Circulation Policies in Academic Medical Libraries: A Comparative Study of Allocation Strategies, Demographic Analysis, Service Offerings, and Implications for Practice
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Objective
The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of current academic medical library circulation policies, examine methods libraries utilize in developing these policies, and to evaluate the impact on user satisfaction and service delivery in academic medical libraries. In addition, the study explores how user satisfaction and service delivery are affected by changes in user service policies in academic medical libraries.

Method
A survey was developed and distributed to 103 academic medical libraries. The survey was designed to gather information on circulation practices, user policies, and library services. The survey was administered online and included questions about library space, user policies, and information about the library and its users.

Survey Instrument and Study Design
The survey instrument was designed to collect information on the following topics:
- Circulation practices
- User policies
- Library services

Data Analysis
The data collected from the survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The analysis included frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations. Chi-square tests were used to determine the significance of differences between groups.

Significant Findings
- More than 75% of libraries surveyed allow a two-week checkout period for regular circulating books.
- More than 75% of libraries do not allow faculty longer checkout periods than students.
- Nearly 75% of participating libraries do not charge a late fee for ILL requests.
- The survey also found that more than 75% of libraries allow students to recall items that have been reserved.

Limitations
- The survey was limited to 103 academic medical libraries and may not be representative of all academic medical libraries.
- The survey was conducted online and may have a response bias.

Conclusions
Circulation practices among surveyed libraries vary, but several common trends can be identified:
- A two-hour loan period for reserve materials continues to be the norm.
- Although using ILL for textbooks is considered controversial in some libraries, it appears to be a regular practice for health science libraries.
- The loan period for regular circulating books appears to have changed over time, with the past 30 years showing a trend towards shorter loan periods.

Future Study
- Future research should explore the impact of changes in user service policies on user satisfaction and service delivery.

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