

Current literature

Sue Childs, Editor

sue.childs@unn.ac.uk

An annotated bibliography of books and articles relevant to the study and use of the Internet in the healthcare environment.

David J Owen. *Internet guide to herbal remedies*. Haworth Information Press, 2006, 120pp

Hard cover: ISBN-13: 978-0-7890-2230-1/
ISBN-10: 0-7890-2230-3. Price \$24.95

Soft cover: ISBN-13: 978-0-7890-2231-8/
ISBN-10: 0-7890-2231-1. Price \$9.95
<www.haworthpress.com/store/product.asp?sku=5855>

The book is aimed at the consumer. However, it would also provide a good starting point for the clinician interested in herbal remedies. The author is well qualified to cover this topic, working at the University of California, San Francisco as both an Education Co-ordinator in the Library and an Assistant Clinical Professor in the School of Pharmacy. The book chapters include:

- *Herbal information on the Internet – how to evaluate the quality of Web sites and examples of good quality sites for herbal remedies;*
- *Searching the medical literature – examples of databases of research literature on herbal remedies;*
- *Herbal safety and efficacy – sites that discuss herbal side effects and herbs/drug interactions;*
- *Diseases and conditions – sites that provide information on herbal remedies for common conditions;*
- *Herbal information for specific populations – sites that provide information on herbal remedies for women, children and elderly people;*
- *Herbs for pets;*
- *The bottom line – warnings of what to do or not do.*

Health information literacy and competencies of information age students: results from the interactive online Research Readiness Self-Assessment (RRSA). Ivanitskaya L et al. *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 2006; 8(2).

<www.jmir.org/2006/2/e6/>

This study surveyed 308 students from a US College of Health Sciences (a response rate of 77%). They

completed an interactive 56-item online assessment tool, the Research Readiness Self-Assessment (RRSA), which was used to evaluate their health information competencies. The authors concluded that: 'While the majority of students think that their research skills are good or excellent, many of them are unable to conduct advanced information searches, judge the trustworthiness of health-related websites and articles, and differentiate between various information sources. Students' self-reports may not be an accurate predictor of their actual health information competencies.'

GeneTests: an online genetic information resource for health care providers. Pagon RA. *Journal of the Medical Library Association* 2006; 94(3):np.

<www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/tocrender.fcgi?journal=93&action=archive>

The article describes GeneTests, an online genetic testing information resource <www.genetests.org> comprising: a genetic testing laboratory directory; a genetics clinics' directory; an illustrated glossary of genetic testing terms; GeneReviews, expert-authored summaries of information about disease diagnosis and management, genetic testing and counselling, and genetic pathogenesis. Though it is a US resource, supported by a contract from the National Institutes of Health, information from other countries is also included. The article concentrates on the GeneReviews component of the site. It describes how GeneReviews came about, how reviews are currently produced, and how they are used.

Who's using PDAs? Estimates of PDA use by health care providers: a systematic review of surveys. Garrity C et al. *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 2006; 8(2).

<www.jmir.org/2006/2/e7/>

This article reports the results of a systematic literature review of personal digital assistant (PDA) usage

surveys in the healthcare field. Eight biomedical sciences and engineering databases were searched resulting in 23 relevant surveys, 15 of which were from peer-reviewed journals. These surveys were published between 2000 and 2005. The authors conclude that: 'Overall, since 1999, there is clear evidence of an increasing trend in PDA use. The current overall adoption rate for individual professional use ranges between 45% and 85%, indicating high but somewhat variable adoption, primarily among physicians ... Younger physicians and residents and those working in large and hospital-based practices are more likely to use a PDA ... However, there is an urgent need to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of specific tasks using handheld technology to inform those developing and those using PDA applications.'

Automated Web issue analysis: a nurse prescribing case study. Thelwall M et al. *Information Processing & Management* 2006; 42(6): 1471-1483

This article describes the technique of Web issue analysis, 'a new automated technique designed to rapidly give timely management intelligence about a topic from an automated large-scale analysis of relevant pages from the Web'. The technique is demonstrated by undertaking a case study of nurse prescribing in the UK. The process comprised: obtaining results from Google for the phrase 'nurse prescribing'; calculating URL distribution statistics; obtaining the relevant Web pages; calculating the external link statistics; obtaining the text from the pages; extracting nouns and noun phrases. The authors concluded that: 'The nurse prescribing results demonstrate interesting new findings, such as the parochial nature of the topic in the UK, an apparent absence of similar concepts internationally, at least in the English-speaking world, and a significant concern with mental health issues.'