

ON THE NET

An online gold mine for medical students

My entry into medical school coincided with the Web's entry into the popular culture. Indeed, prior to 1995 the Internet was the domain of academics and enthusiasts. Universities varied in their online offerings, although determined searching would turn up something somewhere in the world, whether at the NIH or in Argentina. Hand-held computers, of course, were still at the "fancy Filofax" stage of evolution.

Fast forward 6 years. Every university now has a homegrown set of educational resources and links. Medical journals can be searched at portals like PubMed (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/) and

the CMA's own Osler site (www.cma.ca/osler), and accessed online. A number, including *CMAJ* (www.cma.ca/cmaj), have removed all access restrictions (www.freemedicaljournals.com).

A variety of medical textbooks are also accessible online, as listed at Student Bookworld (www.studentbookworld.com/info/free/medical.htm) and MedicalStudent.com (www.medicalstudent.com). The *British Medical Journal's* collected resources (www.bmj.com/collections) include textbooks on the basics of statistics, epidemiology and reading the literature.

Meanwhile, some dedicated souls have constructed impressive sites on their own. The one created by Dr. Ed Friedlander (The PathGuy, www.pathguy.com) contains pathology tutorials — including the approach to the unknown slide — definitions of medical vocabulary and summaries of general and systematic pathology for exam preparation.

The Canadian Federation of Medical Students Web site (www.cfms.org) offers members access to details about CFMS billeting, a catalogue of national and international elective opportunities, discount airfares and CFMS awards. A page of links leads to

sites for Canadian universities, medical societies, more online journals and textbooks and, of course, residency information. More informally, the Med-1 Survival Guide from McGill University, one of several online guides produced by McGill, presents the insider's view (www.med.mcgill.ca/~mss/guides/med1_guidebook/index.htm).

No listing of survival tools would be complete without mention of hand-held computers. Such indispensable items as Harrison's Internal Medicine companion handbook, The Red Book, and the Intern Pocket Survival Guides are all available in electronic form (www.heldmed.com). — Alison Sinclair, CMAJ



MD welcomed back

After being suspended from practice for a year because of an affair with a patient (see *CMAJ* 2000;163[7]:876), Dr. William Hunter Blair is once again treating patients in Barrington Passage, NS. The community responded to his return to work with a party in the parking lot of his clinic.

Blair, 61, said the party provided a rare chance to connect with patients. "In medicine you don't often get an opportunity to find out how your clientele feel about you."

He said many of his patients told him they had awaited his return and did not see another doctor during his suspension. Residents had shown strong support for Blair, 1 of 3 physicians in Barrington Passage, since the Nova Scotia college found him guilty of professional misconduct for having a consensual sexual relationship with a patient he had treated for bipolar disorder.

Residents protested the decision and presented the college with a 4000-signature petition, but Registrar Cameron Little refused to budge: "You can't have one person slapped on the wrist when for the same thing someone else's licence is removed," he said. — Donalee Moulton, Halifax

NB physician recruiter off to Ontario

The physician responsible for recruiting doctors for a large portion of New Brunswick has himself been recruited — by an Ontario hospital.

The irony is not lost on Dr. Bob Beveridge, the former vice-president of health informatics and medical administration for the Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation (AHSC) in Saint John. He moved to Brockville, Ont., this summer. "Some will interpret this [to mean] the system is in danger," he admits, but "it's not intended at all to be a reflection of that."

He says he moved to Ontario so he can practise as a general internist and spend more time with his wife and 4 children. Free time was a luxury at the AHSC, which comprises 12 hospitals and health centres in southwestern New Brunswick. "I got myself into a situation where there was a seemingly endless number of meetings," he says. "I felt I lost all balance."

Convincing doctors to come and to stay in New Brunswick has been a difficult job in recent years, although the province has taken several steps to solve the problem, including buying 10 additional medical school places at Memorial University in Newfoundland. Beveridge says the physician-retention problem has been due, in part, to ongoing disputes with the provincial government. "There have been some very serious problems with regard to trust. There are times when the government has been very confrontational." — Donalee Moulton, Halifax