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Libraries

Consulting & Collaborating on Supporting Systematic Reviews over a Decade: A Librarian's Practical Insights

Yingting Zhang, MLS, AHIP-D

Research Services Librarian

Rutgers University Libraries - RWJ Library of the Health Sciences

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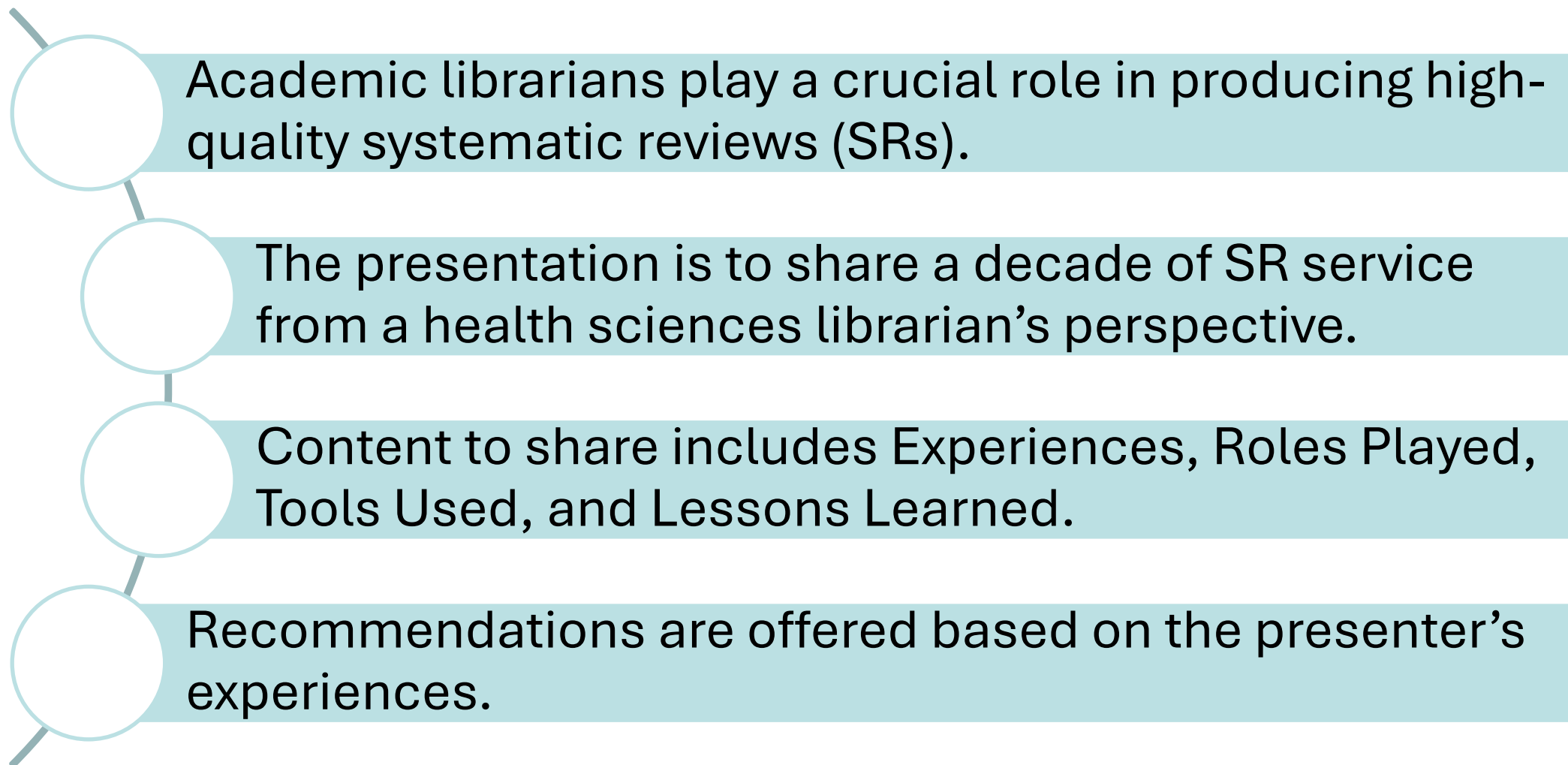
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Outline

➤ Overview

➤ Background

➤ Consultation & Training

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➤ Statistics of SRs Supported

➤ Challenges Encountered
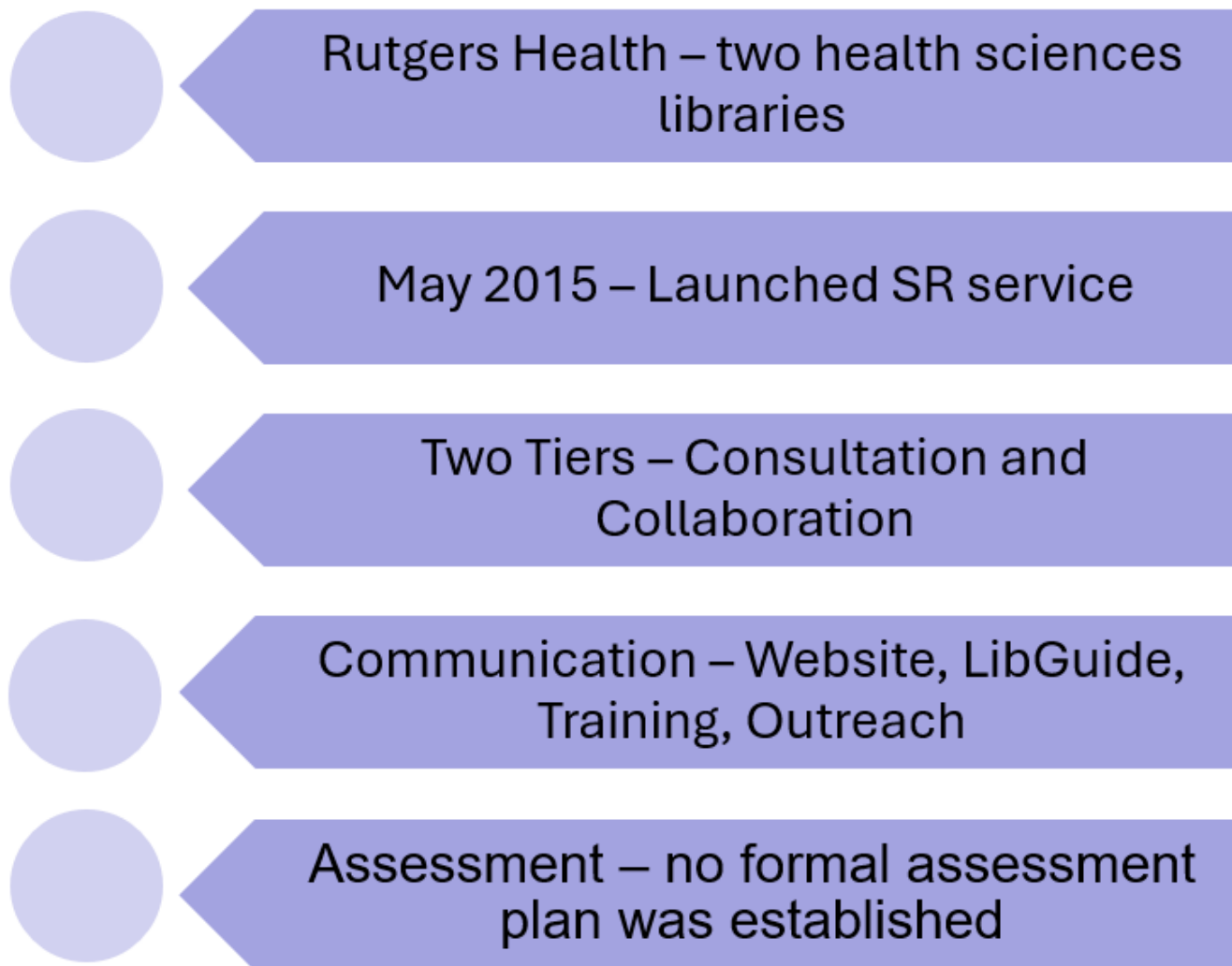
➤ Recommendations

Disclosure: This presentation is based on the recently published article:
    Zhang, Y. (2025). A decade of systematic review services: experiences, challenges, and lessons learned from a health sciences librarian's perspective. *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/02763869.2025.2595571

Overview

Academic librarians play a crucial role in producing high-quality systematic reviews (SRs).

The presentation is to share a decade of SR service from a health sciences librarian's perspective.

Content to share includes Experiences, Roles Played, Tools Used, and Lessons Learned.

Recommendations are offered based on the presenter's experiences.

Background

- Rutgers Health – two health sciences libraries
- May 2015 – Launched SR service
- Two Tiers – Consultation and Collaboration
- Communication – Website, LibGuide, Training, Outreach
- Assessment – no formal assessment plan was established

SR Service Requests Intake

Fill out the Online Request Form

Ask a Librarian

Send Emails

Live online Chat

Make an Appointment

Phone or Text

Visit Physical Libraries

5

Standards & Guidelines

➢ Cochrane handbook for systematic reviews of interventions
➢ JBI manual for evidence synthesis
➢ Scoping Review, Chapter 10 in JBI manual for evidence synthesis
➢ Campbell systematic reviews: Policies and guidelines
➢ The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement
➢ PRISMA-Scoping Reviews
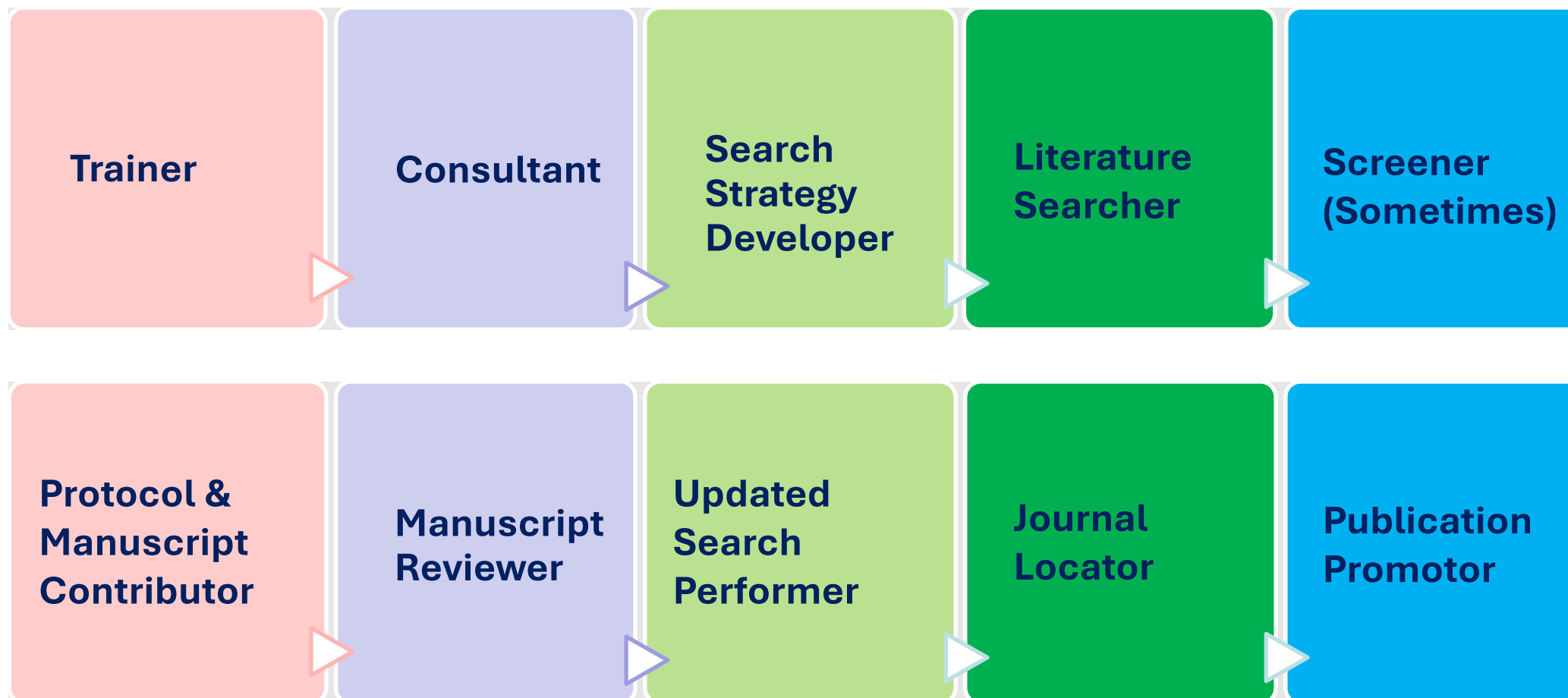➢ PRISMA-Protocols
➢ PRISMA-Search

Consultation & Training

The health sciences libraries started offering two tiers of SR service in 2015: Consultation (incl Training) and Collaboration.

For Consultation & Training, the librarians assist researchers to:

- ➢ Formulate and refine research questions
- ➢ Choose an appropriate review type
- ➢ Prepare and register SR protocols
- ➢ Formulate PICO, PEO, PCC, and other frameworks
- ➢ Harvest search terms and database-specific subject headings
- ➢ Develop and translate search strategy
- ➢ Select relevant databases and other information sources
- ➢ Document literature searches
- ➢ Use SR tools effectively
- ➢ Provide training workshops or course-embedded lectures on SRs

Roles Played in SR Collaborations

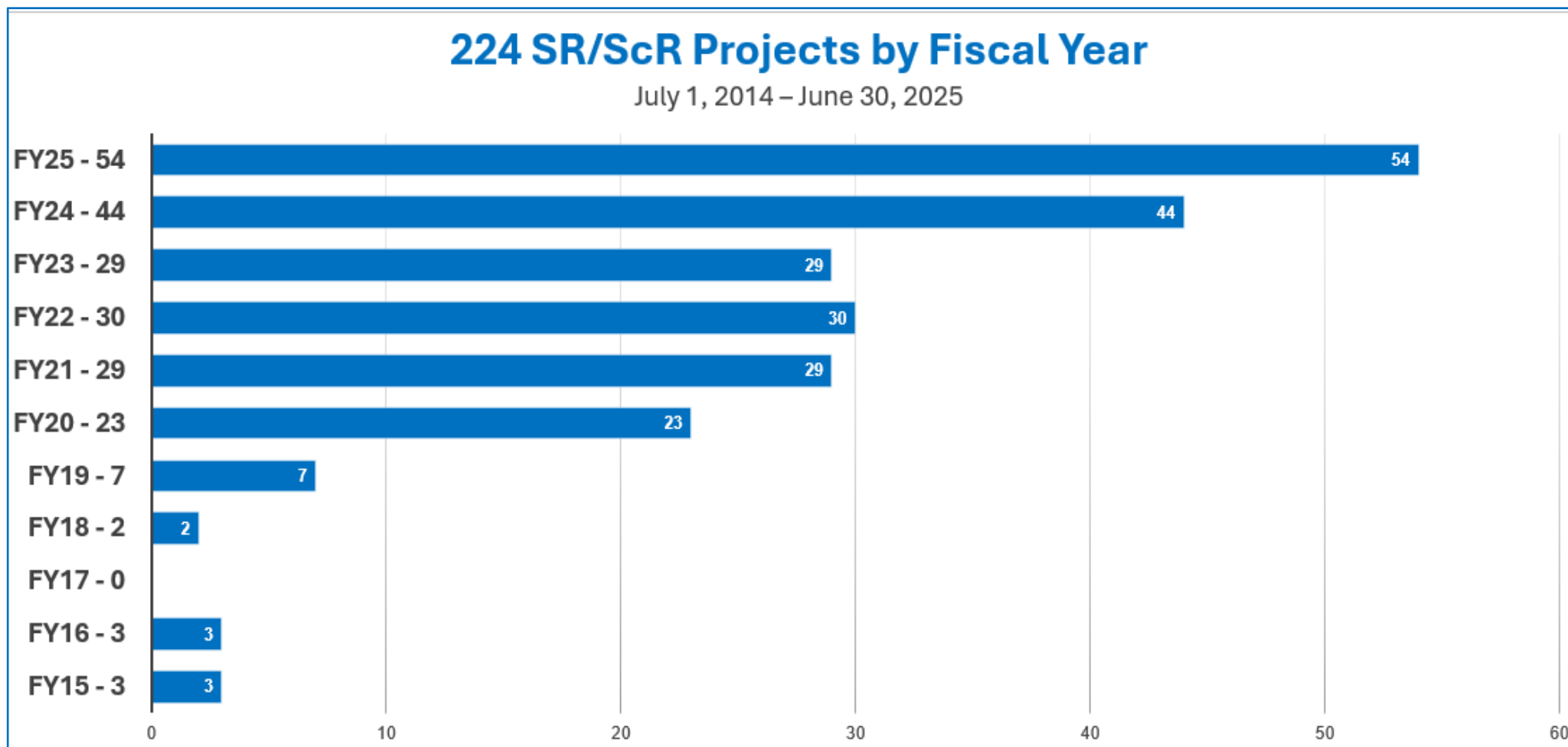| Trainer	Consultant	Search Strategy Developer	Literature Searcher	Screener (Sometimes)
Protocol & Manuscript Contributor	Manuscript Reviewer	Updated Search Performer	Journal Locator	Publication Promotor

Information Sources Frequently Searched

➢ Medline via PubMe or PubMed in general

➢ Embase

➢ Cochrane Library (mostly CENTRAL)

➢ CINAHL

➢ APA PsycInfo

➢ Scopus

➢ Web of Science

➢ ProQuest Sociology & Social Sciences Collection

➢ ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global

➢ ...

Systematic Review Tools Used

➤ Citation Management
- ❑ EndNote
- ❑ Zotero
- ❑ RefWorks

➤ Screening
- ❑ Covidence (since Jan 2025), Rayyan, JBI SUMARI, SRDR+, Abstrackr, etc.

➤ Data Extraction
- ❑ Covidence

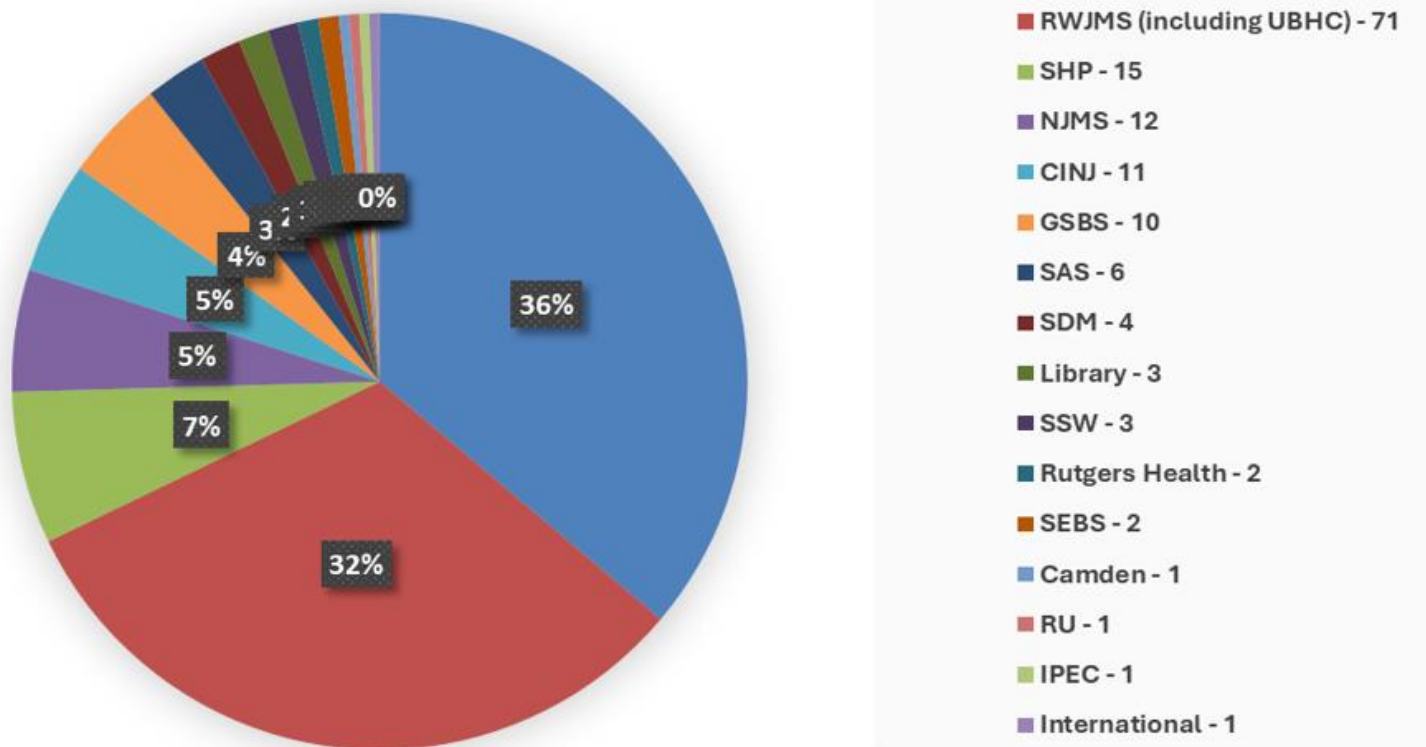➤ AI Tools for SRs Are Being Explored

224 Systematic Review and Scoping Review Projects Supported
July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2025

Faculty / Staff / Fellows / Residents Collaborated	Faculty / Staff / Fellows / Residents Consulted	Students Consulted (incl SR Capstones)	Librarians Initiated	By Unit	By Fiscal Year	By Calendar Year	Total # of SR and ScR Projects Supported
54	42	125	3	**224**	**224**	**224**	**224**
17 – Published 2 – Posters only 2 – Accepted 3 – Submitted 4 – Writing up 11 – In progress 1 – Empty Rev 5 – Discont'd 1 – Paused 8 – Unknown			1 - Published 1 - Published 1 - Paused	SPH (incl IFH, EOHSI) – 81 RWJMS (incl UBHC) – 71 SHP – 15 NJMS – 12 CINJ – 11 GSBS – 10 SAS – 6 SDM - 4 Library – 3 SSW – 3 Rutgers Health – 2 SEBS – 2 Camden – 1 RU – 1 IPEC – 1 International – 1	FY25 – 54 FY24 – 44 FY23 – 29 FY22 – 30 FY21 – 29 FY20 – 23 FY19 – 7 FY18 – 2 FY17 – 0 FY16 – 3 FY15 – 3	2025 – 28 (as of 6/30/25) 2024 – 41 2023 – 43 2022 – 31 2021 – 36 2020 – 20 2019 – 16 2018 – 1 2017 – 2 2016 – 3 2015 – 2 2014 – 1	SRs – 184 (incl MAs & RR, UR, etc.) ScRs – 40

224 SR/ScR Projects by Fiscal Year

July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2025

Fiscal Year	Projects
FY25 - 54	54
FY24 - 44	44
FY23 - 29	29
FY22 - 30	30
FY21 - 29	29
FY20 - 23	23
FY19 - 7	7
FY18 - 2	2
FY17 - 0	0
FY16 - 3	3
FY15 - 3	3

224 SR/ScR Projects by Unit
(July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2025)

Legend:
- SPH (including IFH, EOHSI) - 81
- RWJMS (including UBHC) - 71
- SHP - 15
- NJMS - 12
- CINJ - 11
- GSBS - 10
- SAS - 6
- SDM - 4
- Library - 3
- SSW - 3
- Rutgers Health - 2
- SEBS - 2
- Camden - 1
- RU - 1
- IPEC - 1
- International - 1

Note: The presenter serves as a liaison to SPH and CINJ, and is an adjunct assistant professor at RWJMS.

Challenges Encountered

➢ Time and workload pressure arise due to high demand.
➢ Lack of researcher understanding of the SR process causes misunderstanding and requires training.
➢ Absence of SR protocol upon researchers' requests for support
➢ Delayed responses of team members hindering project progress.
➢ Recognition of contribution for co-authorship is not always honored.

Lessons Learned

➢ Set boundaries and expectations at the beginning.
➢ Offer training workshops regularly
➢ Require a protocol to be in place
➢ Establish effective communication channels
➢ Require commitment of team members.
➢ Honor co-authorship (collaboration) / acknowledgment (consultation)

Recommendations

➢ Develop an SR service model that best suits your library.
➢ Establish best practices to standardize service.
➢ Use an effective project management tool to track and assess the services provided collectively and to show the library impact.
➢ Make an assessment plan for both the service providers and recipients.
➢ Establish authorship guidelines in alignment with ICMJE recommendations if collaboration is made available.
➢ Explore and responsibly and ethically use selected AI assistants to help develop and translate search strategies and other SR phases with human-in-the-loop to enhance service efficiency.

Using AI for SRs and Other ES Projects

➢ Follow the RAISE (**R**esponsible use of **AI** in evidence **S**ynth**E**sis) recommendations and guidance.
➢ Experiment using LLMs/GenAI tools for evidence synthesis with librarians' verification and refinement.
➢ Develop training programs to bridge any skill gaps in AI tool utilization and critical assessment of AI outputs pertaining to SRs and other evidence syntheses.
➢ Libraries develop a workflow that integrates GenAI as research assistants in the SR-ES process to improve efficiency without compromising quality.
➢ Document and emphasize librarian roles in AI-assisted SRs, outlining essential skills and knowledge areas.

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Thank You!

yzhang@rutgers.edu

http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0757-1837