

Parallel Sessions C
C5 – WHO Documentation Centres

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Health Information Provision in Italy: Current State and Future Development of the Italian WHO Documentation Centre

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Health information and user services provided by the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS) – the National Institute of Health – as the Italian Documentation Centre of the WHO Regional Office for Europe are described. This Centre, active since the beginning of the 90s, over the years has expanded in the number and type of services offered. After examining the present situation at the ISS, improvements and implementations are proposed for the next future.

In the framework of the availability and the accessibility of WHO documentation, details about the following services set up at the ISS Library are supplied: reference, document delivery, exchange of duplicate issues, user education, statistical reports. Besides, the authors describe the web site of the Italian WHO/DC, launched in June 2001 and aimed to improve the use of WHO information and documentation in order to make the Centre a focus of interest in the country.

As for the future, the results of this study can be used as tools to investigate about some items like, for example, who is actually using the WHO information, to what extent and to what effect. A further remarkable topic will be offered by the comparison of the use between WHO documentation and other literature on the health-related subject. The paper concludes that the policy in spreading health information calls also for major change in organisational thinking and acceptance by the librarians involved in the WHO Documentation centres that their service must be open to continuous development.