All entries are signed and contain sources for additional information. While the Encyclopedia has many features that make it easily navigable such as subheadings within long entries, bolded terms for cross referencing between entries, a thorough index and “see references” for entries known by alternative terms, browsing would be much easier with one simple addition, a listing of the entries by category: theme, topical and biography. Further, the very small typeface, reminiscent of print encyclopedias of the past, may cause difficulty for some readers. One other minor distraction is a lack of consistency between the “see references” and the actual headings: “Resurrections” versus “Resurrection,” for example.

Overall, however, this is a valuable and well-researched resource on a topic not covered elsewhere. It is a must for all Polish American, ethnic and cross-cultural studies collections, and highly recommended for academic research library collections and public libraries in areas with substantial Polish American populations.—Joann E. Donatiello, Population Research Librarian, Donald E. Stokes Library, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey


This resource is an updated option to the “Brandon Hill Selected List of Print Books and Journals for the Small Medical Library, which ceases publication in 2003 after 38 years and 20 editions” (xi). The Medical Library Association’s Master Guide to Authoritative Information in the Health Sciences (hereafter MLA Master Guide) expands the Brandon Hill list by including works in the basic sciences as well as digital and online publications. Works that were included in the final Brandon Hill list are given a special designation. This resource is being written about as the new gold standard in collection development tools for medical libraries. By using expert contributors, the editors have compiled more than 2,000 authoritative titles encompassing 35 specialties, plus subspecialties, basic sciences, and emerging disciplines. The MLA Master Guide is not comprehensive. Selectors were limited to choosing ten of the most important monographs and serials in their discipline.

This work is loosely arranged by the Health Occupations and the Biological Sciences tree structures of the National Library of Medicine's Medical Subject Headings (MeSH). Definitions come from Stedman's Medical Dictionary or from the topics contributor if a MeSH derived definition is not available. Each section includes general works related to the discipline, as well as more specialized topics. Each entry contains full bibliographic information, URLs (if applicable), and an annotation describing the scope and coverage of the work. The majority of titles covered are appropriate for an academic medical library. Titles appropriate for a hospital or consumer health library are marked.

In comparison to the Brandon Hill List of Print Books and Journals for the Small Medical Library (Medical Library Association, 2001), this resource appears much easier and more efficient. The Brandon Hill List is simply a list of titles with their prices, as opposed to The MLA Master Guide which contains nicely written annotations for each work listed. Another benefit to this work when compared to the Brandon Hill List of Print Books and Journals for the Small Medical Library is that the former is not strictly limited to print resources. The work being reviewed also covers many more titles.

I also looked at Jeffrey T. Huber, Jo Anne Boorkman, and Jean Blackwell’s Introduction to Reference Sources in the Health Sciences (Neal-Schuman, 2008). This source also integrates print and electronic sources together and provides annotations. However, I don’t feel that it is as organized. The MLA Master Guide is much more intuitive and user friendly.

I would highly recommend The Medical Library Association’s Master Guide to Authoritative Information in the Health Sciences over the other two works. It is very well organized and the annotations offer just the right amount of information. Developing or maintaining a collection in a health sciences library can be expensive and is so important because the resources must be accurate, dependable, and up to date to be useful. MLAs guide makes this task easy. I would recommend this title for any academic medical or hospital library.—Mina Chercourt, Unit Leader, Database Maintenance, Graselli Library and Breen Learning Center, John Carroll University, University Heights, Ohio