



Tim Revell/Dispatch

Becky Blackburn is a library consultant for the Doan Hall library at Ohio State University Medical Center. The

library, which opened July 8, aims to provide patients and their families with health-care information.

# Hospital library good medicine for patients' inquiring minds

By David Lore  
Dispatch Science Reporter

Hospitals aren't just places to get healthy anymore. Increasingly, patients — and their families — are using hospital libraries to get smart as well.

People are using these consumer-oriented resource centers to learn more about injuries and disease, to check out their doctors' advice or to seek guidance on healthy living.

"Consumers are becoming more educated about health care and their health-care needs, and I think you have to be prepared to provide them with information," said Pinky Davis, education director at the Ohio State University Medical Center.

OSU is launching two such libraries this summer. The first opened July 8 in Doan Hall; a second opens Sept. 15 at OSU's Stoneridge Medical Center in Dublin.

Staffing will be provided by some 40 volunteers, but the intent is

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to provide the tools to encourage people to do their own research. The Doan Hall center, for example, has computers, CD-ROMs and videotapes.

Both libraries will have evening hours. Eventually, consumers should be able to access these databases from their home or office computers.

Such libraries have become a common feature in most hospitals since the 1980s as accrediting institutions have put more emphasis on consumer education.

Jo Clark, library supervisor at Riverside Methodist Hospitals, for example, said a room in Riverside's library was put aside 16 years ago

for patients and visitors. The Riverside library, with more than 200,000 volumes and 2,200 journal subscriptions, often handles referrals from public libraries, she said.

Whatever happened to just asking the doc?

"That's OK, but doctors are very, very busy people," said Davis at OSU. "And if a physician has a resource that he can send his patient to, he can spend more time on that patient's clinical needs."

People also want copies and reprints to take home, which doctors can't always provide, she said.

At OSU, Davis plans to link the Doan and Stoneridge libraries to the more academically oriented OSU Health Sciences Library this fall.

Davis said the health libraries are being established with private rather than public money. Major contributors are Pharmacia & Upjohn; the late Harold Zieg, a real estate developer; and the OSU Medical Center Service Board.