
HSR: Thirty Years of Service

Preface

The Genesis of *Health Services Research*

Until the Hospital Research and Educational Trust introduced *Health Services Research* in 1965, a noticeable absence of a widespread, ongoing communications channel hampered health services researchers in their efforts to discuss, inform, and seek constructive reaction to their work. Although the contemporary journals provided general information relating to research in the health and medical sciences, none came close to portraying the depth of health services research nor to suggesting a means of communicating this work to a wide and varied audience.

The *HSR* journal, on the other hand, introduced a print medium *designed for no other purpose* than the prompt and clear reporting of outcomes of research on a national and international scale. From the beginning, *HSR* has existed for the advancement of health services.

True to the clarity of its foresight, *HSR* defied the then current trend in the field of publishing research articles far too narrow in scope to be of value to a multidisciplinary audience. From its inaugural issue, *HSR* urged contributors to think and write large for a readership that craved information from and for the varied spectrum of endeavors.

The result was a new approach to communicating health services research, allowing the majority of contributors to this young field to publicize their work and to invite both productive criticism and evaluation from their peers. At last a forum was available for effective communication.

While early editions concentrated on the organization of hospitals, the breadth of disciplinary interests expanded during the 1970s, thanks to efforts generated by Gary Bisbee, Ph.D. and Gordon DeFries, Ph.D.—respectively, editor and book review editor up through the early 1980s. They enlarged the editorial board and worked with publisher Health Administration Press to receive a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. A substantial contribution from the National Center for Health Services Research late in 1983

made it possible to expand the annual number of pages by 60 percent and to increase dissemination from four to six times yearly.

Then, in 1986, Health Administration Press became a division of the American College of Healthcare Executives. The College promised financial support for HAP's publications offerings; this, of course, included operations support and enhancement of *HSR*. Thus began a collaboration that exists to this day.

Another fine relationship was already in place. In 1982, the Association for Health Services Research had sought affiliation with a journal. In selecting *HSR* as its "official" medium of scientific communication, the Association recognized the journal's equally sharp focus and editorial policy.

Since 1984, and continuing into the 1990s, *HSR* has been published bimonthly and has generally devoted 144 pages to the publication of articles reporting original empirical research. Almost annually, a special issue or two contains papers that address topical concerns beyond the regular pages of the journal.

The longevity and popularity of the journal attest to the fact that the health services field is enlivened by diverse and creative forces. I salute the excellent work by many people to produce a first-class, always professional, much needed communications vehicle that reflects the very best information coming out of research in the health services.

A special congratulations is given to the Hospital Research and Educational Trust for creating *HSR* 30 years ago, and also for its half-century of service and contribution to the fields of health services research and education.

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