

## ON THE NET

## A cornucopia of medical images on the Net

Two months ago you were asked to give a lecture on the immune system. No problem, you say. There's lots of time to find some snappy slides for your presentation.

Two months pass, it's the morning of event and now you've got 2 hours to pull together some imagery that will keep that first-year medical class interested and informed. Naturally, you turn to the Net for help. And fortunately, lots of online repositories of medical imagery and media are freely available. In many the quality of the images is poor, but a few sites are worth bookmarking.

The best is probably the Health on the Net (HON) Foundation's Medical Media Library ([www.hon.ch/HONmedia/](http://www.hon.ch/HONmedia/)). HON, based in Geneva, grew out of a 1995 conference on telemedicine. It has since developed a number of Internet initiatives involving health care, including this impressive online media database.

HONmedia contains more than 1950 medical images and videos covering 1200 themes and topics. Subjects range from anatomy to psychiatry, and this site



isn't above injecting a bit of humour into its imagery, as shown by the short video *Human macrophage ingesting candida albicans*. The sound effects alone are worth the downloading effort.

Another place to turn is the University of California's Medical Imaging Library ([www-sci.lib.uci.edu/HSG/MedicalImage.html](http://www-sci.lib.uci.edu/HSG/MedicalImage.html)). This is a large database of teaching materials. It is not well organized but it does contain thousands of multimedia images and more than 700 health-science movies.

If you want to spend a few bucks, several professional graphics houses sell quality images on the Net; Blausen Medical Communications ([www.imagesofhealth](http://www.imagesofhealth.com)

[www.migroup.co.uk/m.i.g](http://www.migroup.co.uk/m.i.g)) and the Medical Illustration Group ([www.migroup.co.uk/m.i.g](http://www.migroup.co.uk/m.i.g)) are just 2 examples. A search in any search engine will turn up hundreds of results. You can also visit Yahoo's medical imagery directory ([dir.yahoo.com/Health/Medicine/Medical\\_Imaging/](http://dir.yahoo.com/Health/Medicine/Medical_Imaging/)).

Finally, if you are just looking for some generic medical graphics to spruce things up, try the collection of sites at Web Clip Art ([webclipart.about.com/internet/webclipart/msu\\_b35aa.htm](http://webclipart.about.com/internet/webclipart/msu_b35aa.htm)). Most of these items are freely available, although some come with restrictions. As always, read the copyright information carefully. — Michael O'Reilly, mike@oreilly.net

## Participation "pathetic" in hospital-based energy-saving program

Despite the potential to save lots of money, less than 3% of Canadian health care facilities are participating in a program designed to cut their energy costs. The Energy Innovators Project, sponsored by the Canadian College of Health Service Executives ([www.cchse.org](http://www.cchse.org)) and Natural Resources Canada ([http.nrcan.gc.ca](http://http.nrcan.gc.ca)), offers conservation workshops, technical advice, organizational support and more.

Coordinator Kent Waddington, who calls the participation rate "pathetic," says energy conservation is a hard sell in hospitals because money is tight and conservation may require a cash investment. "A new boiler doesn't improve patient outcomes," he adds.

A few years ago, the project's 89 members were saving 8% on their an-

nual energy bills, or \$12 million a year on total bills of \$145 million. The project now includes 93 health care institutions ranging from small seniors' residences to major acute care hospitals; there are 3500 potential members.

The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto is now saving \$246 000 annually simply by training staff to switch off lights when they leave rooms and to shut off computers at night. "It cost nothing to do but it saved lots," says Waddington. "That money could be used to hire 3.3 nurses."

Energy innovations are also resulting in annual savings of \$1.6 million at University of Alberta Hospitals in Edmonton, \$683 000 at British Columbia's Royal Inland Hospital and \$180 000 in Saskatchewan's South East Health Dis-

trict. Waddington says energy savings of between 10% and 20% can often be achieved simply through better operating and maintenance practices, improved training and in-house awareness campaigns. Canadian hospitals are major energy users because they operate around the clock and provide such a broad range of services; their annual energy bill is estimated at \$1 billion.

Since 1970, the innovators project has attracted more than 900 members across Canada, including Sears, Tim Hortons, Ikea, John Labatt Ltd. and the Canadian Association of Municipalities. "Health care is lagging behind," says Waddington.

For information, phone 800 363-9056 x36, or email [kwaddington@cchse.org](mailto:kwaddington@cchse.org). — Barbara Sibbald, CMAJ