

## LETTERS / LETTRES

**Dear Editor,**

The last issue of the JCHLA (33(2)) published a program description (“Using a customized search engine to address low health literacy: a program description”) that detailed a project at our library. The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not accurately reflect the position of St. Michael’s Hospital (SMH). The article also does not accurately reflect our Patient and Family Education Program or the intent of our Web site. St. Michael’s Hospital is very proud of the work of our Patient and Family Education program and the Patient and Family Learning Centre (PFLC). The author volunteered with the PFLC for 70 hours between July 2011 and Sept 2011. Most of the work described in this article was conducted by SMH staff in the Health Sciences Library and the Patient and Family Education Program. While the author did seek permission to write a student paper about her experience as a volunteer she did not consult SMH staff on the content of this paper.

It is important that readers of your journal understand that the Google custom search tool that was implemented on our Web site was done so to ease access to a collection of existing Web sites we had compiled; but, it should not be considered a tool to increase access to patient education materials designed for people with low health literacy. The Web sites that the tool searches contain quality health information but they are not necessarily Web sites designed with health literacy principles in mind.

Additionally, it is important that readers of your journal know that the Google custom search tool is but one of the tools available to our staff and patients. For quality patient education materials, designed with the principles of health literacy, adult education, and plain language and design in mind, we rely upon our online patient education library that includes health sheets developed both in-house and by a third party that specializes in patient education. This extensive database has over 3000 health sheets on a wide variety of topics as well as numerous videos.

Our program also addresses the important issue of health literacy by providing in-house training for staff and clinicians to raise their awareness of this issue and provide them with education and communication techniques to address this issue. If any readers of JCHLA would like further information about our PFLC or the resources offered, please visit [www.stmichaelshospital.com/learn](http://www.stmichaelshospital.com/learn) or feel free to contact our Patient and Family Education Program at [patienteducation@smh.ca](mailto:patienteducation@smh.ca)

Thanks very much,

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