Aim:
The aim of "Chasing the sun" is to provide an after business hours on-line reference service for urgent clinical questions relating to patient care. The project takes advantage of global time differences between countries to offer out-of-hours librarian support for clinicians seeking urgently needed information. The initial participants in this project are the South Australian Health Services Libraries' Consortium (SAHSLC) and the South West Information for Clinical Effectiveness (SWICE) network but the intention is to involve other regions around the world to ensure reliability of the service. This will serve to broaden the time range available and enhance the reference expertise in responding quickly and accurately to queries from users. A list of participating libraries can be found under Membership on the website:

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Background

Health professionals in both the United Kingdom and Australia have online access to a collection of bibliographic databases and full text products through the Internet. These databases, of which the majority are the same between the two countries, are available to users on a 24 hours, 7 days a week basis. This out-of-hours access, while a positive feature, becomes problematic if expert help is needed in performing a search out-of-hours. This project proposes to take advantage of global time differences to offer out-of-hours librarian support for users of the databases. The service was trialled by health libraries in South Australia and South West Region of the National Health Service in England.

The Chasing the Sun service will not:

- Assist with password difficulties;
- Provide assistance for general problems with IT or computer connectivity e.g. if databases are not working;
- Provide assistance for assignments or research purposes.

Management of the service

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is signed by both the participating librarians of each Institution and the Group administrators. Each participating Group must elect an administrator. A Project Administrator is elected from among the Group administrators.

The MOU between the Institutions specifies:

- only professionally qualified librarians will answer queries,
- the level of service required for participants,
- the quality and type of resources to be used to answer queries,
- the timeliness of responses to queries,
- each group is monitored by the Group Administrator.

An MOU is required for each Institution, which outlines each account holder’s responsibility to sign-on each day, answer each query to the fullest possible extent and demonstrate willingness to participate. Further, the signing of the MOU is an agreement to commit to the requirements of the CTS project.

The administrator for each group, as the nominated group’s leader is: responsible for ensuring each query is answered; responsible for ensuring that at least one reference query is submitted to the Global Knowledge Bank once a year to ensure compliance with OCLC requirements; determine the funding spread for each Institution. The workload of the system administrator will need be monitored and evaluated.

Promotion of the service to medical and health staff may encompass e-mails, promotions on the Intranet web sites, and/or promotion at regional medical conferences.

Health/medical libraries interested in participating in Chasing the Sun are welcome contact the administrators listed in this brochure for more information. (See back page for details)