

Consumer Health, Health Literacy, & Patient Education at the UNC Health Sciences Library NC IOM December 12, 2006

Why do we do it?

- Service to citizens of North Carolina
- Support for education of health care providers
- Support to patient care

Our role – skills, qualifications and activities of libraries and librarians

- Provide equality of access regardless of affiliations or socioeconomic factors
 1. Public access to the Internet is provided in virtually all libraries
 2. Information assistance from a librarian is available to anyone in person, telephone, email, chat
 - Serve as intermediaries for the public and provide support for intermediaries, e.g. health care providers, librarians, and care-givers
 - Deliver information in many formats – one-on-one, web-based, interactive multimedia and print.
 - Select and evaluate information resources based on the currency, scope, authority and quality of sources.
 - Design web interfaces using best principles of design and usability.
 - Create aggregator websites with attention to their interface with popular search engines, e.g. metadata, so that our sites are easier to find from search engines.
 - Deliver presentations and classes on health literacy, consumer health and patient education topics to UNC groups, community groups, and professional organizations and associations local and statewide.
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Why do we focus our efforts on the web-based health information?

Access to the Internet

- 60% of high school graduates have access to the Internet.
- 91% of college graduates have access to the Internet.

North Carolina Internet access data from E-NC (2004)

- 59% NC homes have Internet access
- 38% of NC Internet users report having used the Internet at a public library
- High school dropouts are more likely to use the Internet in North Carolina than in the rest of the nation.

What Pew, NCES say about health on the Web

Online Health Search 2006, Pew Internet & American Life Project, Susannah Fox, Director, October 29, 2006.

- 80% of Internet users go online for health information.
- 66% of health information queries start at a search engine *but most search engines do not order results based on accuracy.*
- 50% of health searches are on behalf of someone else.

What they are searching for

Eighty percent of American internet users, or some 113 million adults, have searched for information on at least one of seventeen health topics:

Specific disease or medical problem 64%
Certain medical treatment or procedure 51%
Diet, nutrition, vitamins, or nutritional supplements 49%
Exercise or fitness 44%
Prescription or over-the-counter drugs 37%
A particular doctor or hospital 29%
Health insurance 28%
Alternative treatments or medicine 27%
Depression, anxiety, stress, or mental health issues 22%
Environmental health hazards 22%
Experimental treatments or medicines 18%
Immunizations or vaccinations 16%
Dental health information 15%
Medicare or Medicaid 13%
Sexual health information 11%
How to quit smoking 9%
Problems with drugs or alcohol 8%

Health Literacy

The Health Literacy of America's Adults: Results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy, National Center for Education Statistics

Health Literacy Levels	Internet as source of health information
Proficient 12%	85%
Intermediate 53%	67%
Basic 22%	42%
Below Basic 14%	20%

- Lowest educated groups have the lowest health literacy scores. Those who did not speak English before starting school and adults over 65 are also prevalent in this lowest group.
- Those with lower scores receive a lot of their health information from radio and television.

- Receiving health information from personal contacts (including health care workers) is a major source for all groups.

Health seekers feel mostly reassured, confident, and comforted by what they find online

While 74% say they are reassured by what they find and that they could make appropriate health care decisions...

- 22% overwhelmed by the amount of information they found
- 18% confused by what they found
- 69% say you can believe all or most online health information

75% of health seekers do not consistently check the source and date of the health information they find online ...Checking the source and date of information decreases with less educated Internet users.

Health Sciences Library Consumer Health Web Based Products:

NC Health Info and MedlinePlus (<http://nchealthinfo.org>)

- Freely available
- Serves consumers, librarians, health care providers
- Health services combined with health information
- Designed with health literacy considerations in mind
- Evaluated by health literacy experts

Consumer Health Information Portal (under development)

- Freely available
- Serves consumers, librarians, health care providers
- Health information from a variety of recognized sources
- Variety of topics of importance to NC
- Possible special collections

AHEC Digital Library (<http://library.ncahec.net/>)

- 15,000 members in database (NC Health professionals, off-campus faculty and residents, preceptors)
- Freely available as "Guest", restricted resources require membership
- Serves health care providers across NC
- Selected, evaluated materials chosen specifically for clinicians to give their patients
- Low-literacy resources flagged