The history of the medical library at the University of Melbourne 1862-1967

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Abstract
This work is an organizational history of the medical library associated with the University of Melbourne. The University opened the first medical school in Australia in 1864, and this same year marks the origin of the medical library. The small library encountered many obstacles in its first few decades of existence including the repeated threat of amalgamation with the main library, lack of funding and inadequate supervision and direction. The library dealt with these pressures, and with those appearing afterward, primarily shortages in both space and funds, to become a significant leader in the provision of library services to the medical community of Melbourne. The importance of the library lies not only in the fact that it was the first medical library in Australia at the tertiary level, but also that it played a significant role in the education of the first Australian trained doctors. The development and subsequent growth of the medical library is intimately related to the social, economic and political conditions that were present in colonial Victoria. The settlement of Port Phillip, the discovery of gold and the declaration of Victoria as a colony in 1851 were all factors which led to the establishment of a University in Melbourne, and as such must be explored before the history of the medical library can be understood and appreciated.

Keywords
Brownless Medical Library; history; University of Melbourne; medical libraries; Victoria; Melbourne; Australia

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