

The SMARTAL Project

St MARTin's College health students Access to Learning resources whilst on placement

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St Martin's College

- a higher education college, whose degrees are awarded by Lancaster University.
- SMC has 5291 FTE students (2005/06), the majority taking teacher training or nursing and allied health-related courses.





Background

- The project ran from December 2004 to March 2005.
- HENSAL (Health and Education Northumbria Students Access to Learning resources whilst on placement) Project
- 2005/06 – 1282 FTE pre-registration health students who spend up to half their course on placement



Aims

- To determine patterns of use of learning resources
- To find out barriers to access and use
- Provide local evidence to improve access to facilities, services and resources
- To compare with other HE institutions and contribute to the evidence base



Objectives

To find out:

- how important it was for the students to be able to access learning resources while they were on placement
- if they had access to a placement library, IT and study space and, if so, were they using them
- what difficulties they experienced
- how much use they made of the College library, local NHS library and other libraries
- who they asked for help in accessing and using the resources



Methodology

- Questionnaire to students – 444 students, 60% response rate
- Interviews with 5 nursing Practice Placement Facilitators

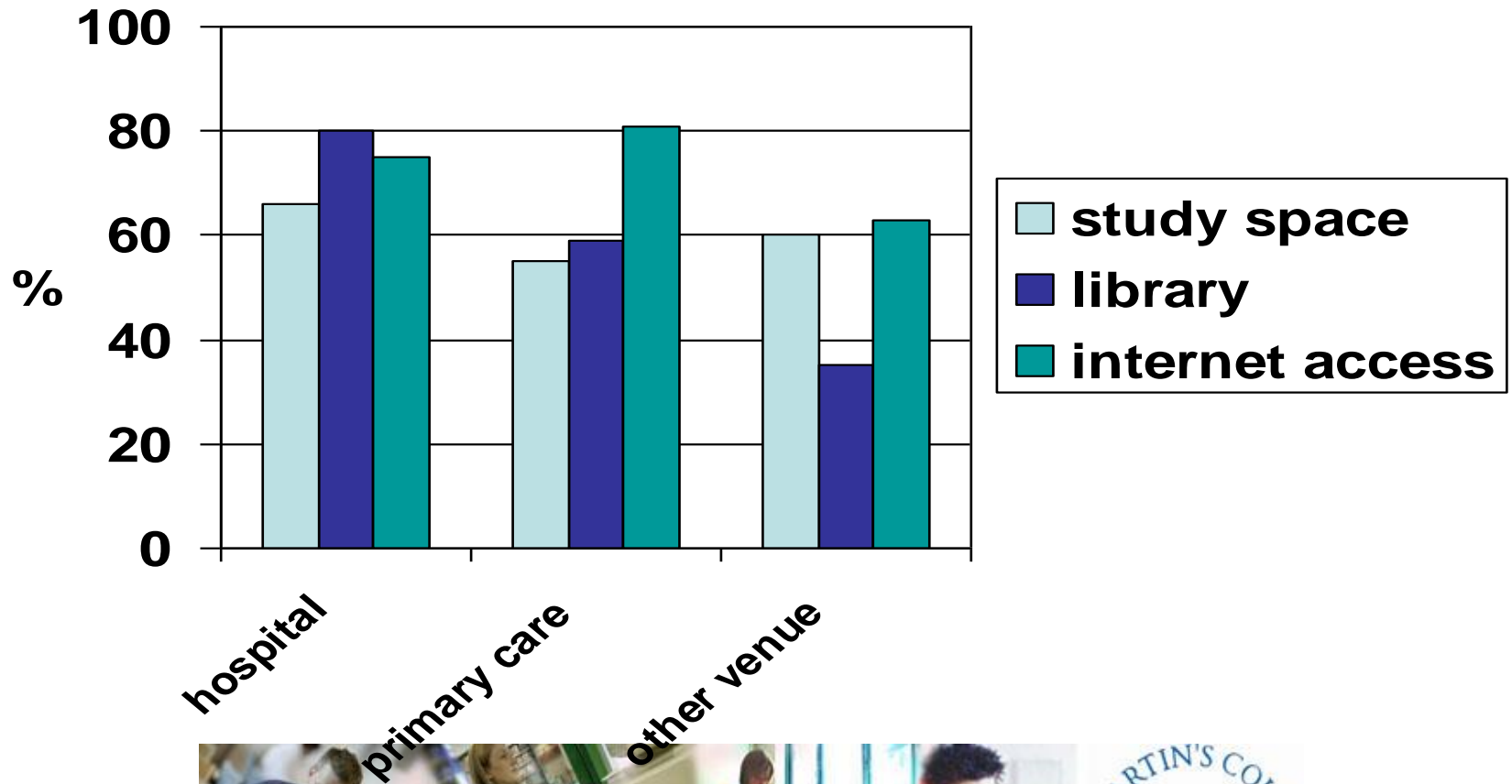


Significant findings

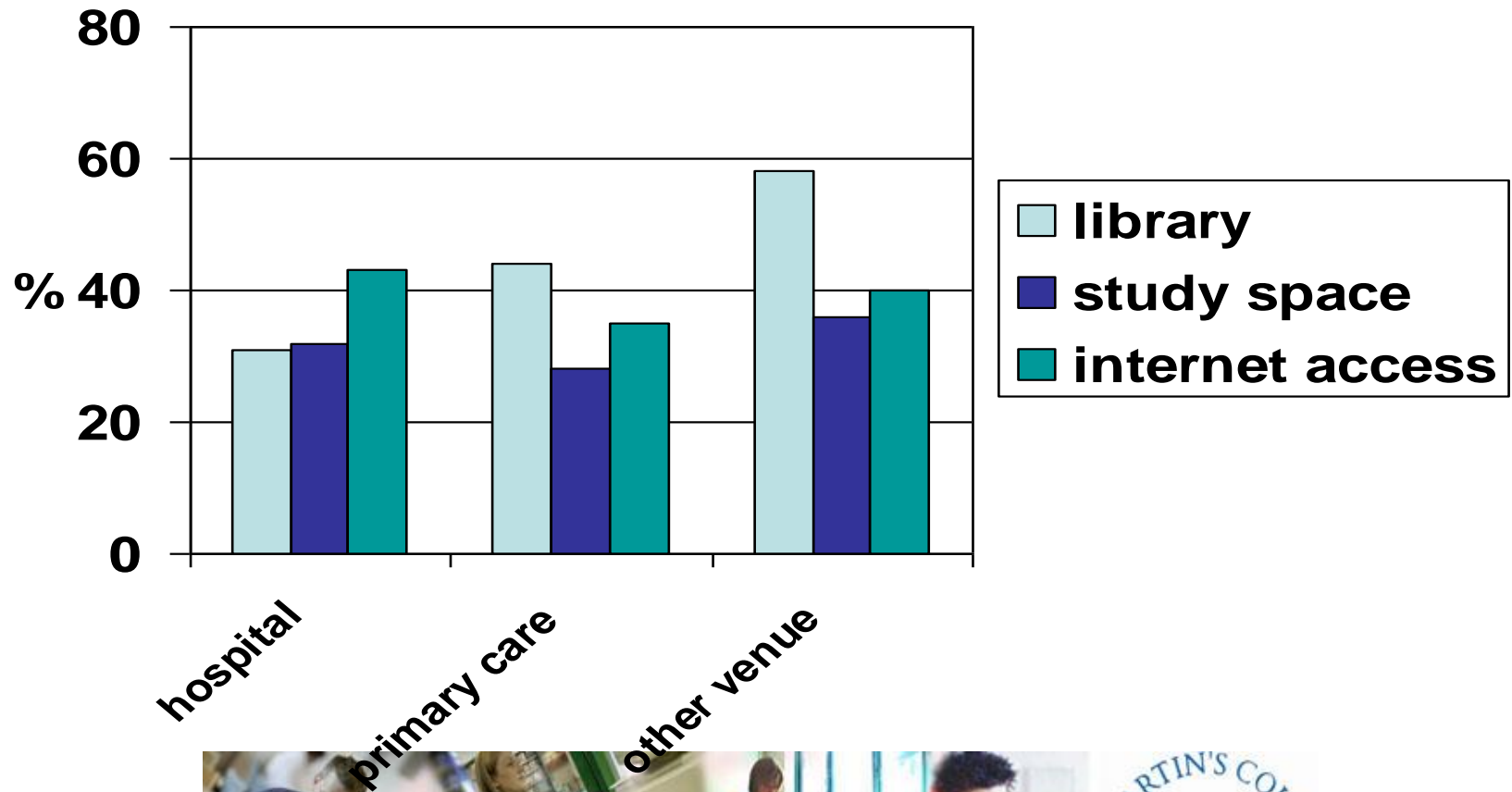
- 72% - in a hospital (68% of these in hospitals in the 2 local trusts)
- 96% - thought access to learning resources was either important or very important
- Most students used libraries for accessing printed books and journals
- 84% - used learning resources for completing a College assignment



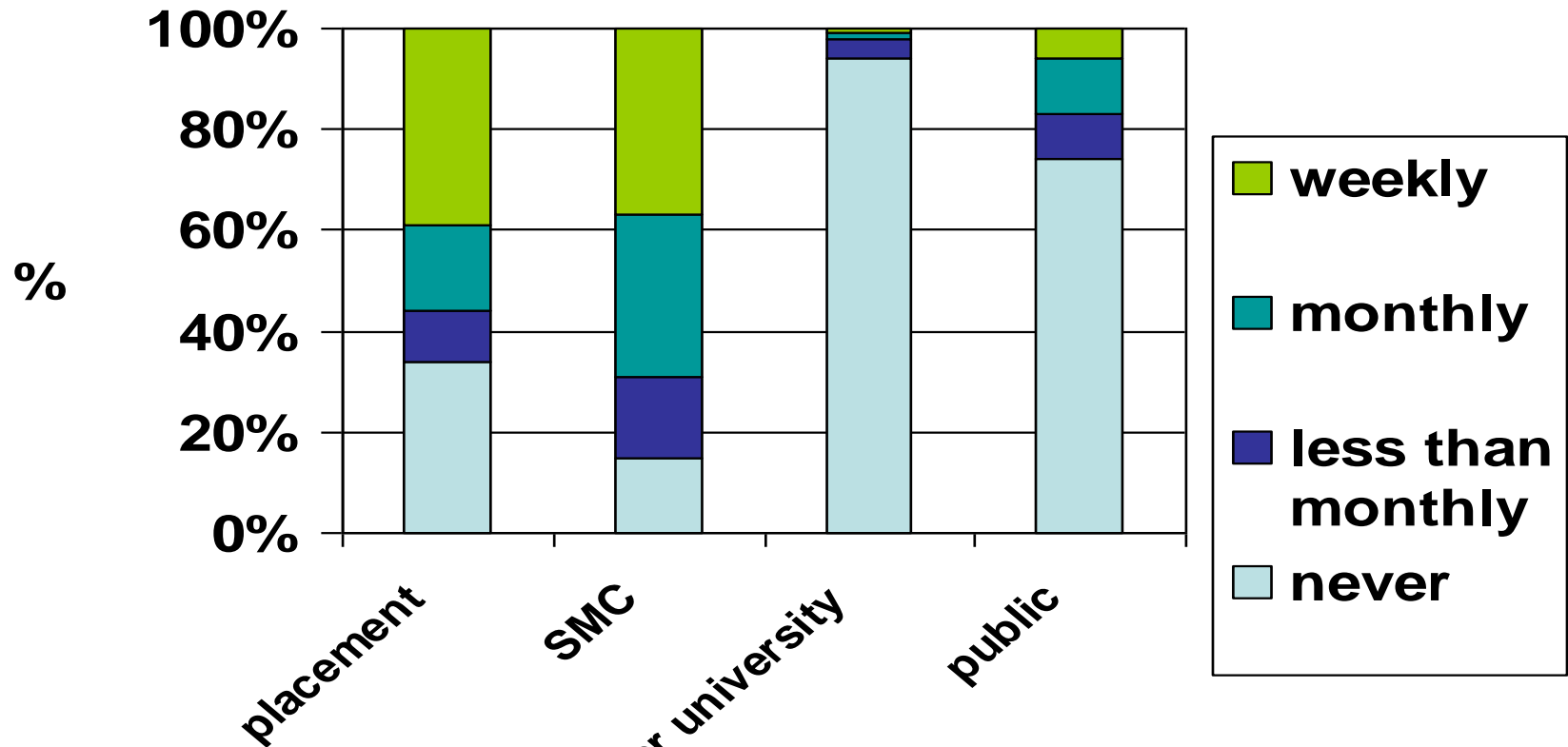
Availability of learning resources by venue



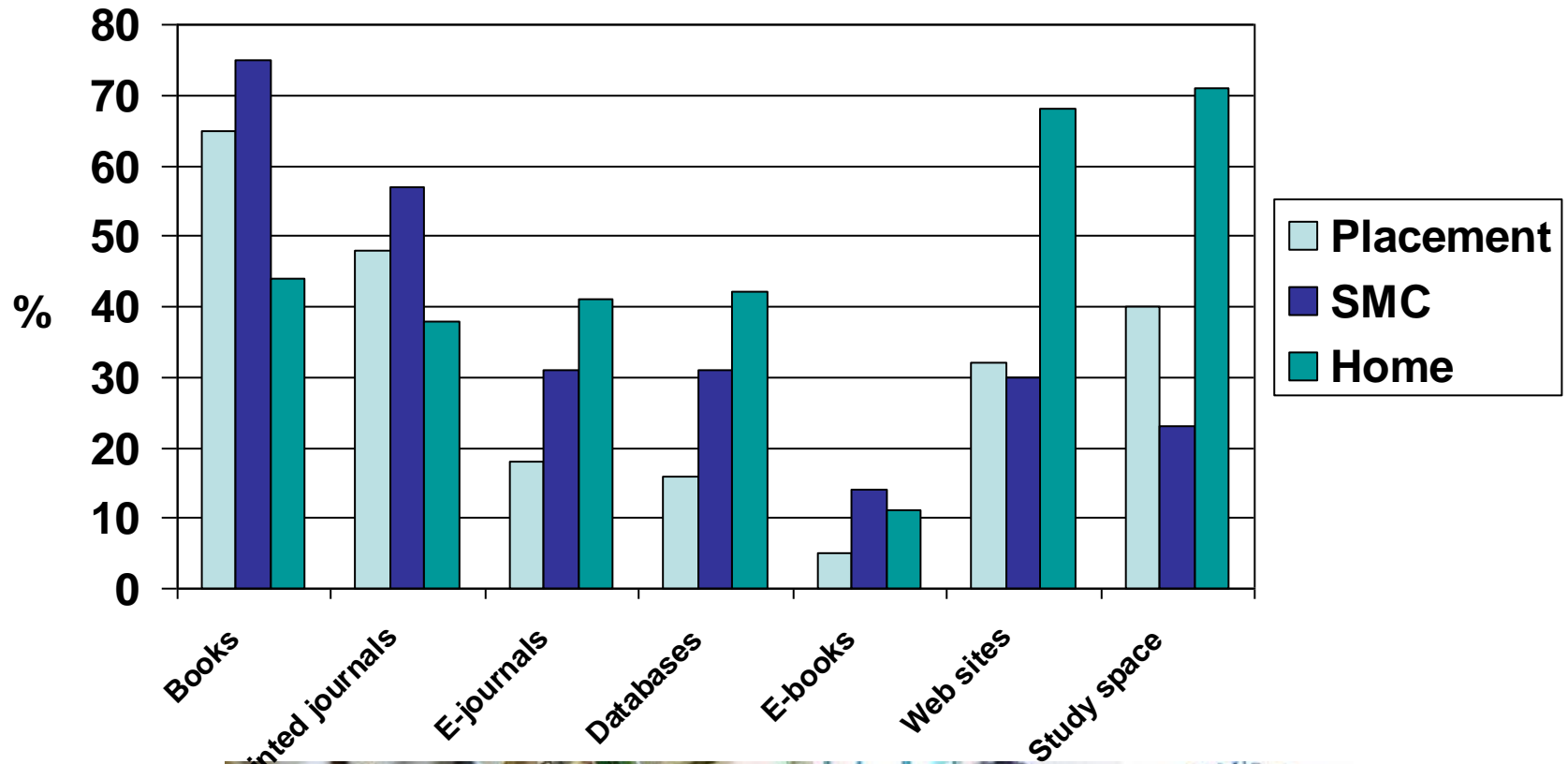
Difficulties accessing learning resources



Use of libraries



Use of specific resources



Other findings

- 82% - internet access at home
- Little awareness of NHS e-resources
- 65% - never accessed their College e-mail account
- Most students asked clinical staff for help in using learning resources



Recommended Actions - 1

- Consultation between the Faculty and the library on placement audits
- Briefing sessions with the students
- Leaflet, web page, VLE module
- Information fluency training
- Feedback from the Faculty
- Exchange of information with mentors and NHS library staff



Recommended Actions - 2

- Publicise extended loans
- Pilot postal loans
- Pilot borrowing access for NHS mentors
- Investigate longer College library opening hours
- Extend methodology to other groups of placement students



- Full text of the SMARTAL report is available at

www.ucsm.ac.uk/library

- MEHMailer@ucsm.ac.uk
- Look out for the next issue of the *Health Information and Libraries Journal*

