

Health Information Rx: Reference Tools for Health Questions



Health Information RX: Reference Tools for Health Questions

- Bill and Melinda Gates Supported Grant
- Administered by LDS
- Health Resources component delivered by Health Science Libraries of Minnesota (<http://www.hslm.org>)
- Topics to be covered:

Consumer Health Resources, MedlinePlus, Text Resources, PubMed, Referrals



Objectives

- Introduce you to authoritative health and medical websites and electronic databases and supplemental resources
- Enable you to develop strategies for effective and efficient use of these resources
- Provide you with helpful guides and other resources
- Enable you to enhance your ability to respond to health-related questions and make appropriate referrals



Today's Agenda

- Consumer Health Resources
- Break
- MedlinePlus
- Text Resources
- Lunch
- PubMed
- Referrals
- Break
- Hands-on/ Q&A/Practice time



Consumer Health



Two Definitions

- Patient education: Specific to an individual's medical situation, provided by health care workers
- Consumer health information: General information that describes diseases, procedures, and preventive health care, can be provided by librarians



Value of Consumer Health Information

- Informed patients make better patients
- Information is a right



Why Contact a Library?

- Doctor as an authority figure
- Second opinion wanted
- Providers have less time to answer questions
- Overwhelmed by information
- Want to take information to provider
- Assuming more responsibility for health



“Cyberchondriacs”

According to a 2002 article in the Journal of the Medical Library Association, more than 100 million Americans have gone online at least once to search for health information. The article also used the word “cyberchondriac” to describe some health Internet searchers.



Librarians and Liability

- Librarians have not (yet) been sued for malpractice.
 - Some suggest that we simply do not make enough money to get sued!
- Do not interpret medical information or give medical advice.



“We must communicate that we are librarians, not health professionals, that we are providing information, not advice.”

- Allen, LS. “Legal and ethical considerations in providing health information” In: Rees, AM, ed. Developing consumer health information services. 1982: 43.



Guidelines

- Have a complete and up-to-date reference collection
- Conduct a proper reference interview
- Give information, not advice
- Do not practice medicine by claiming or implying medical knowledge
- Use a disclaimer



- Refer specific questions back to health care professionals, especially those that require interpretation
- Respect the patron's privacy
- Be objective and non-judgmental



Sample Disclaimer

“This information is provided by *** Library and is for informational purposes only. It should not be construed as medical advice or instruction. Please consult your health care professional for advice relating to a medical problem or condition.”



Reference Interview

- Reference and User Services Association has guidelines on appropriate behavior
- Importance of appropriate behavior amplified in the area of consumer health
- Vital for both humane as well as legal reasons



Reference Interview Don'ts

- Don't give advice (“if I were you...”)
- Don't tell personal stories (“my uncle had those symptoms and he had cancer...”)
- Don't interpret complicated medical terms (“what they really mean is...”)
- Don't edit information so as to avoid a scene (“it's not that bad...”)



These seem like obvious blunders to make at the reference desk, but it is really easy to catch yourself falling into the trap of relating a story. We all have stories about a medical oddity, a miraculous cure, or a devastating diagnosis. This is neither the time nor the place for telling them.



Concepts for Success

- Confidentiality--a necessity
- Non-judgmental kindness--you are talking to a person who is suffering
- Listen--this can be cathartic for the patron and help guide your search
- Spelling--hypothyroidism vs. hyperthyroidism



To Do:

- Verify spelling/correct terminology
- Look for literacy-appropriate books and articles on the topic
- Demonstrate the use of directories of healthcare professionals
- Offer to get further assistance



- Assist with finding appropriate community resources
- Always cite your source
- Provide a disclaimer that this is information, not advice, and that it is in no way to be construed as medical advice



Health Literacy

- 2003 Institute of Medicine Report *Priority Areas for National Action: Transforming Health Care Quality*
 - Health literacy should be one of top 20 priorities for improvement in health care
 - Other notable priorities included cancer screening, management of obesity, and smoking cessation



Definition

Health literacy is “the ability to read and comprehend prescription bottles, appointment slips, and other essential health-related materials required to successfully function as a patient”

- Gazmarian JA, Peel MV, and Baker DW (2003).
Health literacy and knowledge of chronic disease.
Patient Education and Counseling, 51(3), 267-75.



Points to Ponder

- Many people who are literate may not also be health literate
- Health literacy requires
 - ability to obtain and synthesize information from multiple sources
 - chart and graph interpretation
 - perform of basic mathematical skills



What Does the Research Say?

- People with low health literacy tend to have the poorest health
- This is independent of socioeconomic factors
- Low health literate individuals have higher expenditures
 - longer hospital stays
 - more visits to the healthcare provider



What Can You Do?

- Be aware that this can be a difficulty
- Establishing that the patron has low health literacy is vital
- Know where low health literacy resources are available
 - Many emphasize pictures or pictographs
 - Many professional associations distribute these



- Refer the patron back to his or her healthcare provider for clarification
 - Providers are working to create better ways of informing their patients with low literacy
- Listen patiently
- Repeat yourself
- Check for comprehension



Ehealth Quality Assurance for Consumers

The next portion of this presentation is taken from: Stahl L and Spatz M (2003). Quality assurance in Ehealth for consumers. *Journal of Consumer Health on the Internet* 7(1), 33-42.



Ehealth Quality Assurance

According to a 2002 Harris Poll, 110 million people had used the Internet to access health information, double the rate of users in 1998.

- Is the information they find high in quality and trustworthy?
- Where can they find credible, understandable information?



Basic Criteria

- Accurate--should be up-to-date and referenced
- Clear--should be simply stated
- Relevant--must be written with the consumer in mind; look for information that is important and addresses the concerns of the consumer



Guiding Principles for Ehealth

- Ownership of the website
- Purpose
- Comprehensiveness/Consumer orientation
- Origin of information on the web site



- Who selects the information?
- How current is the information?
- Web site design and functionality
- Privacy issues
- Language and cultural sensitivity




Domain Extensions

- Extensions on domains provide some information about who owns the site
- e.g., .gov, .org, .edu, .mil, .net, .com
- Generally, .gov, .org, and .edu will provide reliable information
- Other domain extensions may also provide quality information--just look more critically



Accreditation Programs

- URAC 
 - <http://webapps.urac.org/websiteaccreditation/porta/Consumer/Standards.asp>
 - Set of 50+ standards
- HONCode 
 - www.hon.ch
 - Internet health information is evaluated against a set of criteria, should be able to check status



Good Sites (longer list included in handouts)

- <http://www.mayoclinic.com>
- <http://www.medlineplus.gov>
- <http://www.healthweb.org>
- <http://www.cdc.gov>
- <http://www.cancer.gov>
- <http://www.kidshealth.org>
- <http://www.nih.gov>



Other Languages

- More health information written in other languages
- <http://nnlm.gov/train/chi/multi.html>
- <http://medstat.med.utah.edu/library/refdesk/24lang.html>
- <http://medlineplus.gov/spanish>



Bad Sites

- <http://www.medical-library.org/index.htm>
 - Looks authentic
 - none of the authors, journals indexed in MEDLINE
- <http://www.wemarket4u.net/nordicalite/index.html>
- <http://www.all-natural.com/>



Search Engines

- Look for quality sites, based on criteria previously listed
- Advanced options often allow for limiting by domain extension
- Metasearch engines
 - www.vivisimo.com
 - www.dogpile.com
 - www.metacrawler.com



Electronic Library for Minnesota

- ELM resources familiar to public librarians
- Health Reference Center Academic
 - more traditional database feel
- Health and Wellness Resource Center
 - database with “website” format
- General databases may be useful
- Your library director can provide more info



MedlinePlus



MedlinePlus®

Trusted Health Information for You

Search MedlinePlus



MedlinePlus Exercises

- Using the Health Topics, find information on back pain. Explore the resources, then link to the MEDLINE search to explore the results.
- Using the Health Topics, find information on dizziness and vertigo. Is there information specific to children? Seniors? What is the primary NIH organization for research in this area?



MedlinePlus Exercises, cont.

- Using the Search Box, find information on ear infections. Where do the results come from (health topics, drug information, etc.)?
- Find information about Zyban (a drug). What are some other name brands? Why is this drug prescribed? Are there side effects?
- Using the directories, locate a hospital in your city/town or elsewhere in Minnesota.



MedlinePlus Exercises, cont.

- From the homepage, find some easy-to-read resources about AIDS.
- Explore one of the interactive tutorials, either from the homepage or a Health Topics page.
- Using the Other Resources link, find a library in your area or elsewhere in Minnesota that provides consumer health services.
- Explore a topic of personal interest, using several features of the site.



Text Resources

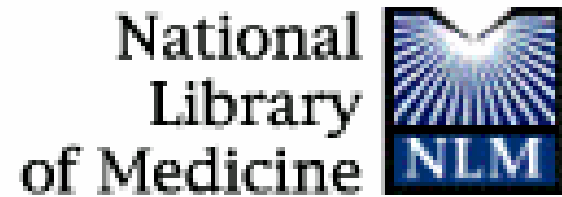


Print and Online Text Resources

- Resources for Selection
 - [Brandon/Hill](#): Professional
 - [CAPHIS](#): Consumer
- Health Information in the News
- Free Online Books
 - MedlinePlus
 - [PubMed Bookshelf](#): Professional and Clinical
 - [FreeBooks₄Doctors!](#): Professional and Clinical



PubMed



PubMed Exercises

- Use real news releases to find an article from a specific journal (any current example can be used).
- Is it true that fruits and vegetables can be just as important as calcium for healthy bone growth in young girls?
- American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, February 2004



PubMed Exercises, cont.

- A child has peanut allergies. Consumer health information has been adequate but what is needed now is more detailed information. What kind of information is there beyond basic consumer health information?
- Complications of tongue piercing
- Lyme disease and bell's palsy (MeSH bell palsy)



PubMed Exercises, cont.

- Search correct journal. I heard about an article on obesity in the news. I think it was in New England Association of Medicine.
- What is the latest information about hormone replacement therapy and heart disease?
- Is there a connection between childhood car injuries and air bags?
- Find this title: Baby walker related injuries-a continuing problem. Find related articles.
- Search wisdom tooth pain. Where to you display how the term was mapped?



Referrals



Referrals – When & Where?

- When to make referrals?
- If you do not have the resources or expertise needed
- Instead of saying “I can’t help you,” find someone or some group who might help.



Where to Refer?

- Health & social services organizations & agencies
- Other libraries & librarians
- Patron's health care provider



Health & Social Services Groups

- Local
- State
- National



Local Agencies/Organizations

- First Call for Help
 - Publication
 - Call 211
- Senior LinkAge Line
 - <http://www.tcaging.org/senior.htm>
 - 1-800-677-1116
- Local department of health (city/county)



State Agencies and Organizations

- MN Department of Health
- MN Board of Medical Practice
- MN chapters of national non-profits



National Agencies/Organizations

- [MedlinePlus](#)
- [HealthWeb](#)
- [Mayo Clinic](#) website
- [Health Hotlines](#)



Other Libraries / Librarians

- Regional public library “reference nodes”
- Minitex Reference Services
- See “[MORE: Minnesota Opportunities for Reference Excellence](#)” for Medical Question Worksheet



Other Libraries / Librarians

- Local hospital library
 - If patron is patient there, or
 - If library is open to the public, or
 - If you have checked with hospital librarian
- Local public college
 - If they have a health science program



Other Libraries / Librarians

- U of MN Duluth Library (UMD)
- UMD supports Medical School and College of Pharmacy programs



Other Libraries / Librarians

- U of M Bio-Medical Library
(Minneapolis)
- In person
- Phone (612-626-3260)
- Fee-based service ([Biomedical Information Service](#))



Health Care Provider

- Refer patron to their physician, nurse practitioner, etc.
- Health insurance “hot lines”
- Example: [Blue Cross/Blue Shield](#)



Concluding Remarks

- Thank you for attending today!
- We hope that we've met the objectives of today's session
- You have a packet of information to take away with you, and today's presentation will be on HSLM's website (<http://www.hslm.org>)
- We have time now for questions and discussion of health information questions you face in your own libraries



Hands-On and Questions

