitions by the [American Board of Medical Specialties](#) and the [American Board of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

NLM focuses on medical evaluation, treatment and management of persons with impairments and disabilities. The Library selectively collects works on social, political, legal and cultural aspects of disability, focusing on works that emphasize public health issues, those that are essential to providing a context for evaluation and treatment, and those likely to be of importance to the historical record.

Social and vocational rehabilitation literature is more selectively acquired, and only when the primary intended audience is health professionals.

1/20/04

Physiology***Definition:***

The science of the functions of the living organism and its parts, and of the physical and chemical factors and processes involved (adapted from [MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

The NLM emphasis is on the physiology of humans, laboratory animals and model organisms, and fundamental biomedical research in this area.

See also:

Plant Biology

Veterinary Medicine

12/4/03

Plant Biology

Definition:

Plant biology is the study of the structure and function of plants.

Discussion:

Research on plants is becoming increasingly important in basic life sciences and biomedical research as it furthers our understanding of fundamental physical, chemical and biological structures and processes.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM is interested in fundamental research on plants at the molecular level (e.g., DNA sequencing), and health-related effects of plants and plant products (e.g., animal and [human nutrition](#), [pharmacology](#), [toxicology](#)). The Library also collects research on plant physiology when it is applicable to biomedical research.

Other types of agricultural research generally are not collected.

See also:

Cell Biology
Genetics
Medical Botany
Molecular Biology

12/15/03

Podiatry

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with foot disorders and injuries and anatomic defects of the foot (adapted from [MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Preventive Medicine

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the prevention of disease and the promotion and preservation of health in the individual (adapted from [MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See Also:

Health Communication
Health Policy
Public Health

12/15/03

Primateology

Definition:

The study of primates.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM collects works in all aspects of primatology except for those primate ecology and wildlife management materials that are unrelated to the health of primates.

See also:

Laboratory Animal Science
Veterinary Medicine

12/15/03

Psychiatry

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders, including mental retardation and substance-related disorders (adapted from definition by the [American Psychiatric Association](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively. Both the National Library of Medicine and the [Library of Congress](#) collect works on psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic theory.

See also:

Psychology
Neuroscience

4/6/04

Psychology

Definition:

The science dealing with the study of mental processes and behavior in man and animals ([MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

The Library's collection of the psychological literature emphasizes all areas of research with potential application to biomedical research and health care. NLM comprehensively collects works on clinical and counseling psychology; the role of behavior in physical and mental health; biopsychosocial interactions (relationship between biological factors and behavioral or social variables); the function of the brain; and the history of psychology. NLM generally defers to the [Library of Congress](#) in areas of psychology with little application to medicine (e.g., school psychology, organizational behavior).

Special considerations:

NLM focuses on the collection of print and electronic monographs and journals containing original research in psychology. The NLM collection complements that of the [Library of Congress](#), which collects dissertations, textbooks, and consumer health publications in addition to its extensive holdings of monographic and journal literature.

See also:

Tests
Neuroscience
Cognitive Science
Psychiatry

4/6/04

Public Health***Definition:***

Public health is concerned with the prevention, detection, and control of disease, and the protection and promotion of health on a community or population level.

Discussion:

Public health includes a set of biological, epidemiological, social, and statistical sciences and practices intended to measure, protect, and promote health on a population level. Public health overlaps many fields of medicine, given the growing population focus of biomedical research, the increasing concern with bioterrorism, and the importance of epidemiological methods in clinical trials.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM comprehensively collects scholarly and professional works on public health issues and crises. Works on the public health response to crises, disasters, and bioterrorism are of particular collecting importance, as are issues affecting health policy, health economics, and health services research. NLM collects works on epidemiology, population health, health disparities, and the history of public health, including historical demography related to health.

Public health issues (e.g., substance abuse, violence, birth control, HIV/AIDS) often engender a large body of literature not specifically addressed to health professionals or public health

practitioners. NLM collects selectively materials of these types, emphasizing serious scholarly works, those characterizing diverse viewpoints, those chronicling the public health response of health professionals and policy makers, and those documenting the health information disseminated to the public at large. Works endorsed by health care associations, patient advocacy groups, and health policy organizations are of particular interest.

NLM generally excludes infrastructure and engineering of waste management, sanitation and water quality, except where this literature represents the focus of public health efforts in the region.

Special considerations:

Government documents, reports of international agencies ([WHO](#), [World Bank](#), etc.), domestic task forces (e.g., [Institute of Medicine](#)), and Foundations are of particular interest.

Representative models of state and local health plans are collected when available.

Reports from oppositional or popular groups presenting perspectives different from those reflected in official documents are collected.

Selected popular educational materials such as posters, prints, photographs, pamphlets, and other ephemera are collected to document trends in public health and public health education. Current educational materials and services for the public are also linked from [MedlinePlus](#).

See also:

Grey Literature
Health Policy
Health Services Research
Medical Sociology

8/14/03

Pulmonary Medicine

Definition:

A branch of medicine concerned with the diagnosis and treatment of diseases and defects of the lungs and respiratory system.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Radiology

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the use of x-ray and other forms of radiant energy in the diagnosis and treatment of disease (adapted from [MeSH](#)).

Discussion:

Includes the subspecialty of nuclear medicine.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Religion and Medicine

Definition:

The influence of religious belief and practice on health and biomedical research.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM collects works that illuminate the contemporary or historical influences of religion on health, health care policy and practice, and biomedical research.

Special considerations:

The Library selectively acquires works for pastoral caregivers in health care settings. Emphasis is on publications likely to be of broad interest to U.S. health professionals.

NLM very selectively acquires denominational or sectarian literature related to health. Collecting emphasis is on works that are likely to be of research value for scholars and health professionals, and are published at the national or international level. The [Library of Congress](#) takes primary collecting responsibility for religion and theology.

See also:

Bioethics
Medical Sociology
Anthropology

4/6/04

Reproductive Medicine

Definition:

A branch of medicine concerned with the morphology, physiology, biochemistry, and pathology of reproduction in humans and other animals, and on the biological, medical, and veterinary problems of fertility and lactation. It includes ovulation induction, diagnosis of infertility and

recurrent pregnancy loss, and assisted reproductive technologies such as embryo transfer, in vitro fertilization, and intrafallopian transfer of zygotes (from Infertility and Reproductive Medicine Clinics of North America, Foreword 1990; Journal of Reproduction and Fertility, Notice to Contributors, Jan 1979) ([MeSH](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Gynecology

Obstetrics

Urology

12/15/03

Rheumatology

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the diseases and disorders of the musculoskeletal system, particularly inflammatory or degenerative processes of the joints and connective tissue.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

12/15/03

Space Life Sciences

Definition:

The study of the effects of the reduced-gravity environment of space flight and of outer space on living organisms. Space life sciences may also be called exobiology or astrobiology.

Scope and emphasis:

The Library's primary interest is in the study of fundamental biological processes in space - for example, in the origin of life; the development of DNA, cells and early life forms; and changes to cellular mechanisms and physiological functions.

See also:

Aerospace Medicine

Biological Sciences

11/26/03

Sports Medicine

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with physical fitness, the underlying science of function and performance in sport and exercise, and the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of injuries or illnesses affecting the athlete.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Exercise Science

12/15/03

Surgery

Definition:

The branch of medicine in which manual or operative procedures are used in the diagnosis and treatment of disease, injuries, or deformities.

Discussion:

Specialties include neurological, orthopaedic, plastic, thoracic, and colon and rectal surgery.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

Special considerations:

Still and moving images depicting surgical techniques are of particular interest. NLM has an extensive historical collection in surgery and holds the papers of several key surgical organizations.

Therapeutics

Definition:

The plan of treatment of a disease or disorder as administered by a health care practitioner.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM collects works on current and historical systems of therapeutics. Preference is given to works prepared for health care professionals including practitioners of complementary and alternative health care systems. Works that provide a detailed description of the therapeutics system or include a critical history or analysis of the system also may be selected.

See also:

Complementary and Alternative Medicine

11/12/03

Toxicology***Definition:***

Toxicology is the study of the adverse effects of chemical, physical and biological agents on living organisms and the ecosystem.

Discussion:

Toxicology studies the agents responsible for adverse effects, the mechanisms involved, the damage that may ensue, testing methodologies to determine the extent of damage, and ways to avoid or repair it. Toxicology is traditionally associated with chemical exposures, such as the effects of drugs, industrial chemicals, pesticides, food additives, household products, and personal care items. Toxinology, a subdiscipline of toxicology, studies biological exposures, such as insect stings, poisonous mushrooms and plants, venomous snakes and aquatic life. The third category of toxicology is concerned with physical hazards, such as radiation and noise.

Test methodology for determining the toxicity or safety of chemicals is an important emphasis of toxicology. With increased attention to alternatives to whole animal testing, important tools in toxicology include in vivo and in vitro methods, analysis of structure-activity relationships, modeling and computational toxicology.

Scope and emphasis:

NLM collects all aspects of toxicology involving human health, and works of potential application to biomedical research such as studies on the biochemical and molecular basis of toxicity. The collection places special emphasis on emerging disciplines, such as toxicogenomics and toxicoproteomics, and topics of public health concern, such as endocrine disruptors and the toxicology of chemical and other disasters.

Because of the relevance of extrapolating animal study results to humans, toxicological assays involving both traditional laboratory animals and wildlife are collected. In the area of food toxicology, NLM collects toxicological studies on plants in the human food chain and works on nutritional toxicology of potential interest to researchers in biomedicine and public health, but generally excludes works primarily intended for agricultural or food industry research. The Library collects works on environmental pollution and ecotoxicology if they have biomedical application or public health content, but otherwise does not collect in the area of ecotoxicology.

Special considerations:

Technical reports, criteria documents, and standards are important publication types in toxicology. The focus of the NLM collection is on documents of U.S. and global interest.

The Library produces, organizes, and/or archives many resources on toxicology, including the

database [TOXLINE](#).

See also:

Environmental Health
Occupational Health and Safety
Government Publications
Standards and Guidelines
Technical Reports

4/6/04

Urology

Definition:

The branch of medicine concerned with the study, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases of the urinary tract in both sexes, and the genital tract in the male (adapted from [MeSH](#)).

Discussion:

Urology includes andrology, the study of male genital diseases and male fertility.

Scope and emphasis:

Collected comprehensively.

See also:

Nephrology

12/15/03

Veterinary Medicine

Definition:

Veterinary medicine is the science that specializes in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of disease or injury in animals.

Discussion:

The field of veterinary medicine correlates with broader disease prevention and control, particularly diseases that are transmissible between animals and humans or affecting human welfare ([American Veterinary Medical Association](#)).

Scope and emphasis:

The Library's collecting emphasis is on veterinary medicine as it relates to human health, biomedical research, and advances in biomedicine. The Library collects works on comparative medicine and comparative pathology, zoonoses, veterinary pharmacology, veterinary clinical sciences, primatology, and laboratory animal science and welfare.

Because of the Library's interest in research at the cellular, molecular and biochemical level and its potential application to humans and human health, the Library also collects animal research literature in such fields as immunology, microbiology, parasitology and toxicology.

NLM collects major publications that are likely to be widely used in U.S. veterinary practice on the health care of any species including exotic animals. NLM also collects works on veterinary medicine as a health profession and the history of veterinary medicine.

NLM generally excludes works concerned with animal breeding and training, animal husbandry, pets, recreational and show animals, dietary management, production efficiency, or ecology except when these topics expressly relate to human health or laboratory animal science.

Special considerations:

See the [Joint Collection Development Policy on Veterinary Science](#) of NLM, the National Agricultural Library, and the Library of Congress.

See also:

Laboratory Animal Science
Parasitology
Primatology

11/24/03

Selection Guidelines by Format and Literature Type

The Library's goal is to assemble a collection that insofar as possible contains all significant professional and research literature of biomedical practice, research and scholarship. This effort has resulted in the world's richest collection of scientific and scholarly publications in biomedicine and public health, including works from every region of the world and in virtually every written language.

However, NLM recognizes that it is impossible and impractical to achieve the same level of comprehensiveness in all categories of publications, such as manuscripts, pamphlets and annual reports. Nor is it desirable to assemble comprehensive collections of some categories of materials, such as textbooks or examination review guides. Consequently, the Library collects certain categories selectively, according to guidelines in this section. It is important to note that at NLM, such "selective" collections may be quite extensive, even by research library standards. This designation indicates only that the Library does not intend to acquire every example of the literature.

In most cases, the Library's selective collecting strategy emphasizes the intentional selection of a wide range of influential, representative and distinctive resources in order to illustrate a diversity of philosophical, cultural, and political perspectives from around the world.

In a small number of categories, the Library focuses on collecting works that document U.S practice and education. Typically these are educational and working materials such as examination review guides, continuing education publications, and laboratory manuals.

Within some categories, NLM collects selectively in order to avoid redundancy. This is particularly true in the case of works which synthesize information from other sources. Examples include textbooks, directories, and newsletters. Although the Library collects broadly in these areas, there is no intent to acquire every iteration of similar intellectual content.

The question of redundancy has become more of a challenge as content increasingly is available in multiple formats. A single work may be available in print, physical media, and online versions. NLM may select one format over another -- or select multiple formats -- based on considerations such as ability to preserve and archive, and added value due to searchability or multimedia content. The amount of support required by staff to make the resources available must be considered. The decision to collect resources requiring significant amounts of staff time to preserve, including migration to new formats, must be weighed against the current and future scholarly value of the resources.

The following section offers guidance for the selection of many categories of publications. It is not an exhaustive list but includes types of publications most commonly encountered in the scientific, technical, medical and public health bibliography.

Academic Dissertations

This category includes master's theses, doctoral and post-doctoral dissertations, inauguraldissertationen and habilitationschriften.

Academic dissertations, including theses and postdoctoral dissertations, played an important role in communicating results of original biomedical research before the rise of commercial scientific publishing. The Library's historical collections are rich in dissertation literature, and NLM continues to collect historical dissertations.

Although most present-day Western clinical and scientific dissertation research is reported elsewhere in the scientific literature or provides secondary review of research literature, the dissertation literature remains an important source of original research in some fields, such as the [history of medicine](#), medical [anthropology](#), and paleopathology. Dissertations from less developed countries also are of interest, not only because they report research not documented elsewhere, but also because they may contain unique cultural and regional perspectives. NLM selectively collects modern dissertations, with emphasis on those that contain significant primary research not likely to be reported in other literature held at the Library and those from countries that produce little biomedical literature.

3/09/04

Alumni and Student Publications

Publications written by and for alumni and students often provide information concerning developments in medical education, trace the development of a school, chronicle its history, and report the accomplishments of its alumni, students and staff. To document the history of education in the health professions, NLM very selectively collects alumni and student publications from a range of U.S. institutions, seeking to represent not only the publications of prominent medical schools but also those of culturally and geographically diverse institutions. Selection criteria include the presence of signed original articles, biographical information, and other material of potential historical value.

4/5/04

Annual Reports

Organizations publish annual reports to document activities to members or the public, to satisfy organizational or government mandates, to promote orderly progress toward organizational goals, or to enhance public relations. They may provide an illustration of events over time, show the changes and trends in the delivery of health care or reflect the concerns of organizations that help shape the progress of health in the U.S. and abroad. Some reports focus on social, political, or economic issues that contribute to understanding the overall picture of medicine and health. Annual reports can be a useful source for policy makers, historians and scholars.

Annual reports of relevance to biomedicine and health care include those from centers of medical education and research, private foundations providing support for medical research, medical cen-

ters and hospitals, health-related societies, disease related associations, and international, federal and state agencies.

NLM selectively collects annual reports to document the history and progress of significant institutions and organizations. The collection emphasis is on annual reports that are issued by international research, development or reporting organizations; national-level research institutes of any country; the department of health of any country; or influential or historically important health organizations in the United States.

The nature and quality of content is the most critical factor in selecting titles for the NLM collection. Collection emphasis is on annual reports that contain significant statistics or research results not reported elsewhere, photographs, biographical and historical information, and unique cultural, political or social information.

Since maintaining a comprehensive collection of annual reports is beyond the reach of NLM, the goal is to achieve a balance which includes reports from important institutions and diverse types of organizations, and to follow these over time. Annual reports from institutions of more regional and local interest should be the responsibility of state or the [National Network of Libraries of Medicine](#).

4/1/04

Atlases

Atlases are works consisting of collections of images, usually with explanatory text or captions. In medicine, atlases usually contain drawings, radiological images, diagrams, or photographs of the body, various health conditions, surgical procedures, etc. They are used for the education of health professionals, and as practical references for clinical diagnosis and treatment. Atlases also document the level of knowledge about anatomy during a historical period, and sometimes reflect the medical philosophy of a culture.

NLM selectively collects medical and anatomical atlases likely to be of interest to U.S. health professionals and to historians of medicine and science. Selection criteria include quality of graphics, current research value, and potential historical importance. For the historical record, atlases produced or translated in non-Western countries are of particular interest, as are any works that document national differences in the portrayal of anatomical subjects. Because of their visual nature, atlases increasingly appear in audiovisual and electronic format; NLM collects according to the guidelines in those sections.

See also:

Audiovisual Materials
Electronic Resources

3/9/04

Audiovisual Materials

This category includes works such as film, video, sound recordings, and projected images, whether produced in analog or digital format.

NLM selects audiovisuals which are important to the research needs of scholars and historians in medicine and public health, as well as selected examples of audiovisual works produced for use by health professionals in continuing medical education, patient instruction, or health education. The collection focuses on works which provide valuable historical insight to health care of the period and those in which audiovisual presentation significantly enhances the communication of the subject matter.

For current research and practice, NLM selectively collects works that document contemporary practices and procedures in medicine, health care, and biomedical research. Emphasis is on works which demonstrate innovative techniques or new medical devices, and those which introduce new health policies and guidelines.

For the historical record, NLM collects materials that provide audiovisual documentation of discoveries in biomedical research; trends in medical and health education; health care issues, viewpoints and controversies; innovations in instruments, equipment and procedures; health facilities (e.g., hospitals, institutions, and laboratories); health personnel in action; and noted persons in medicine and public health. The Library is particularly interested in audiovisual documentation of authentic health care practices, situations or events, and healthcare workers in practice. Examples include surgical demonstrations, actual case studies of communication between patients and health professionals, and oral history interviews with noted health professionals.

NLM selectively acquires lectures, with emphasis on those delivered by noted persons and others in which audiovisual presentation significantly enhances communication of the topic. Lectures sponsored by NLM, other NIH Institutes and Centers, and authoritative societies and institutions are of particular interest.

Conference publications in audiovisual format are selectively acquired when no print counterpart exists. Emphasis is on the conference publications of government agencies and other major national and international organizations, in which the audiovisual presentation significantly enhances the communication of important trends, innovations, or discoveries.

In general, NLM does not select consumer health audiovisuals intended for independent patient use, except for historical purposes. To document the history of public health, the Library selectively collects consumer health videos which are produced by or on behalf of authoritative health organizations and present public health issues of the day, such as those focusing on health disparities or emerging diseases. The Library collects other audiovisuals produced for a broad audience, such as televised documentaries and public service announcements, when they are likely to be of historical interest.

The audiovisual collection emphasizes English language audiovisuals produced in the United States. Audiovisuals in foreign languages and non-U.S. works are collected when they contain

unique information (e.g., a public health film targeted specifically to U.S. speakers of a foreign language) or are of historical importance.

NLM generally acquires audiovisual materials produced in currently accepted U.S. formats, although other formats may be considered for the historical collection. When a title is available in more than one format, preference generally is given to an archival format or to the format most readily transferable to an archival format.

NLM also produces or licenses some educational audiovisual materials for online dissemination via [MedlinePlus](#) and other Web resources.

See also:

Atlases
Conference Publications
Consumer Health
Continuing Education Publications
Digital Images
Electronic Resources
Prints and Photographs

9/14/04

Bibliographic Works

This category includes abstracts, indexes, and national, subject, and personal bibliographies, both recurring and monographic.

NLM attempts to acquire bibliographic works sufficient to provide access to biomedical and public health literature from around the world. The Library bases its selection decisions on criteria such as comprehensiveness, uniqueness, and usefulness for research and scholarship.

NLM generally does not collect subsets or abridgements of bibliographic works. The Library does not collect national bibliographies (except for selected titles required for historical research), as the [Library of Congress](#) takes national responsibility for collecting and preserving such works.

3/8/04

Biographical Works

This category includes biographies, autobiographies, personal narratives, memoirs, and published oral history transcripts.

Biographical works generally are written for a broad audience and are important chronicles of the course of biomedicine. First hand accounts, such as autobiographies and personal narratives, may be especially valuable as primary source materials.

NLM collects medical histories of famous persons and biographical works about individuals who have contributed significantly to biomedicine.

NLM selects other biographical works about prominent or lesser known individuals if they characterize the health care environment, practice or attitudes of a given time or place; influence public perceptions about health; document medical innovations; or contain significant biomedical information.

Personal narratives (such as an account of an illness written by a patient or family member) generally are not collected, except for historical interest.

3/26/03

Catalogs

This category includes sales and trade catalogs, academic catalogs, and exhibit catalogs.

Sales and trade catalogs present descriptions, prices, and intended uses of medical equipment, drugs, preparations and devices. NLM collects examples of these catalogs for historical purposes.

Catalogs of academic health science institutions provide a record of the development of those institutions, and changes in health science curricula. NLM collects representative examples of catalogs from a range of academic health science institutions – the prominent and influential, as well as some lesser known but culturally unique institutions.

NLM also collects catalogs of biomedical exhibits from any country, with emphasis upon works that provide valuable illustrative and descriptive material.

3/1/04

Collected Works

NLM selects collected works when the original works are not in the collection, when the compilation contains additional information or commentary, or when presentation of the material as a unit is of value for scholarship.

See also:

Reprints and Facsimiles

9/30/04

Conference Publications

NLM strives to assemble a comprehensive collection of the proceedings of significant national and international biomedical and public health conferences, congresses and symposia.

Conference programs containing abstracts may also be collected if the abstracts do not appear in the journal literature or if publication of complete conference proceedings is not anticipated.

Conference programs are collected only if they are of historical interest, or if they document important research not otherwise represented in the traditional scholarly literature.

NLM collects the proceedings of other meetings, such as local and regional workshops, as well as single lectures not issued as part of proceedings, when they are likely to be of widespread contemporary interest to scholars and health professionals, provide a unique cultural perspective, and/or are likely to have historical importance.

See also:

Electronic Resources

8/25/04

Consumer Health

This category includes materials designed for direct use by consumers, as well as those intended to be used by health professionals to educate patients.

Dissemination of consumer education information is an important strategy in the practice of public health and preventive medicine. NLM has taken an increasingly prominent role in the dissemination of consumer health information by the creation of online resources such as [MedlinePlus](#). MedlinePlus is designed to provide consumers with immediate access to authoritative information that helps them to research health-related questions and increase their understanding of health topics.

NLM selectively acquires consumer health publications for its collection of print and audiovisual publications, with emphasis on works likely to be of historical value, i.e., those that influence perceptions about health or health behaviors, chronicle changing viewpoints about health and illness, or provide perspectives not found in conventional medical literature. NLM also selectively acquires instructional materials produced for use by health providers in patient care, with emphasis on authoritative U.S. materials. The Library indexes selected consumer health periodicals for its data products such as [PubMed](#).

The NLM collecting mission complements that of the Library of Congress, which supports public and state library services for consumers (such as the management of the [National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped](#)), and accordingly assumes principal responsibility for the collection, cataloging and archiving of consumer health publications for the nation.

See also:

Popular Literature

4/23/04

Continuing Education Publications

Continuing education materials provide evidence of the content, instructional techniques and educational philosophies found in formal education for the health professions. These materials typically contain information collected from other sources and reorganized into forms suitable for instructional purposes. NLM collects this category very selectively, primarily for historical purposes. Continuing education materials that describe new concepts, demonstrate new techniques, or document contemporary concerns of the U.S. health professional are of particular collecting interest.

See also:

Audiovisual Materials
Electronic Resources
Examination Review Guides
Textbooks

4/1/04

Datasets

This category includes structured collections of related digital files.

The Library produces, makes available, and serves as a permanent repository of datasets such as [GenBank](#), the [Visible Human](#), the [Unified Medical Language System \(UMLS\)](#), and many other resources created or maintained by the NLM [National Center for Biotechnology Information](#), [Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications](#), the [Specialized Information Services \(SIS\) Division](#), and the [National Information Center on Health Services Research and Health Care Technology](#).

NLM also may acquire selected datasets that are germane to research initiatives at the Library. For example, the Library's Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications acquired datasets from the [National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys](#) (NHANES II and III, produced by the [National Center for Health Statistics](#)), and developed [research tools that offer access to NHANES data](#).

Since many datasets of potential use to biomedical researchers and health professionals are archived by institutional repositories, such as government agencies and major research institutions, NLM may provide access to this data via Internet links from the Library's Web pages or [online public access catalog](#).

See also:

Electronic Resources
Statistical Works

7/27/04

Developing Countries Publications

In some countries, publishing is characterized by an unorganized book trade, volatility in publishing patterns, limited press runs, poor quality paper, and inadequate support for scientific research. NLM recognizes that it has a unique role to play in the collection of biomedical and public health literature from countries with limited resources, as few other Western research libraries collect such publications. To ensure the documentation of scientific activity and public health issues from these countries, the Library may select works that might otherwise be excluded (such as works with unique but nominal health content, introductory [textbooks](#), miscellaneous [government publications](#), and [ephemera](#)).

4/22/04

Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

NLM collects subject-relevant dictionaries and glossaries of terms, names, subjects, phrases, abbreviations, acronyms and symbols in all languages.

Bilingual and polyglot reference tools are collected more selectively, with emphasis on those containing English terminology or otherwise of value to U.S. researchers (for example, a dictionary that contains medical terminology from a less widely read language to a more commonly read language).

NLM collects encyclopedias that support biomedical and health research and scholarship. The collection emphasizes English language works, but other languages are selected if they are of scholarly importance.

NLM very selectively collects examples of medical dictionaries and encyclopedias written for U.S. consumers to document the dissemination of public health information. Collecting emphasis is on works edited by leading experts or endorsed by major professional organizations.

2/19/04

Digital Images

The Library maintains several collections of digital images.

The [Visible Human Project](#) has produced high resolution cryosectional color images (cross-sections or slices) of human anatomy. The [Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications](#) has created a database for this image dataset as well as for 3D rendered images of anatomic objects created from cryosectional images.

[Images from the History of Medicine \(IHM\)](#), the National Library of Medicine's database of almost 60,000 historical images, documents social and historical aspects of medicine from the Middle Ages to the present. Pictures in the database come from the Library's collection of caricatures, photographs, fine prints, ephemera and portraits and from illustrations drawn from books and journals held by NLM. IHM covers a large range of medically related topics past and present, from medieval astrology to nineteenth century slum conditions, from the international fight against drug abuse to AIDS. The strength of the collection lies in the earlier periods, although it does contain twentieth century images, most dating from before World War II. IHM generally is not a source of modern clinical images.

Other collections of images include [Profiles in Science](#), digitized archival collections of leaders in biomedical research and public health; and [Historical Anatomies on the Web](#), which provides access to digitized images from important anatomical atlases in the Library's collection.

For modern clinical images, NLM refers users to other sources such as the [Wellcome Trust Medical Photographic Library](#).

See also:

Electronic Resources
Posters
Prints and Photographs

7/15/04

Directories

This category includes lists of persons, places, organizations, government agencies, health facilities, laboratories and research institutes, corporations, products, services, and educational programs.

Directories are useful as current reference tools and may also be of historical interest, especially those that provide information regarding an organization's history and influence on biomedicine and public health, include biographical information and photographs, contain details about the structure and governance of significant institutions, or capture trends in health services, education, marketing, or manufacturing. Chronological runs of directories are especially important for historical research.

Collecting emphasis is on U.S. national, U.S. state, international and foreign national directories of physicians and hospitals, and on U.S. national and international directories of other health professionals, health associations, research facilities, corporations, products, services, and programs.

A primary selection criterion is the inclusion of details beyond contact information. Membership rosters without biographical information generally are not collected.

NLM makes directory information available online through [DIRLINE](#) (Directory of Information Resources Online), the Library's online database containing location and descriptive information about a wide variety of information resources including organizations, research resources, projects, and databases concerned with health and biomedicine.

3/9/04

Drafts

A draft is a preliminary version of a written work, often written for comment, approval or clearance by others. NLM generally does not add drafts to the General Collection. Exceptions are drafts of significant content for which the publication of a final version is not assured (e.g., those from developing countries) and those that have historical importance.

See also:

Developing Countries Publications
Manuscripts

4/1/04

Electronic Resources

I. Introduction

The National Library of Medicine has a statutory mandate to collect and preserve scholarly and professional literature about health, medicine, and the biomedical sciences, irrespective of format. The Library is committed to investigating and implementing new ways of making electronic content accessible to users; to preserving significant electronic scholarship; and to collaborating internationally, with publishers and with other archival institutions, to promote and enhance the development of standards in electronic publishing.

II. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy statement on electronic resources.

Access. The ability to locate, to gain entry, and to use an electronic resource.

Acquired. Refers to electronic resources, online or physical, which the Library receives through formal acquisitions processes, or to which the Library provides access through contractual, licensed, or other official agreements. These electronic resources may or may not be owned by or housed at the Library.

Collected. Refers to electronic resources owned by, created by, or archived by the Library and selected for the permanent collection. This category also includes works which are stored elsewhere, but to which the Library has permanent ownership rights.

Electronic resources. Works which are encoded and made accessible through a computer, online or in a physical format. This category includes an ever-growing array of electronic journals, monographs, reports, articles, databases, digital collections, still and moving images, sound, and interactive resources.

Link. A pointer from the Library's Web resources or bibliographic records to an electronic resource. To link is not to acquire or to collect.

Online-only resources. Works which are "born digital" and for which there is no counterpart in print or on physical media.

Physical media. Tangible objects, such as disks, which store computer data.

III. Electronic collection development at NLM

In cooperation with other U.S. and international institutions with archival missions, NLM endeavors to ensure permanent public access to scholarly and professional electronic works (particularly online-only resources) in the fields of biomedicine and health care.

When considering electronic resources for selection, the Library's intent is to apply the same criteria for scope, depth of coverage, and authoritativeness as for publications in other formats.

The Library's collecting guidelines for electronic resources reflect the ideal situation. In practice, the Library is still developing strategies for ensuring permanent access to important biomedical documents published in electronic format, given the current licensing and publishing environment, and the evolution of digital preservation techniques.

In the meantime, NLM takes a multifaceted approach to the collection of electronic resources, including the following:

1. NLM creates, or collects and makes permanently accessible, an expanding body of electronic works, such as:

- journal literature deposited in [PubMedCentral](#).
- books published through the [NCBI Bookshelf](#).
- the Library's own electronic publishing output, including its many databases, publications (e.g., [NLM Classification](#), Collection Development Manual of the National Library of Medicine), technical reports, fact sheets, and other works considered to be part of the NLM archives.
- digital collections of important research materials which originally were issued in print (e.g., [Profiles in Science](#), the complete [Reports of the Surgeon General](#)), which the Library has digitized and is committed to maintaining.

The Library actively seeks to create and collect new digital content for this collection.

2. NLM collaborates with other organizations to collect and preserve online-only resources maintained at other trusted institutional repositories.

A trusted institutional repository is a library, archive, government agency, or educational institution which has made a commitment to archiving electronic resources; maintaining a reputation for technical capability and institutional stability which provides assurance that it will be able to fulfill its commitment. If, for any reason, NLM is unable to collect published material which has been thus archived, and it is determined that there are enough extant copies at multiple repositories to ensure that the material will be preserved, the Library may attempt to acquire current access, to describe and link to the resources in NLM databases, and distribute bibliographic records for the resources.

3. NLM provides access, and seeks to ensure archival access, to online-only scholarly resources that the Library is unable to collect and that are not maintained at another institutional repository.

NLM may provide access to such resources via its [online public access catalog](#) or other NLM databases, while continuing its efforts to collect the resource and/or to work with the scholarly and publishing communities to ensure permanent online access via another means.

4. NLM collects preservation copies of resources which are available both electronically and in another format.

To ensure preservation of the content of an electronic work, NLM normally attempts to collect a print version (or an archival electronic copy on physical media), in addition to the online version.

5. NLM provides access to a wide variety of miscellaneous online resources, and intends selectively to preserve some of this content.

NLM selects and provides links from its Web sites and databases to a variety of other electronic resources, including selected patient and consumer health information. NLM intends to provide an archival repository for selected examples and periodic "snapshots" of this material, in order to document the evolution of consumer health publications over time.

IV. Selection criteria for electronic resources on physical media

NLM selectively collects electronic works issued on physical media.

Collection emphasis is on works which are valuable for research and which contain unique information, or information which is significantly enhanced by electronic presentation.

NLM collects instructional works on physical media highly selectively, emphasizing those that illustrate contemporary instructional techniques, such as simulations, decision making models, or computer graphics.

The Library selects works which exhibit good technical quality and which are produced in currently acceptable formats. NLM generally does not collect electronic media that require additional proprietary software, or software designed to be modified by the user.

See also:

Audiovisual Materials

Datasets

Digital Images

9/16/04

Ephemera

Materials designed for short term use are considered ephemera. They vary greatly in size (from broadsides to patent medicine cards), sophistication (from finely designed posters to comic book illustrations), and format (from pamphlets to matchbooks).

Ephemeral materials provide a glimpse into the everyday life of a certain time period. By capturing information not available in the formal written record, ephemera allow the scholar to reconstruct the past with a precision of detail not otherwise possible. Medical ephemera may deal with conventional medicine or alternative medicine. Examples of both are desirable in the collection.

NLM collects selected examples of ephemera of particular interest such as posters, pamphlets and fact sheets. Other types of ephemera are collected more selectively based on their relevance to health care and historical value.

See also

Fact Sheets
Pamphlets
Posters

4/5/04

Examination Review Guides

This category includes publications that assist students preparing for entrance, board certification, recertification, or licensing examinations.

Examination review guides provide information concerning generally recognized standards, requirements and prerequisites for formal education and licensure in the health professions, and hence may be valuable for historical research as well as current use. However, since this category is characterized by a high volume of publishing and many competing, redundant titles, the Library does not intend to maintain a comprehensive collection. NLM selectively collects examples of guides to U.S. examinations, with emphasis on widely disseminated titles that have substantive content and that are produced by major U.S. medical publishers or recognized professional organizations. The Library also collects guides for disciplines for which the majority of publishing is in this format (e.g., allied health professions). NLM generally does not collect foreign examination review guides or guides that assist students to prepare for examinations based upon specific textbooks.

See also:

Audiovisual Materials
Continuing Education Publications
Textbooks

4/1/04

Fact Sheets

Fact sheets provide health information in an economical, easily distributed form. NLM may collect compilations of fact sheets issued by influential agencies or societies, or of potential interest to historians. The Library generally does not collect individual fact sheets for the General Collection.

See also:

Ephemera
Pamphlets

3/1/04

Fiction and Poetry

The Library of Congress takes national collecting and preservation responsibility for literature; therefore, NLM does not maintain a research collection of fiction or poetry.

The Library's collection does include selected literary works of historical value. Since there is such a large volume of literary works with medical themes, and since it rarely is possible to ascertain at the time of publication whether a new title will be of historical interest, the Library identifies and selects such works retrospectively. In addition, the modern collection includes examples of anthologies of fiction and poetry used in U.S. professional health education, and selected humorous and satirical works. The Library has a significant collection of scholarly works about medicine and literature, in areas such as the history of medicine in literature, psychoanalytic interpretations of literature, and bibliographic works on the subject.

3/1/04

Government Publications

Government agencies are a significant source of information about public health policy, health economics, epidemiology, statistics, standards, guidelines, and other topics important to the Library's collecting mission. NLM collects government publications as follows:

U.S. Executive Branch. NLM collects U.S. federal agency documents and reports issued by the executive branch pertaining to health care and health issues, with particular emphasis on the documents produced by the health agencies within the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#).

U.S. Legislative Branch. NLM generally does not collect [Congressional legislative documents](#), as the Library of Congress takes collection responsibility for such publications.

U.S. Judicial Branch. NLM generally does not collect the publications of the [Judicial Branch](#), as the Library of Congress collects these documents comprehensively .

U.S. State and local - Since the Library of Congress acquires a comprehensive collection of publications issued by state and inter-state offices and agencies, with the exception of works in the field of clinical medicine and technical agriculture, the National Library of Medicine generally restricts its collecting effort to compilations of state vital and health statistics, works on health care for epidemiologically important populations, reports on health policy issues of broad national interest, and compendia of health policies and regulations.

International: NLM collects the substantive publications of international non-governmental health organizations, such as the [World Health Organization](#) and the [Pan American Health Organization](#). NLM may collect important compendia of health laws and regulations and major health policy reports from other countries when they are likely to be of interest to U.S. health professionals or to scholars generally.

The Library participates in the [Federal Depository Library Program](#) as a selective depository library.

2/4/03

Grey Literature

Grey literature is "that which is produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic formats, but which is not controlled by commercial publishers," according to the Luxembourg Convention.

This category includes reports, memoranda, conference proceedings, standards, technical documentation, and government documents.

NLM recognizes the impossibility of collecting all of the grey literature with potential relevance to health. The Library's collecting intent is to collect a wide range of works representing diverse cultural and political perspectives. The collecting effort is particularly strong in health services research, health policy and economics, toxicology, and public health. Emphasis is on the publications of major national and international associations, institutes, and agencies. Publications of other organizations (such as regional, state and local associations) are collected more selectively, with emphasis on publications of broad interest to U.S. health professionals, those representing unique viewpoints, and others likely to be of historical interest.

See also:

- Conference Publications
- Drafts
- Government Publications
- Patents
- Standards and Guidelines
- Technical Reports
- Working Papers

7/14/04

Handbooks and Manuals

Handbooks and manuals that summarize and document procedures and standard practices are important not only for current clinical practice, but also for historical documentation of the practice of medicine and delivery of health care of an era. The Library collects handbooks and manuals likely to be of interest to U.S. health professionals. Much of the literature is targeted to practitioners and is purely of local interest. Hence the Library generally collects only those international resources likely to be of historical interest, for example, those that depict culturally or geographically diverse practices and procedures.

See also:

- Laboratory Manuals

3/2/04

Humorous and Satirical Works

Humorous and satirical works, including caricatures, provide unique insight into controversies and opinions in health care, depict health care professionals as seen through the eyes of their contemporaries, and illuminate the political and social setting of health care and the health professions.

NLM collects these works selectively with emphasis on those that deal with historically important issues, events and personalities, or that address topics of current concern to U.S. health professionals.

2/04

Journals

The American Library Association Glossary of Library and Information Science (1983) defines journal as "a periodical, especially one containing scholarly articles and /or disseminating current information on research and development in a particular subject field."

The Library's first priority is collecting scientific or scholarly journals containing signed papers that report original research. The intent is to assemble a comprehensive collection of the world's most significant research journals in all subjects collected at NLM, from all countries and in any language.

NLM also collects clinical and other practice journals. Collecting emphasis is on those of interest to U.S. health professionals; but NLM also collects works from other countries that document diverse approaches to clinical practice, or that cover health issues unique to a particular region.

Review journals, which summarize and sometimes analyze recent research in a field, have become an important means of biomedical communication. The Library collects substantive review journals likely to be of interest to U.S. health professionals and scholars. NLM collects "current awareness" periodicals -- which provide only cursory summaries -- more selectively, emphasizing those that contain unique subject or geographic coverage or are of particular interest to U.S. health professionals. NLM generally does not collect review journals or current awareness periodicals intended primarily for local or regional audiences, or those that essentially duplicate journal literature already in the collection.

When selecting scholarly and scientific journals, NLM expects, as a benchmark, at least 15% of the articles to be "in scope" - i.e., to fall within the subject collection parameters outlined in this manual. Other periodicals -- those that are not sources of original research -- must be primarily biomedical in content to be considered for selection. The Library may make exceptions to this rule to ensure that the collection provides sufficient geographic heterogeneity. For example, NLM may select basic science or social science journals from [developing countries](#), which often have little or no medical publishing per se.

See also:

Annual Reports

Newsletters and Newspapers

4/19/04

Juvenile Literature

The Library generally does not collect literature intended for children or young adults. The collection contains some examples of educational materials written for children or young adults, typically selected for the historical documentation of notable public health campaigns.

The Library of Congress has an extensive collection of [juvenile literature](#).

See also:

Consumer Health

4/5/04

Laboratory Manuals

Laboratory manuals contain descriptions of standard laboratory procedures, current techniques and safety measures, as well as formulae and other technical information. NLM selectively collects laboratory manuals, with emphasis on those which are widely disseminated in the United States, i.e., those issued by major U.S. and international scientific publishers and agencies.

See also:

Handbooks and Manuals

3/26/03

Limited Distribution Materials

NLM collects publications designated for limited distribution and proprietary use only when they are available to the Library without restrictions on access.

4/5/04

Looseleaf Service Publications

Looseleaf subscription services are generally designed to be updated by means of interfiled or replacement pages. They typically provide information compiled from other sources. NLM collects looseleaf services only when they compile information not readily accessible or available in other formats.

3/2/04

Manuscripts

Manuscripts are important to the scholarly biomedical record as primary source materials.

NLM divides its manuscript collections into early Western (pre-1601) manuscripts, Oriental (primarily Arabic and Persian) manuscripts, and modern manuscripts. Early Western and Oriental

manuscripts are collected selectively, taking into account their historical significance, their value for scholarship, and the price of the work.

Modern manuscripts are collected selectively with an emphasis on twentieth-century U.S. medicine, public health, and health care advocacy. Manuscripts and collections of papers written by or about individuals who have contributed significantly to the health sciences, and those that contain other information important to the history of medicine receive priority. Materials selected for the modern manuscript collection include unique handwritten or typed documents and papers, associated printed or near print materials, and oral history transcripts and tapes. Areas of special collecting interest include: molecular biology and cellular regulation; surgery, transplantation, and artificial organs; biotechnology; fraud and quackery; human psychosocial development, especially child development; medical informatics; international and global health; health services research; marginalized groups in health and medicine; and the history of medicine.

For more information and guides to the manuscript collections, see the [NLM Archives and Modern Manuscripts Program](#) Web site.

See also:

Biographical Works

7/27/04

Market Research Reports

Market research reports assess the likely demand for a product or a service, describe potential commercial opportunities and barriers, recommend marketing strategies, and provide competitive business intelligence information. Although NLM does not maintain a research collection of such works, the General Collection includes examples of market research reports, collected primarily for potential historical value, rather than for current reference.

3/26/03

Monographs

Within the subject parameters of this manual, NLM strives to assemble an exhaustive collection of significant published monographic works that contain original thought or research and that potentially are of international interest, regardless of language or country of origin. The Library also maintains an extensive collection of other monographic works that support U.S. clinical practice and education of U.S. health professionals; and those that uniquely characterize the medical thought and practice of a particular country, culture, or movement. In some disciplines, such as the history of medicine, bioethics, medical humanities and many interdisciplinary fields, the monograph is especially important as a vehicle of scholarly communication, and NLM accordingly collects monographic works at the highest level of intensity. In the basic sciences, which place greater emphasis on the scientific journal as the primary means of communication, the Library's monographic collection is very extensive, with collecting emphasis on works of research and educational value to U.S. health professionals and biomedical researchers. The Library of Congress maintains a comprehensive collection of monographic literature in science and technology, excluding clinical medicine.

See also:

Academic Dissertations
Handbooks and Manuals
Grey Literature
Technical Reports
Textbooks

8/26/04

Newsletters and Newspapers

Newsletters and newspapers may represent a unique historical chronicle of health related issues. They often contain the most current information on health topics, research and policy. Newsletters may focus on emerging areas of research or health care before such fields are adequately represented in the primary journal literature.

NLM collects selected newsletters with an emphasis on those issued by major U.S. and international professional health organizations. Of particular collecting interest are those that focus on contemporary health issues and concerns, represent emerging health areas, or document health outreach efforts to populations at risk. NLM collects newsletters with original content or commentary rather than those that contain digests of articles reprinted or abridged from other publications. Newsletters that represent non-traditional treatment philosophies or specific health issues of topical interest to scholars or U.S. health professionals are collected selectively.

Foreign newsletters are collected very selectively with an emphasis on those published by major organizations on topics of particular concern to U.S. health professionals.

Medical newspapers written for a national audience are collected if they contain substantive health related information that is probably not duplicated elsewhere or are published in a country for which little medical information is available.

In collecting newsletters and newspapers, NLM takes into account the availability of comparable information in the journal literature.

See also:

Consumer Health

3/10/04

Pamphlets

Pamphlets are short, unbound, printed works which generally deal with subjects of current interest. They are an efficient means for the distribution of health care standards, guidelines, and capsule summaries of a biomedical topic. Pamphlets are also an effective medium for public health outreach, patient instruction, consumer health information, and commercial advertising literature.

NLM collects representative examples of the pamphlet literature to provide a balanced collection of typical, influential, authoritative and unique items dealing with health issues of particular interest. Collecting emphasis is on publications of U.S. national health organizations, health agencies,

and authoritative or widely influential institutions. Examples of pamphlets produced by influential international health organizations and those that present unique health care strategies and concerns also are selected. Other items that present health outreach efforts, conflicting opinion, and alternative practice are also of collecting interest.

See also:

Standards and Guidelines

Ephemera

2/04

Patents

NLM does not collect patents, which fall under the responsibility of the [U.S. Patent and Trade-mark Office](#).

2/04

Pharmacopoeias and Formularies

Pharmacopoeias are authoritative treatises on drugs and preparations, their description, formulation, analytic composition, physical constants, main chemical properties used in identification, standards for strength, purity, and dosage, chemical tests for determining identity and purity, etc. They are usually published under governmental jurisdiction. They differ from formularies in that they are far more complete; formularies simply list drugs or collections of formulas for the compounding of medicinal preparations. However, sometimes the terms “pharmacopoeia” and “formulary” are used interchangeably.

In addition to serving as current reference sources, pharmacopoeias and formularies provide an historical record of pharmacy practice, drug use, and drug availability.

NLM collects the national pharmacopoeias of the world insofar as possible. Other formularies are more selectively acquired, with emphasis on those likely to be of historical interest. Hospital formularies, which list all drugs commonly stocked in a hospital pharmacy, generally are not collected.

12/4/03

Posters

Posters are designed to be displayed publicly to communicate a message or to advertise a product or service. Posters provide historically valuable visual evidence of developments in health care, public health outreach campaigns, and official responses to health crises.

NLM collects representative examples of historical and contemporary posters. Of particular collecting interest are posters concerning the spread of infectious diseases (e.g., tuberculosis, AIDS, measles), smoking, alcohol and other substance abuse, preventive medicine, maternal and child health, and occupational health. Posters of any origin and language are selected. Collecting

emphasis is on posters issued by professional health associations, and medical or public health organizations.

See also:

Digital Images

Ephemera

Prints and Photographs

9/30/04

Popular Literature

Popular health literature is aimed at a wide audience and does not presuppose subject expertise on the part of the reader. Popular literature typically is written by journalists or science writers, but sometimes also by scientists, medical experts, or scholars in non-medical fields. In addition to works that explain scientific and health issues to general readers, popular literature includes genres such as investigative journalism, essays, personal narratives, and polemical works. Popular literature has research value for historians, medical sociologists and medical anthropologists, since it may influence health behaviors and viewpoints, and capture dissenting viewpoints not found in scientific, technical and medical publications. The Library collects popular literature highly selectively, with emphasis on works noted for their impact on individual behavior or public policy, publications written by noted experts, or those with content or perspective not found elsewhere in the literature.

See also:

Biographical Works

Consumer Health

History of Medicine

Public Health

Medical Sociology

6/21/04

Practice Management Tools

This category includes practical business aids and systems intended to assist health care providers with financial management, file management, marketing, and human resource management.

These materials are supplementary to the general professional practice management journal and monograph literature that is collected by NLM. They are often issued in looseleaf, unbound, electronic, or audiovisual format. Typically they are only useful when integrated into a hospital or office setting. NLM selectively acquires practice management tools if they are of general interest to U.S. health professionals, contain information not captured elsewhere in the literature, and are issued in a format appropriate for a library collection. NLM also collects materials that assist practitioners with the application of classification and coding systems. Collection emphasis is on publications of major U.S. professional associations and trade publishers.

7/12/04

Prints and Photographs

Prints and photographs document visually the history and development of medicine from early times to recent decades. The NLM collection includes fine prints, historical and contemporary photographic processes, posters, and ephemera such as patent medicine trade cards. Collecting emphasis is on works that depict twentieth-century health personnel at work; portraits of health professionals and biomedical scientists who have contributed to the development of medicine; images of health institutions such as hospitals and medical schools; fine prints with medically related themes; and public health posters. International images and images of marginalized groups are actively sought. Images reproduced from existing works are also selectively added to the prints and photographs collection.

See also:

Digital Images
Posters

9/30/04

Reprints and Facsimiles

A reprint may refer to a new printing of an item made from the original type image, commonly by photographic methods, or to a new edition with substantially unchanged text. A facsimile reproduction simulates the physical appearance of the original in addition to reproducing its content exactly. Reprints and facsimiles are collected when they provide useful information such as a commentary or bibliography which did not appear in previous printings, when NLM lacks the original, when the original copy in the collection is in poor condition or was issued on alkaline paper, or when they represent important scholarly initiatives or are historically significant in some way.

See also:

Collected Works

12/04/03

Standards and Guidelines

Institutions, associations, and government agencies issue health related standards and guidelines which are widely used and recognized in the U.S. Standards are authoritative statements that articulate minimal, acceptable or excellent levels of performance or that describe expected outcomes in health care delivery, biomedical research and development, health care technology, or professional health care. Guidelines are statements of principles or procedures that assist professionals in ensuring quality in such areas as clinical practice, biomedical research, and health services. Practice guidelines assist the health care practitioner with patient care decisions about appropriate diagnostic, therapeutic, or other clinical procedures for specific clinical circumstances.

NLM collects comprehensively the following types of standards and guidelines:

- Practice guidelines
- Official U.S. national standards in health care technology, biomedical research and development, and health care
- Standards of conduct and professional competence for U.S. health care professionals
- Standards and guidelines issued by the World Health Organization

Other influential or widely recognized standards and guidelines also are collected.

2/04

Statistical Works

This category includes works that tabulate and summarize data.

NLM collects significant statistical works in all areas of health and biomedicine. Of particular interest are works that report vital statistics, disease incidence, health status indicators, health outcomes, and factors that have a direct impact on health and medical research. Emphasis is on cumulated works that are national or international in scope, cumulations of U.S. state health and vital statistics, statistical works that describe populations of special epidemiological interest, and statistical works from any jurisdiction that include substantial scholarly interpretation and analysis.

See also:

Datasets

4/19/04

Technical Reports

Technical reports detail the progress or results of scientific, technical, or policy research. Typically, technical reports are produced in response to a relatively narrow research need, and serve as a report of accountability to the sponsoring organization. They generally are not peer reviewed, but often document detailed methodology and data information in order to facilitate review of research by others. Technical reports play a unique role in scientific communication, in that they sometimes are the only source of information on a specific topic, and often report on unsuccessful research results. Technical reports generally are not commercially published, but are issued using techniques that permit rapid, inexpensive, and limited distribution methods. Long-range archiving of these materials generally is accomplished through microformat, and, increasingly, electronic publishing.

Although it is not feasible for the Library to maintain a comprehensive collection of technical reports, the collection does include a great volume of technical report literature. NLM is particularly interested in acquiring technical reports that provide information in emerging fields. Collecting emphasis is on reports published by U.S. federal agencies and eminent international research organizations. NLM also collects less widely disseminated technical reports (e.g., from developing countries) when such reports document scientific activity of international interest, or describe findings unique to the country or culture of origin.

The Library of Congress maintains an extensive collection of [technical reports in the sciences and engineering](#), but generally excludes clinical medicine.

See also:

Working Papers

4/4/03

Tests

NLM generally does not collect individual tests which measure, diagnose, or evaluate psychological or physical processes or status. The NLM collection includes an extensive collection of literature about tests and testing.

3/2/04

Textbooks

Textbooks primarily are intended for the instruction of students, but they also may document the history of education for the health professions or chronicle societal viewpoints toward health. Advanced, widely recognized textbooks summarize the state of knowledge in a single field and serve as generally accepted reference tools in many disciplines.

Although NLM does not collect this category comprehensively, the Library does have an extensive collection of the principal textbooks produced for use in the education of U.S. health professionals. The collection is especially rich in advanced textbooks notable for their comprehensiveness, authority, and presentation, but the Library also collects less advanced works (such as those for allied health education, or other areas for which textbooks represent the bulk of publishing in the field), selected non-U.S. works that contain information unique to a country or culture, and others likely to have historical value.

The Library generally does not collect accompanying ancillary material, such as study guides, instructors' manuals, and workbooks, even when the main text has been selected.

3/2/04

Translations

NLM collects works in the original language, and also acquires translations from foreign languages into English.

Translations from one foreign language into another, or from English into another language, are rarely acquired. They may be selected if they have important scholarly apparatus such as extensive commentary, represent a significant work that the Library does not possess in its original language; are the only known medical work available in that language; or are translated from a language that is not well known in the United States to a language that is clearly better known (e.g., Vietnamese to French) provided that no English translation is available.

When works are issued simultaneously in several languages, NLM generally collects the English version only. There are exceptions. For example, the Library occasionally collects examples of works intended for international public health outreach in several languages, especially languages where few medical works appear (e.g., Pushto).

3/26/03

Working Papers

Working papers, discussion papers, and occasional papers report original research in a narrow area of study. They sometimes are used to communicate new approaches or ideas, or to solicit comment from other scholars. NLM selectively acquires working papers, emphasizing notable series in health economics, health services research, and health policy.

See also:

Technical Reports

6/20/03

Index

A

- abnormal psychology, see psychology 63
- about the NLM Collection Development Manual 9
- abridgements 75, 90
 - see also handbooks and manuals 86
- abstracts, see bibliographic works 75
- academic catalogs 76
- academic dissertations 72
- academic leadership 36
- academic medicine 36
- access to health care 45, 51
- access, defined 81
- accidents, see emergency medicine 37
- acquire, defined 81
- acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), see infectious diseases 48
- acquisitions 13
- action research, see health services research 45
- addiction medicine 23
- administration
 - of biomedical research 29
 - of health facilities 43
 - of health services 45
- administrative records of the NLM 14
- admissions, for educational institutions 36
- adolescents, see pediatrics 59
- advanced nursing practice 55
- advertising and marketing of health care 42
- aerospace medicine 23
- agency reports 72, 86
- aging 41, 52
- agriculture 15, 26, 27, 40, 53, 61, 68, 85
- agronomy 15
- AIDS 48, 79
 - as a public health issue 63
- air pollution, see environmental health 38
- alchemy 32
- alcoholism, see addiction medicine 23
- allergy and immunology 23
- allied health
 - educational publications 84, 95
 - professions, see health occupations 43
- alternative medicine 33
- alumni and student publications 72

analgesia 24
analytical chemistry 31
anatomic images 79
anatomy 23, 24
andrology 69
anesthesiology 24
animal health 69
animal husbandry 70
animals
 as models 49
 breeding 70
 husbandry 15
 laboratory 49
 medicine, see veterinary medicine 69
 primates 62
 testing of 49
annual reports 72
anthologies, see collected works 76
anthropology 25, 50
applied genetics 40
archaea 52
archaeology 25
architecture of health facilities 43
archives of NLM Web documents 14
archives of the NLM 14
armed forces, medicine in 53
Army Medical Library 17
art 47, 50
art of medicine 52
arthritis, see rheumatology 66
artificial intelligence 32
artificial organs 26
assays 68
association reports 72, 86
astrobiology, see space life sciences 66
athletes 67
athletic training 39
atlases 73
audience for the NLM collection 12
audiovisual materials 74
 in NLM collections 14
autobiographies 75
autopsy
 see forensic medicine 39
 see pathology 58
aviation 23

ayurvedic medicine, see complementary and alternative medicine 33

B

bacteria 48, 52

Barnes, Joseph K. 17

barriers to access 42

basic life sciences 3

behavior 62

 of health care consumers 51

 social, related to health 51

 social, see anthropology 25

behavioral genetics 40

behavioral medicine 25

belief, see religion and medicine 65

beliefs and perceptions about health 25, 51

bibliographic works 75

Billings, John Shaw 14, 17

biochemistry 26

 see also chemistry 31

biodefense, see disaster management 35

bioengineering 25, 26

bioethics 27, 89

biographical works 74, 75

bioinformatics 27

bioinstrumentation 26

biological exposures 68

biological sciences 28

biological systems 28

biological-computer interfaces 32

biology 28

 cell 30

 microbiology 52

 molecular 53

 plant 61

 structural 30, 53

biomaterials 26

biomathematics 28

biomechanical engineering 26

biomechanics 26, 30, 39

biomedical communication, see health communication 41

biomedical engineering, see bioengineering 26

biomedical ethics 27

biomedical imaging 29

biomedical libraries 15

biomedical research 29

biomedical, defined 11

biomolecular engineering 26
biomolecules 31
bionic medicine 26
bionics 26, 30
biophysical chemistry 31
biophysics 30
biopolymers 31
biopsychosocial interactions 63
biostatistics
 see biomedical research 29
 see statistical works 94
biotechnology, see bioengineering 26
bioterrorism 36, 48, 63
birth 56
 customs and practices 25
 statistics 94
birth control
 as a public health issue 63
blood, see hematology 46
Board of Regents 14
Board of Regents Policy 10
board review, see examination review guides 84
body structure 24
books, see monographs 89
Bookshelf 82
botanical remedies 49
botany 49
 see medical botany 49
 see plant biology 61
brain 32, 55, 62
broadsides 83

C

cancer medicine, see oncology 57
cardiac rehabilitation 39
cardiology 30
cardiovascular disease, see cardiology 30
care of the sick, see nursing 55
caricatures 79, 87
case studies 74
cassette tapes, see audiovisual materials 74
catalogs 76
cell biology 30
 see also cytology 34
cell engineering 26
cell morphology 34

cell pathology 34
cell structures 34
cells 34
cellular processes 28
certification 84
chemical biology 31
chemical dependence, see addiction medicine 23
chemical engineering 31
chemical exposures 68
chemical toxicology 31
chemical weapons 36
chemistry 26, 31
 of food 47
childbirth 56
childhood 52
children, see pediatrics 59
children's literature, see juvenile literature 88
chiropractic 33
chromosomes 40
Classification database 82
classification systems 92
classified documents, see limited distribution materials 88
climate 38
clinical chemistry, see clinical laboratory science 32
clinical engineering 26
clinical engineering, see bioengineering 26
clinical images 79
clinical laboratory science 32
clinical nutrition 47
clinical practice journals 87
clinical practice standards and guidelines 93
clinical psychology 63
clinical trials 63
 see biomedical research 29
clinics 43
cloning 53
codes 43, 92
coding manuals 92
coding systems 92
cognition, see cognitive science 32
cognitive science 32
 see also psychology 62
coins 47
collect, defined 11, 81
collected works 76
collection development policy of the NLM 10

collections

- Early Manuscripts 14
- General Collection 13
- historical and special materials 13
- Historical Audiovisuals 14
- Historical printed works 13
- Modern Manuscripts 14
- NLM Archives 14
- Oral History 14
- Prints and Photographs 14

collections overview 13

college catalogs 76

colon and rectal surgery 67

comic books 83

comments and suggestions about this Manual 9

communicable disease control 36

communicable diseases, see infectious diseases 48

communication disorders 33

communication, see health communication 41

communicative disorders 33

community health 63

compact disks, see electronic resources 83

comparative biology 40

comparative medicine 69

compilations, see collected works 76

complementary and alternative medicine 33

comprehensively, defined as used in this manual 22

computational biology 27, 29

computational chemistry 31

computed tomography 29

computer modeling of cognition 32

computer science 32

computers

- in medicine, see medical informatics 51

- in research, see biomedical research 29

conference publications 74, 76

- see also grey literature 86

congresses, see conference publications 76

congressional documents 85

consumer behavior 42

consumer health 19, 77

- see also pamphlets 90

consumer health audiovisuals 74

consumer health informatics 51

consumer nutrition education 15

continuing education publications 77

contraception
 birth control as a public health issue 63
controversies 74
coordinated collection development 15
cost analysis 42
cost of health care 42
 see also health services research 45
counseling psychology 63
countries, represented in NLM collections 13
coverage, defined 11
crime 52
criminology, of substance use 23
critical care medicine, see medicine 52
critical interpretation of art and literature 50
crystallography 30, 31
cultivation of medicinal plants, see medical botany 49
cultural anthropology 25
cultural studies 50
culture and health, see anthropology 25
current awareness publications 87
curriculum 36
cytogenetics 40
cytology 34

D

data analysis 27
databases 27, 78
datasets 78
deafness 33
death investigation 39
death, customs and practices 25
demography, historical 63
dental informatics 51
dentistry 35
depository 18
dermatology 35
design and construction of health facilities 43
design of research 29
developing countries 78
developmental biology 28
 see also embryology 37
diabetes, see endocrinology 37
diagnosis of disease 52
diagnostic imaging, see biomedical imaging 29
dictionaries and encyclopedias 79
diet 48

- customs and practices 25
- diffusion of innovation 45
- digestive system 40
- digital collections 81
- digital files 78
- digital images 79
- directories 80
- disabilities 60
- disabilities, communication 33
- disaster management 35
- disasters 35, 63, 68
- discoveries 74
- discussion papers, see working papers 96
- disease
 - incidence 94
 - prevention 61, 63
 - process, see pathology 58
- disks, see electronic resources 83
- disparities in health care 3
- disposal 21
- dissertations, see academic dissertations 72
- DNA sequencing 40, 61
- doctor-patient communication 42
- doctors, see health occupations 43
- documentaries 74
- drafts 80
- drawings 73
- drug abuse 23, 79
- drug design, see pharmacology 59
- drug dispensing, see pharmacy 59
- drug references, see pharmacopoeias 91
- drugs, see pharmacology 59
- duplicates 21
- DVDs, see electronic resources 83
- dysfunction, communicative 33

E

- ear, see otolaryngology 58
- early life forms 66
- economics of education 36
- economics, health 86
- economics, see health economics 42
- ecotoxicology 68
- education for the health professions 36, 44, 74
- education, nursing 55
- electrochemistry 31

electromagnetic fields 26
electronic data 78
electronic images, see digital images 79
electronic resources 81
 preservation and archiving 19, 81
electronic resources, defined 81
electrophysiology 30
 see also internal medicine 49
embryology 36, 37
emergencies 35
emergency medical services 36
emergency medicine 37
emerging disciplines 22
encyclopedias, see dictionaries and encyclopedias 79
endocrine disruptors 68
endocrinology 37
energy therapies 33
engineering, see bioengineering 26
Entrez Bookshelf 82
environmental health 38
 litigation related to 39
environmental pollution 68
environmental science 38
ephemera 79, 83
epidemiology 42, 63, 85, 94
ergonomics 56
esophagus, see gastroenterology 40
essays 92
ethics 27
 in research 29
 of health care professionals 44
ethnicity 51
evaluation, of health services 45
evidence-based medicine, see medicine 52
evolution 28, 40
examination review guides 84
exercise science 39
exhibit catalogs 76
exobiology, see space life sciences 66
exotic animals 70
experimentation, see biomedical research 29
extreme environments 52
eye health and diseases, see ophthalmology 57

F

facsimiles 93

fact sheets 84
 see also ephemera 83
faith, see religion and medicine 65
family practice 39
federal documents 85
Federal Library Depository Program 86
fertility 65
 see also urology 69
fiction and poetry 85
films 74
 in NLM collections 14
finance
 of biomedical research 29
 of health care 42
 of health facilities 43
fine arts 50
fine prints 79, 93
 in NLM collections 14
first aid 37
first responders 36, 37
fitness 39
folk medicine 47
food 47
 additives 68
 composition 48
 science 15
 security 48
 service 43
 supply 48
 technology 48
 toxicology 68
foot, see podiatry 61
forensic anthropology
 see anthropology 25
 see forensic medicine 39
forensic medicine 39
format 71
formularies 91
foundation reports 72, 86
fraud 29
fungi 48, 49, 52

G

gallbladder, see gastroenterology 40
gastroenterology 40
GenBank 78

gender 52
gene expression and regulation 30, 40, 53
gene therapy 54
gene-environment interactions 38
General Collection 13
general practice, see family practice 39
general public 12
general readers, works for 92
genetic counseling 50
genetic disorders, see medical genetics 50
genetic engineering 40
genetic epidemiology 54
genetics 40
 see also medical genetics 50
Genetics Home Reference 40
genetics informatics, see bioinformatics 27
genetics, biochemical 53
genitals 41, 69
genomics 40, 53
geriatric medicine 41
geriatrics 41
gerontology 41
global health 3
glycoproteins 30
government 44
government publications 85
 see also grey literature 86
gravity 66
grey literature 86
guidelines 43, 44, 85, 93
gynecology 41

H

habilitationsschriften, see academic dissertations 72
handbooks and manuals 86
hazardous materials 68
hazards in the workplace 56
healing modalities 25
health care ethics, see bioethics 27
health care financing 42
health care personnel, see health occupations 43
health care practices, audiovisual documentation 74
health care system 44
health communication 41
health disparities 3, 63
health economics 42, 63, 85, 86

health education 64
health facilities 43
health information systems 36
health laws and regulations 85
health literacy 42
health maintenance 52
health occupations 43
health planning 44
health policy 23, 44, 45, 63, 74, 86
health professions, defined 11
health professions, see health occupations 43
health promotion 61, 63
health psychology, see behavioral medicine 25
health risk communication 42
health sciences librarianship 45
health seeking behavior 45
health services research 45, 63, 86
health services, see also health facilities 43
health statistics 94
health status indicators 94
health, environmental 38
health, public 63
health, reproductive 65
hearing disorders 33
heart diseases, see cardiology 30
hematology 46
hemorheology, see biophysics 30
hepatology, see medicine 52
herbal medicine 33, 49
heredity 40
Hill, Lister 18
histology 46
 see also pathology 58
Historical Audiovisuals 14
historical demography 63
historical images 79
history of medicine 46, 89, 92
history of medicine, in prints and photographs 14
history of public health 63
history of the NLM collection 17
HIV 48, 63
holistic medicine, see complementary and alternative medicine 33
homeopathy, see complementary and alternative medicine 33
hormones, see endocrinology 37
hospital directories 80
hospital librarianship, see health sciences librarianship 45

hospitals 43
host-parasite relationships, see parasitology 58
household products 68
housekeeping 43
how-to, see practice management tools 92
html archives 14
Human Genome Project 41
human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) 48
human nutrition 47
human rights violations 39
humanism 50
humanities 50
humorous and satirical works 87
hyberbaric medicine, see medicine 52
hybrid resources 81

I

illustrations 79
images 73, 93
images, anatomical 79
images, clinical 79
images, digital 79
images, historical 79
imaging, see biomedical imaging 29
immunochemistry, see biochemistry 26
immunogenetics 40
immunology 23
implants 26
inauguraldissertationen, see academic dissertations 72
indexes, see bibliographic works 75
indicators, health status 94
industrial chemistry 31
inequalities in health 45
infectious diseases 48
inflammation 66
informatics
 bioinformatics 27
 medical 51
informatics, nursing 55
information science 45
 as applied to biomedical research 27
 as applied to medical practice 51
information services 45
ingredients and chemicals, see chemistry 31
innovations 74
 social implications of 51

institute reports 86
institutional publications 72, 86
instructional materials
 for health professionals, see continuing education 77
 for patients, see consumer health 77
instructors' manuals 95
instrumentation 30
insurance 42
integrative medicine 33
interactive resources 81
interdisciplinary studies 3
interim reports 80
interlibrary cooperation 15
internal medicine 49
internal records 14
international health organizations 85
Internet resources, see electronic resources 81
Internet, see health communication 42
interviews 14, 74
investigative journalism 92

J

job health, see occupational health 56
joints, see rheumatology 66
journalists 92
journals 87
judicial documents 85
juvenile literature 88

K

Kennedy Institute of Ethics 27
Kennedy, John F. 18
kidney diseases 54
kidneys 54
kinesiology
 see complementary and alternative medicine 33
 see exercise science 39
knowledge representation 32

L

laboratories 43
laboratory animal science 49
laboratory manuals 88
laboratory science 32
laboratory tests 32
language 32

language disorders 33
languages, collected by NLM 3, 13, 74, 89
lasers 26
law 27, 44
leaflets, see pamphlets 90
learning 32
lectures 74
legal medicine, see forensic medicine 39
legislation 44, 85
librarianship, see health sciences librarianship 45
libraries 43, 45
library acquisitions 13
Library of Congress 11, 15, 21, 26, 28, 38, 47, 52, 62, 63, 65, 70, 75, 77, 85, 88, 89, 95
licensing examinations 84
licensing, of electronic resources 82
life sciences 3, 28
limited distribution materials 88
linguistic anthropology 25
linguistics 32
link, defined 81
Lister Hill Center 78, 79
literacy, health 42
literary works, see fiction and poetry 85
literature 50
literature types 71
literature, defined 11
liver, see gastroenterology 40
local association publications 86
local health plans 64
local publications 85
looseleaf service publications 88
Lovell, Joseph 17
lungs, see pulmonary medicine 64

M

macromolecular interactions 30
magazines 87
magnetic resonance imaging 29
maintenance of health 52
malpractice 39
management
 of biomedical research 29
 of disasters 35
 of health facilities 43
 of health services 45
 practice management tools 92

- manuals 86
 - laboratory 88
- manuscripts 88
 - in NLM collections 14
- manuscripts in nursing 56
- market research reports 89
- mass communication 42
- massage therapy 33
- mathematics, see biomathematics 28
- medical anthropology 25
- medical botany 49
 - see also plant biology 61
- medical care research, see health services research 45
- medical codes 92
- medical communication, see health communication 41
- medical data 51
- medical devices 26
- medical dictionaries, see dictionaries and encyclopedias 79
- medical education 51
- medical ethics 27
- medical ethnobotany 49
- medical facilities 43
- medical genetics 40, 50
- medical humanities 50, 89
- medical imaging 29
- medical informatics 50, 51
- medical librarianship, see health sciences librarianship 45
- medical microbiology 52
- medical museums 47
- medical office management, see practice management tools 92
- medical practice 52
- medical research 29, 52
- medical schools
 - alumni and student publications 72
 - catalogs 76
 - history 47
- medical sociology 47, 50, 51
- medical specialties 52
- Medical Subject Headings 22
- medicinal chemistry 31
- medicinal plants 49
- medicine 52
 - medicine, addiction 23
 - medicine, aerospace 23
 - medicine, alternative 33
 - medicine, behavioral 25

medicine, cancer 57
medicine, cardiovascular 30
medicine, emergency 37
medicine, emergency, see also disaster management 35
medicine, family, see family practice 39
medicine, forensic 39
medicine, genetic, see medical genetics 50
medicine, geriatric 41
medicine, history of 46
medicine, internal 49
medicine, military 53
medicine, molecular 54
medicine, nuclear, see radiology 65
medicine, occupational, see occupational health and safety 56
medicine, orthopedic 57
medicine, pediatric 59
medicine, physical 60
medicine, podiatric 61
medicine, preventive 61
medicine, pulmonary 64
medicine, reproductive 65
medicine, sports 67
medicine, traditional 33
medicine, veterinary 69
medicines 59
MedlinePlus 12, 19, 77
meetings, see conference publications 76
membership rosters 80
membrane physics 30
membrane transport 30, 31
memoirs 75
memoranda 86
memory 32
mental disorders 62
mental illness 62
mental processes 62
mental retardation 62
MeSH 22
metabolic disorders, see endocrinology 37
metabolism 37
metalloproteins 31
methods, research 29
microbes 52
microbial ecology 53
microbiology 52
microorganisms 52

see also medical botany 49
military medicine 53
mind 32
mind-body interventions 33
models 29
molecular biology 53
molecular biology informatics 27
molecular genetics 53
molecular imaging 29
molecular medicine 54
molecular pharmacology 54
molecular recognition 31
monographs 89
musculoskeletal injuries 60
musculoskeletal system 66
mutagenesis 40
mutation 40

N

nanomedicine 26
narratives 75
National Agricultural Library 11, 15, 26, 38, 70
National Archives and Records Administration 14
national bibliographies 75
National Center for Biotechnology Information 19, 41, 78
National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine 33
National Information Center on Health Services Research and Health Care Technology (NICHSR) 45,78
National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health 56
National Institutes of Health, records of the 14
National Library of Medicine Act of 1956 10, 18
natural history 28
NCBI Bookshelf 82
neoplasms 57
nephrology 54
nervous system 55
neurochemistry, see biochemistry 26
neuroendocrinology, see endocrinology 37
neurological surgery 67
neurology 55
neuroscience 55
neurotology, see otolaryngology 58
news, see health communication 42
newsletters and newspapers 90
NIH Institutes 74
NLM Classification 82

NLM Long Range Plan 19
NLM publications 14
NLM Retention Policy 20
NLM Web archives 14
Nobel laureates 19
noise 38
nonverbal communication disorders 33
nose, see otolaryngology 58
novels, see fiction and poetry 85
nuclear chemistry 31
nuclear magnetic resonance 30
nuclear medicine, see radiology 65
nurses 55
 see also health occupations 43
nurses, training of 36
nursing 55
nursing education 55
nursing informatics 51, 55
nursing policy 55
nursing research 55
nutrients 47
nutrition 47
nutritional epidemiology 47

O

obesity, see endocrinology 37
obstetrics 56
occasional papers, see working papers 96
occupational health 56
 litigation related to 39
occupational therapy, see physical medicine and rehabilitation 60
occupations, see health occupations 43
odontology 39
official publications of the NLM 14
oncology 57
online resources 81
online-only resources, defined 81
operations, see surgery 67
ophthalmology 57
optics 26
optometry 57
oral history 74, 75
 in NLM collections 14
oral microbiology 52
organelles 31
organization of health services 45

organization reports 72, 86
origin of life 28, 66
orthodontics, see dentistry 35
orthopaedic surgery 67
orthopedics 57
osteology 25
otolaryngology 58
otology, see otolaryngology 58
outcomes, health 93
outer space, see space life sciences 66

P

pain 24
pain syndromes 60
paleobiology 25
paleopathology 25
palliative care 24
pamphlets 90
 see also ephemera 83
Pan American Health Organization 85
pancreas, see gastroenterology 40
Paracelsianism 32
parasitology 58
pastoral care 65
patents 91
pathology 46, 58
 comparative 69
 forensic 39
patient attitudes 45
patient education, see consumer health 77
patient monitoring 32
patient-doctor communication 42
patient-professional communication 42
patient-provider relationships 44
pediatrics 59
perception 32
performing arts 50
periodicals 87
personal narratives 75, 92
personnel, see health occupations 43
pesticides 68
pets 70
pharmaceutical chemistry 31
pharmaceutical industry, see pharmacology 59
pharmaceuticals 32
pharmacogenetics, see pharmacology 59

pharmacognosy, see pharmacology 59
pharmacology 59
 veterinary 69
pharmacopoeias and formularies 91
pharmacy 59
pharmacy services in health facilities 43
philosophy 50
photographs 73, 79, 93
 in NLM collections 14
physiatrics, see physical medicine and rehabilitation 60
physiatry, see physical medicine and rehabilitation 60
physical anthropology 25
physical education 39
physical fitness 39, 67
physical hazards 68
physical media, defined 81
physical medicine 60
physical plant maintenance in health facilities 43
physical sciences 3
physicians, training of 36
physics, see biophysics 30
physiology 28, 60
 animal 60
 cell, see cell biology 30
 human 60
 plant 61
phytotherapy, see medical botany 49
plant biology 61
plants 61
 biology 61
 medicinal, see medical botany 49
 sequencing 40
plasmid construction 53
plastic surgery 67
podiatry 61
poetry, see fiction and poetry 85
poisons, see toxicology 68
polemical works 92
Policy for updating this manual 9
policy, health 44
politics and health care 44
pollution, see environmental health 38
polymers 31
popular literature 92
population genetics 40
population health 63

portraits 14, 79, 93
posters 91
 see also ephemera 83
postpartum 56
practice guidelines 93
practice management tools 92
pregnancy 56
prep guides, see examination review guides 84
prescriptions, see pharmacy 59
preservation 3, 10, 18, 19
 of electronic resources 81
prevention of disease 52, 61, 63
preventive medicine 61
primary care 39
primary prevention, see preventive medicine 61
primates 25, 62
primatology 25, 62
prints and photographs 93
prints, fine 79
procedures 86, 88
proceedings, see conference publications 76
professional associations 44
professional education, see continuing education 77
professional issues 43
Profiles in Science 19, 79, 82
projected images 74
proprietary use 88
protein synthesis 53
proteins 30
proteomics 40, 53
proteomics, see biochemistry 26
protozoa 48, 52
psychiatry 62
psychoactive plants 49
psychoanalysis 62
psychoanalytic interpretations of literature 85
psycholinguistics 32
psychological tests, see tests 95
psychology 62
 cognitive, see also cognitive science 32
psychology, health, see behavioral medicine 25
public health 38, 48, 63, 86
 policy 29, 85
public health emergencies, see disaster management 35
public policy 47
public service announcements 74

publications of the NLM 14
PubMed Central 19, 82
pulmonary medicine 64
purpose of the NLM collection 10

Q

quackery 47
quality of education 36
quality of health care 45, 51

R

radiation exposure 68
radio, see health communication 42
radiology 65
recordings 74
records management 43
records of the NLM 14
recruitment of health care professionals, see health occupations 44
recruitment, for education 36
rectal surgery 67
redundancy, avoiding in collection 71
reference tools, see dictionaries and encyclopedias 79
refractive errors 57
regional publications 86
regulations 44, 85
rehabilitation, see physical medicine and rehabilitation 60
religion 65
religion and medicine 50, 65
reports
 annual 72
 draft 80
 market research 89
 technical 86, 94
Reports of the Surgeon General 82
reprints and facsimiles 93
reproductive health 41
reproductive medicine 65
reproductive physiology 41
rescue literature 36
research 29, 52
research animals 49
research design 29
research ethics 29
research in nursing 55
research journals 87
research services 45

residents 36
respiratory system, see pulmonary medicine 64
retention policy 20
retrieval mechanisms 27
review guides, see examination review guides 84
review journals 87
rheumatology 66
risk management 36
risk taking behaviors 51
Rogers, Frank Bradway 18

S

sales catalogs 76
sanitation 64
satire 87
scanning microscopy 29
scholarly journals 87
scholarly, defined 11
school publications, see alumni and student publications 72
schools of medicine 47
science of medicine 52
science writers 92
scientific fraud 29
scope of the collection 10
scope, defined 11
selection guidelines by subject 22
selective (use of term in collection policy) 71
sequence data 40
sexual health 41, 65, 69
sexuality 52
sign language 33
signal transduction 31
skeletal system, see orthopedics 57
skin 35
skin diseases 35
slides, see audiovisual materials 74
social behavior, see anthropology 25
social factors and health 51
social factors in health services 45
social rehabilitation 60
socioeconomic status 51
sociology of medicine 47, 51
sociology, of substance use 23
sound recordings 74
space life sciences 66
space medicine 23

Specialized Information Services Division 78
specialties 52
speciation 28
spectroscopy 30, 31
spiritual healing, see complementary and alternative medicine 33
sports medicine 67
stamps 47
standards and guidelines 44, 85, 86, 93
standards in electronic publishing 81
standards related to health facilities 43
state documents 85
state health plans 64
state publications 86
statistical analysis, see biomedical research 29
statistical works 85, 94
stem cell research 30, 31
stem cells 30
stress, job 56
structural biology 31, 53
structural biology informatics, see bioinformatics 27
student publications 72
students 36
study guides 95
subjects, inclusion of 22
subspecialties 52
substance abuse 23, 52, 62, 63
suggestions about this Manual 9
surfaces 31
surgery 67
surgical demonstrations 74
surgical techniques 67
symposia, see conference publications 76
systematics 28
systems biology, see biological sciences 28

T

tai chi 39
tape recordings, see audiovisual materials 74
teaching aids, see textbooks 95
teaching hospitals 36
teaching, of health professionals 36
technical documentation 86
technical reports 86, 94
technique, clinical laboratory, see clinical laboratory science 32
technology, medical, see also clinical laboratory science 32
teeth 35

telemedicine 42
television, see health communication 42
teratology, see embryology 37
terminology, see dictionaries and encyclopedias 79
terms used in this manual 22
tests 95
tests, laboratory 32
textbooks 95
therapeutics 67
therapy, alternative 33
theses, see academic dissertations 72
thinking 32
thoracic surgery 67
throat, see otolaryngology 58
tissue engineering 26
tissues see histology 46
tomography 29
toxicology 38, 68, 86
 see also pharmacology 59
toxinology 68
trade catalogs, 76
traditional medicine
 see anthropology 25
 see complementary and alternative medicine 33
training of health professionals 36
 see also health occupations 44
transfection 53
translational research, see biomedical research 29
translations 95
treatment of disease 52
treatment, see therapeutics 67
trends in medical and health education 74
tropical medicine
 see environmental health 38
 see infectious diseases 48

U

U.S. Government Partial Depository 18
ultrasonics 26
ultrasonics, see also biomedical imaging 29
undersea medicine, see medicine 52
uniformed services 53
university publications, see alumni and student publications 72
urinary tract 69
urology 69

V

vectors 53
verbal communication disorders 33
veterinary medicine 69
veterinary pharmacology 69
video 74
violence 63
viruses 48, 52
Visible Human Project 78, 79
vision
 see ophthalmology 57
 see optometry 57
vital statistics 94
vocabulary used in this manual 22
vocational rehabilitation 60

W

waste management 64
weather, influence on health, see environmental health 38
Web archives 14
Web resources, see electronic resources 81
weeding 20
wellness, see preventive medicine 61
withdrawal 20
woodcuts 14
workbooks 95
workers' health, see occupational health 56
working papers 42, 96
workshops 77
World Health Organization 85, 94
World Wide Web, see health communication 42

X

x-rays 65

Y

yoga 39

Z

zoonoses 69
 see also infectious diseases 48