

Consumer health information

Compiled by Susan Murray

Consumer Health Complete

In January, EBSCO launched Consumer Health Complete (CHC), an extensive comprehensive consumer health information resource that covers the gamut of health and wellness from mainstream medicine to complementary and alternative medicine. This product will be very competitive with Gale's Health and Wellness Reference Center.

CHC provides access to 170 consumer health encyclopaedias and reference books; 4100 evidenced-based full text health reports on diseases, conditions, injuries, and procedures written for consumers; more than 1000 consumer health pamphlets; full text for nearly 1000 health-related periodicals (with selected articles from thousands more); consumer-friendly drug information resources including Clinical Pharmacology; as well as an extensive collection of full text alternative health resources for consumers. Also, 5000 Spanish-language health reports and a Spanish-language health newswire are provided. Coming soon is an educational collection of consumer health images, diagrams, animations, and streaming videos. You can request a free trial at <http://www.epnet.com/freeTrial.php?tabForward=freeTrial>.

Evidence-based information on complementary and alternative medicine

<http://www.camline.ca>

CAMline is an evidence-based Web site on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) with a Canadian perspective for health care professionals and the public. It has greatly expanded its content and has both professional reviews and patient summaries for a number of natural health products, as well as many CAM therapies.

Collection development

Now that Alan Rees has retired, and there is no word if anyone is going to continue the consumer health information (CHI) "bible" *Consumer Health Information Source Book*, it's more difficult to know about new CHI publications. Below are a few suggestions of some CHI series and publishers.

- Cleveland Clinic Press Consumer Series (<http://www.clevelandclinicpress.org>) – Last year, the Cleveland Clinic, one of the top medical centres in the US, launched a series of consumer health publications. The series seeks to increase health literacy and dispel health care myths. Each book will be reviewed or authored by Cleveland Clinic experts. Some recent topics have included infertility, prostate cancer, arthritis, heart attack, sleep problems, and bariatric surgery and weight management.
- Mayo Clinic Series (<http://www.kensingtonbooks.com/>) – The series is distributed by Kensington Publishing Corp., New York. They also distribute a number of alternative health titles.
- The Facts Series (<http://www.us.oup.com/us/catalog/general/series/TheFactsSeries/?view=usa>) – This series presents succinct overviews of a variety of health conditions, and is published by Oxford University Press.
- Harvard Health Publications (<http://www.health.harvard.edu/books/>) – Harvard Health Publications provides an extensive list of special health reports (30–50 pages) published by Harvard Medical School (http://www.health.harvard.edu/special_health_reports/). Harvard Medical School, together with Simon & Schuster, publishes books designed to empower patients and provide thoughtful and authoritative health care information to consumers.
- Health Press (<http://www.healthpress.co.uk/>) – Health Press publishes two series: Fast Facts and Patient Pictures. These publications are written by internationally acclaimed authors and provide clear, accessible, and dependable medical information for consumers and health care professionals.
- Johns Hopkins (<http://www.hopkinsafter50.com/>) – Johns Hopkins publishes White Papers: in-depth special reports on major medical disorders written in clear, nontechnical language and edited by experts at Johns Hopkins. The reports are updated annually. The organization also publishes a number of guides, such as *The Johns Hopkins Medical Guide to Health After 50*, *The Johns Hopkins Consumer Guide to Medical Tests*, *The Johns Hopkins Consumer Guide to Drugs* and *The Johns Hopkins Consumer Guide to Medical Tests*.
- What Your Doctor May Not Tell You (<http://tinyurl.com/rwldv>) – This series is published by Warner Books.
- Your Personal Health Series (<http://www.hbfenn.com/new/ff/2003107.pdf>) – This is a series of practical consumer-oriented health guides written by leading medical specialists. It is endorsed by the Canadian Medical Association and published by Key Porter Books.
- Demos (<http://www.demosmedpub.com>) – This publisher focuses on neurology (Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injury, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis) and rehabilitation medicine. They are now expanding into spine medicine and oncology.

- Jones & Bartlett (<http://www.jbpub.com/>) – Jones & Bartlett is the publisher for organizations such as the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, American Cancer Society, American Geriatrics Society, American Heart Association, American Dietetics Association, and American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Facts on File (<http://www.factsonfile.com/>) – This company publishes numerous encyclopaedias on selected medical and health topics. On the publisher's Web site, select medical and health.
- Dorling and Kindersley (<http://cn.dk.com/static/cs/cn/11/nf/health/index.html>) – Dorling and Kindersley is the publisher for the Canadian Medical Association, as well as a variety of mainstream and alternative health topics.
- Harper Collins (http://www.harpercollins.com/browse_main.asp?section=books) – On this publisher's Web page, check the Health, Fitness, and Medical categories.
- Robert Rose (<http://tinyurl.com/r5q5t>) – This is a Canadian publisher, mainly of cookbooks, including those for special needs (diabetes, pregnancy).
- Jessica Kingsley (<http://www.jkp.com>) – This publisher focuses on Asperger syndrome, autism, art therapies, and disabilities.
- University Press of Mississippi (<http://www.upress.state.ms.us/cgi-bin/upress-swish.cgi?query=understanding&submit=Search%21>) – University Press of Mississippi publishes *Understanding*, a series that covers numerous health conditions.
- Script (<http://www.whathappensnext.ca/>) – This Canadian company publishes a series of surgery guides.
- McGraw-Hill (http://doi.contentdirections.com/mr/mgh_subject.jsp/HEA000000/10.1036/) – McGraw-Hill publishes both consumer health and professional medical titles.

Publisher and distributor Web sites

For an online directory of several hundred publishers, see <http://www.lights.com/publisher/>. Searchers can browse by topic, such as medicine. The following is a list of other publishers and distributors:

- Login Brothers Canada (<http://www.logincanada.ca>) – This distributor stocks patient education materials and publishes a library newsletter.

- Majors (<http://www.majors.com>) – On the publisher's Web site, select libraries; the allied health catalog is featured.
- Rittenhouse (<http://www.rittenhouse.com>)
- Matthews (<http://www.mattmccoy.com>) – On the publisher's Web site, select libraries.

Roundup of current readings

Borman CB, McKenzie PM. Trying to help without getting in their faces [Public library staff descriptions of providing consumer health information]. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*. 2005;45(2):133–46.

Unlike the “library visits” studies where the reference transaction is analyzed from the perspective of the user, this article examines the medical reference transaction from the viewpoint of the librarian. Consumers have difficulty in getting information from health care providers due to their lack of time and (or) accessibility. The library is seen as a neutral, approachable, well-connected place that can connect consumers with print and electronic resources at no cost and make referrals to relevant organizations that they are not aware of. However, there was great variation in how staff approached consumer health questions, particularly their own sensitivity to whether probing or privacy was the appropriate response.

Picerno PV. Health and medical Information on and off the Internet: what part can and do public libraries play? *Journal of Consumer Health on the Internet*. 2005;9(4):11–25.

Discusses where consumers go for electronic health information and surveys what public libraries are doing to meet this information need.

Werner SE. Creating a more informed health care consumer: how one medical library participates in mini medical school. *Journal of Consumer Health on the Internet*. 2005;9(4):27–33.

Mini med schools for the public, such as programs at McMaster University and the University of Toronto, are enjoying great success. This article describes how the Health Sciences Center Library at Stony Brook University has been involved in teaching consumers to find quality, electronic health information as part of the mini med school curriculum.