

Nursing patient guide to the internet



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Nursing / patient guide to the internet

Web sites Running Head: Web sites Vera and integrity of web sites consulted for health care information “ A mixed blessing of the Web is that anyone with a computer and a modem can have a Web page and post whatever information he or she wants” (Navigating for Health: Finding Accurate Information on the Internet) It is difficult for a layman to verify the authenticity of a web site. For each topic there are hundreds of web sites and among them only few will be the useful ones. This paper intended to help ordinary people in analyzing web sites for its validity and reliability.

Introduction

“ According to a recent poll conducted by Harris Interactive, about 98 million American adults use the Internet to find health-related information. That number has grown from 54 million in 1998 and continues to increase” (Navigating for Health: Finding Accurate Information on the Internet) The World Wide Web (WWW) helps us to find information from all over the world, with a finger click. Most of the information is anonymous and hence it is necessary to verify it before using it. Books and journal information are written by scholars and hence we can depend, such knowledge up to certain extent. But we don't have much idea about the providers of web site information and hence such information should be used after careful evaluation.

Guidelines for the evaluation of web site information regarding health care

1. “ Be reasonable. Don't believe everything you read. Maintain a healthy skepticism
2. Be cautious of anecdotes. One individual's personal story and word-of-

mouth reporting does not qualify as scientific evidence

3. Look at the source of the information. Professional organizations such as The American Dietetic Association or the U. S. Food and Drug Administration are more likely to have credible, reliable information than an unknown person or group of people or a single issue site

4. Check the dates. As they say, " old news is no news." Make sure the information is up-to-date

5. Check it out. Discuss Internet nutrition and health advice with your doctor, a registered dietitian or other health professional to be sure it is accurate and appropriate for your needs" (Navigating for Health: Finding Accurate Information on the Internet)

Apart from the guidelines mentioned above, information regarding the authorship, publishing body, point of view or bias, accuracy of the content, knowledge of the literature, etc are also should be analyzed by the user of such information.

Consider a person who was suffering from anxiety disorders and looking for some solutions from the net. Since he wanted to keep his problems as a secret, he was not interested in approaching a doctor. At the same time he was badly in need of some remedies also.

The above patient can consider looking at the information provided in the web site <http://www.adaa.org/AboutADAA/25YearsHistory/HighlightofPast.asp>. This site is sponsored by the anxiety disorder association of America. It provides accurate information regarding authorship, publishing body (anxiety disorder association of America) etc. The content seems to be accurate and also the knowledge level regarding the anxiety disorder looks very good.

Since the creator of this site is a professional organization it can be

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dependable. They are not asking any money from you for the advices and moreover they have provided an option for the patients to get solution for their problems. This site is certified by the independent charities of America and has the entire basic requirement for a trusted site.

Now consider another site <http://www.panic-anxiety.com/anxiety-symptoms/> This web site has included some testimonials from qualified doctors. Though this site provides information regarding the creators of the site and copy right information, it looks like a scam since it asks you money for their services. We cannot guarantee their services unless we have enough evidences from patients who used their services directly. As there are lot of such business sites, entrusting of this site may not be advisable.

Conclusion

Internet is filled with thousands of web sites out of which only few are reliable. Selection of the reliable source is the most difficult thing. The users of such site should analyze as much as information regarding the site before using its services.

References

1. Navigating for Health: Finding Accurate Information on the Internet,

Retrieved on

February 1, 2009