

Websites for the Family Physician

By Dr Matthew Ng



Like it or not, the Internet has become part of our lives and it is changing the way we practice Medicine. How many times have we come across patients who come with an article and say "Doc, do you think I have this disease?" or after the consultation, say "Doc, I think you are right. I was reading this article on the Net last night and it said the things you've just said".

As present-day practitioners, we should be able to direct our patients to reputable sites so they can get reliable information. Surfing the Net is also a wonderful way of getting updated on current medical information and continual professional development.

For practical reasons, all organisations and associations in America have websites, but not all of them are free. There is no harm going to these sites and taking a look; you never know what you may find. For local sites you may wish to visit the SMA site. <http://www.sma.org.sg>, where full-text SMJ articles and ethics and practice articles can be found. The College of Family Physician website is also worth a visit. The entire Family Medicine Training Module (<http://www.cfps.org.sg/fmtp/syllabus.html>) will be available soon. You will also be getting CME Accreditation online this year.

Here are some of my favourite websites outside Singapore.



1. American Family Physician

<http://www.aafp.org>

This is the website of the American Academy of Family Physician. You can access the online American Family Physician journal on this site. The online journal is up a week even before our American counterparts receive their printed version in the mail and before we receive ours 6 to 8 weeks later.

For the Business aspect of Family

Practice, you can access the sister journal Family Practice Management on the same website. Those of you who are more academically inclined may like to try your hand on the online interactive clinical cases. The last time I checked in on the site, there are three cases online. Take a look at the cardiac case. It is so good you can even hear the simulated murmurs online.

There is online shopping as well. You may purchase CME, patient educational materials, T-shirts and caps at the online store. Those of you with Internet access in the clinic can obtain patient education materials and print them for your patients from the site. Alternatively, you may obtain such materials from <http://www.familydoctor.org>.



2. Postgraduate Medicine Journal

<http://www.postgradmed.com>

This is the online version of the peer review journal published by McGraw Hill. Why not take a look at the latest issue on Hyperlipidaemia? You can also search the site for past articles. The site also links you to two other journals published by the same company: Hospital Practice and Sports Medicine.



3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov>

This site contains health information, information on infectious diseases and a listing of diseases from A-Z. Zoom in on the latest update on infectious diseases in the weekly mortality and morbidity reports. Look at the hepatitis information on the site. You can download some useful slides, which you can use to explain the disease to your patients.

Those of you who are involved in Statutory Medical Examination and have

factories under your care may like to take a look at the National Institute of Occupational and Safety Health linked to the site. Alternatively you can access it by going to the URL: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh>.



4. British Medical Journal

<http://www.bmj.com>

This popular journal is updated very Friday. You can access the current and past articles online. There is a search engine available to search the databases. If you like the BMJ ABC series, you can view them online. The current series is on Liver and Gallbladder disease.



5. U.S. National Library of Medicine

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov>

For those who like to do research, you can view abstracts right in your home and do not have to go to the library by accessing Medline.



6. Doctor's Guide

<http://www.docguide.com>

This site provides a summary of the latest Medical News. You can listen to lectures on webcasts and look at interesting cases online presented by various Universities in America. Interestingly, some webcasts have links to articles from the College of Family Physician FMTP modules. You can also gain access to some online lectures that are pay-per-view.



7. National Institute of Health

<http://www.nih.gov>

This site has a wealth of health information. Look up the information presented by each of the individual associations that made up

the Institute. You can find everything from insomnia to diabetic foot care. Guidelines such as the Expert Panel 2 guidelines for the treatment of Asthma, JNC VI and treatment of Obesity can be found at the National Heart, Blood and Lung Institute.



8. National Medical Library
<http://www.medical-library.org>

This site is not free, but for a mere US\$9.95, you can gain access to diverse resources of medical information. You can download medical articles and textbooks online. These books can be obtained in CD-ROM from the online store Medsite but this will set you back by US\$30 per disc. For those of you

who carry palm top PCs, you can down-load the books in Windows CE version.



9. National Guideline Clearing House
<http://www.guidelines.gov>

This was formerly the Agency for Healthcare and Research. For those of you who cannot live without guidelines, this is the site for you. It provides a summary of all guidelines available in U.S. with links to the original guidelines.



10. Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
<http://www.stfm.org>

Those of you involved in teaching medical students in your clinic may like to take a look at some of the articles in the Office-based Teacher. Very good tips on effective teaching methods can be found here.

The Internet has brought on a revolution which all of us cannot deny and refrain from getting on it. For those of you who are already happily surfing, kudos to you. ■

Editor's Note:

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