Abstract

PAHO establishes guidelines that must be met by drug information centers (DIC) and the drug information services (DIS). Objective: To describe the operations, activities, and resources of the DICs and the DISs affiliated with public institutions of Costa Rica, and their adjustment to the provisions set forth by the PAHO. Methods: Descriptive study conducted in May 2003. The officers in charge of each of the seven public DICs or DISs in Costa Rica were interviewed, and inquiries were made regarding aspects of the structure and process of their centers. Results: In Costa Rica there are seven public drug information units, that is, four DICs and three DISs. One of the DICs is located in this university, and the remaining six centers and services are in located in hospitals. Five of the centers do not have the primary sources required by the PAHO. Fifteen out of the 36 tertiary sources recommended are not available in any of the centers. 100% of the information units carry out four main activities: answering inquiries from the hospital community, answering inquiries from users outside the hospital, implementing education programs for patients and risk groups, and rotation programs for student training. Conclusions: The activities developed by the DISs and the DICs in Costa Rica are similar to each other; they respond not only to the PAHOs guidelines, but they also have similarities with the activities and operations of other DICs worldwide. Primary, secondary, and tertiary bibliographical support must be strengthened.

Keywords

Drug information services. Costa Rica.