

Consumer health information

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MedlinePlus

In September 2007, the National Library of Medicine released the “What’s New on MedlinePlus” Web page (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/whatsnew.html>). It will keep you current on new MedlinePlus topics, podcasts, featured sites, and new issues of the *NIH MedlinePlus Magazine*. The “What’s New” items will display for 3 weeks and are also available through an RSS feed. This page and RSS feed complement the already-available MedlinePlus Health News RSS, which delivers press announcements and HealthDay news stories. Access the What’s New on MedlinePlus RSS and the MedlinePlus Health News RSS from the E-mail Lists and RSS Feeds page at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/listserv.html>.

Consumer and Patient Health Information Section (CAPHIS)

CAPHIS recently launched a redesign of their Web site at www.caphis.mlanet.org. There isn’t a significant amount of new content yet, but stay tuned. The 1990–1999 back issues of the CAPHIS newsletter *Consumer Connections* are available now, and issues from 2001–2007 will be available in January 2008.

Health literacy

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

The US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has developed a free online course titled “Unified Health Communication 101: Addressing Health Literacy, Cultural Competency, and Limited English Proficiency”. This interactive training course is designed to improve interaction between health care providers and their patients. It “aims to raise the quality of provider–patient interactions by teaching providers and their staff how to gauge and respond to their patients’ health literacy, cultural background, and language skills.”

The course’s five modules take 4–5 hours to complete. Modules 1 through 4 provide an introduction to health communication, health literacy, cultural competency, and limited English proficiency. In Module 5, participants can apply information learned in previous modules (<http://www.hrsa.gov/healthliteracy/training.htm>). (Press release available at <http://newsroom.hrsa.gov/NewsBriefs/2007/HealthLiteracy.htm>.)

Medical Library Association (MLA)

There are currently six “deciphering Medspeak” topics available: breast cancer, stroke, diabetes, eye disease, HIV/AIDS, and heart disease (<http://www.mlanet.org/resources/medspeak/index.html>).

Multilanguage health sites

S*P*I*R*A*L (Selected Patient Information Resources in Asian Languages) is a joint initiative of the South Cove Community Health Center and Tufts University Hirsh Health Sciences Library. Information is listed by language on about 30 topics.

Notable new publications and Web sites

While not new, MLA has a very useful page of Resources for Health Consumers that they update. See http://www.mlanet.org/resources/consumr_index.html.

Jacobson P. Empowering the physician–patient relationship: the effect of the Internet. *Partnership: the Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research*. 2007;2(1). Available from <http://journal.lib.uoguelph.ca/index.php/perj/article/view/244/374>.

Books

Torkos S. *The Canadian encyclopedia of natural medicine*. Mississauga, Ont.: John Wiley & Sons Canada Ltd., 2008. CAN\$29.99. ISBN 978-0-470-83908-9.

This is a household reference for natural medicine with information specifically for Canadians. The bulk of the book is devoted to a listing of common health conditions with natural prescription and lifestyle suggestions. It also includes detailed information on dietary supplements; tips on safe supplementing, including potential drug and herbal interactions; tips for a healthy diet; and sleep and stress management tips. The author is a pharmacist, author of 10 books, and certified fitness instructor.

Roter DL, Hall JA. *Doctors talking with patients/patients talking with doctors: improving communication in medical visits*. 2nd ed. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006. US\$29.95. ISBN 0-275-99014-1.

Since a doctor commonly interrupts a patient after about 18 seconds, the second edition of this book on better communication is most welcome. The authors describe the pro-

cess of communication, analyze social and psychological factors that color doctor–patient exchanges, and detail changes that can benefit both parties. This edition includes an expanded section on how a patient’s age affects visit dynamics and the role of health literacy. New is a discussion of the influence of physician characteristics, such as race and gender, on visit dynamics. Roter is a professor at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and Nursing, and Hall is a professor of psychology at Northeast University.

Grahek N. *Feeling pain and being in pain*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Bradford Books, MIT Press, 2007. US\$30.00. ISBN 13 978-0-262-07283-0.

With the rise of conditions where no physiological cause can be determined for the pain, pain is an area that has been scrutinized. The late author, a professor of philosophy at the University of Belgrade, looks at the radical dissociation syndromes of pain without painfulness and painfulness without pain and explains the crucial distinction between feeling pain and being in pain.

Weller S. *Healing yoga: a practical approach to healing common ailments with yoga*. Toronto: McArthur & Company, 2007. CAN\$29.95. ISBN 1-55278-621-8.

This is a basic book with easy-to-follow workouts for beginners that provides a brief background about the philoso-

phy of yoga, practical information to get started, information about yoga’s benefits for various health conditions, and a series of wellness routines. The author is a registered nurse who has worked in the field of psychiatry, assisting clients with stress-related conditions.

Groopman J. *How doctors think*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007. US\$26.00. ISBN 13 978-0-618-61003-7.

This book examines what goes on in doctors’ minds as they treat patients. The author, a *New Yorker* staff writer, best-selling author, and professor at Harvard Medical School, explores how doctors err and how they can benefit from listening to patients and avoid making snap decisions and incorrect diagnoses. Groopman also reveals how technologies that are supposed to assist in making better diagnoses may hinder the process.

Burke C. *To buy or not to buy organic: what you need to know to choose the healthiest, safest, most earth-friendly food*. New York: Marlowe & Company, 2007. CAN\$18.50. ISBN 13 978-1-56924-268-1.

The subtitle sums it up: this practical guide helps consumers sort out the confusing options presented by organic foods. It covers why organics are a good choice, how pesticide exposure impacts health, how to grow organic foods and reap health benefits from them, and where to find healthy food. The author is a food journalist and former professional chef.