

# Polish on-line resources for community nurses

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper was to present our experiences in supplying seminars for community nurses and other their self-educational activities with Polish on-line resources free distributed in the Internet. We didn't pretended to give scrupulous review of all Polish medical and health Web sites. The choice was got subjectively, but all links mentioned in the paper were find useful in own Author's didactic practice.

**Material and methods:** In the paper several Web hosts were classified into five categories: legal and organizational information; handbooks and readings for nurses' self-education; didactic aids and readings for patients; diagnostic and organizational tools; mailing lists for nurses.

**Results:** It was stated that Polish on-line resources to assist community health nurses implement their role are becoming more accessible. There are observed somewhere lack of up-to-date information, but more frightening away is lack of credible guidance on the trustworthiness of health-related information.

**Conclusions:** The on-line resources should not be treated only as tool for making our lessons more brilliant. The main goal there is to train the practical skills necessary for reading and critically evaluating medical literature, to make students sensitive to the reliability and credibility of information.

## Introduction

The key role of the community health nurses includes health promotion and illness / injury prevention for individuals, families, groups and all communities representing wide-ranging

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ages, social position, health status [1]. In this they collaborate with other health workers, but their medical and pedagogical literacy was critical commonly [2]. Till 2003 the Polish nurses preferred printed literature in their self-educational activities [3]. There are known many users' guides to the medical literature which encourage us to start reading them critically [4], introduce us to research and statistical methodology [5,6], point on included discussion [7] or on this, how use it in caring for the reader's patients [8,9]. Currently, in the Poland the Internet has become the most widely-used communication medium, in this by nurses too [10,11]. The above guides keep their usefulness but they must be completed with some guidance on the trustworthiness of a Web health-related information [12], because it should be considered that there besides trustworthy good medical journals and editors anyone can set up a Web site and publish any kind of data which is then accessible to all. The eEurope 2005 Action Plan proclaim that "it is critical that e-health content and services are developed efficiently, are available for all and health related web sites comply with established quality criteria" [13]. What about health-related hosts in the English language the problem was there overcoming with some specialised hosts like <http://discern.org.uk>; <http://www.quick.org.uk>; <http://www.biome.ac.uk>; <http://www.medcertain.org>, and in the French <http://www.chu-rouen.fr>. For Polish hosts it arises now as a challenge of a great importance.

## Material and methods

Besides the governmental hosts [www.mzios.gov.pl](http://www.mzios.gov.pl); [www.unuz.gov.pl](http://www.unuz.gov.pl); [www.csioz.gov.pl](http://www.csioz.gov.pl); [www.gis.mz.gov.pl](http://www.gis.mz.gov.pl) the Main Chamber of Nurses and Midwives (<http://www.izbapiel.org.pl>) and the Polish Nurses Association (<http://www.zgtpiel.waw.pl>) took the leading position in providing the legal and organizational information to nurses with some other useful links in the matter. Some specialised hosts provides legal information concerning their area of interest, for example: <http://www.pck.org.pl/> for international law or <http://www.ratownictwo.pl/> for emergency

medicine. The profuse free educational material and advises for patients offers page <http://zdrowie.medicentrum.pl> and for medical specialists the page <http://www.mediclub.pl/club/mp/>, both connected with Praha Communications, the editor of JAMA (Journal of the America Medical Association). The leading Polish editor of the medical journals, the Medycyna Praktyczna Co, carries on some professional web hosts, in these the great <http://www.mp.pl>. Tree other great educational hosts for no-professionals are offered by Allcore Co (<http://www.mediweb.pl/>) and by Medical Web Designs Co ([www.zdrowie.med.pl](http://www.zdrowie.med.pl)) and [www.zdrowemiasto.pl](http://www.zdrowemiasto.pl). Besides encyclopaedic hosts a set of specialised hosts offer the educational aids, for example: [www.parkinson.med.pl](http://www.parkinson.med.pl); [www.oko.info.pl](http://www.oko.info.pl); [www.alergen.info.pl](http://www.alergen.info.pl); [www.udarmozgu.pl](http://www.udarmozgu.pl); [www.leki.med.pl](http://www.leki.med.pl); [www.onkolink.pl](http://www.onkolink.pl); [www.cukrzyca.pl](http://www.cukrzyca.pl); [www.dzieci.org.pl](http://www.dzieci.org.pl); [www.warman.com.pl/~osteo](http://www.warman.com.pl/~osteo). The ready to use Power Point and video presentations provides specialised host <http://www.rakpiersi.pl>. Some specialised hosts offered interactive tests for medical and psychological diagnoses: [www.acpp.edu.pl](http://www.acpp.edu.pl); <http://www.psychologia.edu.pl/> (Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test, Adult Alcoholic's Child, Alcoholic's Wife, Social Readjustment Rating Scale, Fagerstrom test for smokers, Affect Balance Scale, Workoholic Test, Internet Dependence); [www.telezdrowie.pl](http://www.telezdrowie.pl) (tests: I hear, I speak, I see); [www.nadcisnienie.pl](http://www.nadcisnienie.pl); [www.ptk.waw.pl/](http://www.ptk.waw.pl/) (IBM, coronary risk, Fagerstrom's test). Almost all above hosts provide chat and mailing lists for their users.

What about methodology let us now turn to ask what specific skills and attitudes we should seek to develop. Currently it is no problem to find a lot of texts including wanted key words with Web browse tools. The problem is how to distinguish useful from useless or even harmful reading-matters. We introduced student to that art by leading them from passive work to active tutored and active self-reliant work. During passive readings the students deal with material selected by a teacher. It is, however, important that at least some of the students' readings should involve an active participation in looking for an appropriate texts for different sorts of their tasks. During tutorials a teacher prompts the validation criterions to students and step by step he/she restricts it to discussion on criterions proposed by students.

## Results

It was stated that Internet stands currently a prepared source of health-related educational Polish readings for patient and nurses. Nevertheless, the not experienced users should be there supported with professional tutors because of lack of credible on-line guidance on the trustworthiness of health-related information.

## Discussion

Medicine is a persistently developing science, day after day new research results change some previous medical standards with the new ones. Moreover, human error is always possible. In practice various on-line tools were applied with aim to describe and evaluate patient-oriented health information on the Internet. All they are very expensive rather and they need constant

support from a team of trained experts. Among them there are sites held by commercial and non-commercial organizations. For example each of about 6000 pages for patients and consumers in [www.eMedicinehealth.com](http://www.eMedicinehealth.com) is reviewed by 2 physicians and a PharmD. Besides, the eMedicine Clinical Knowledge Base contains 30000 multimedia files suitable to medical education for physicians, nurses, and optometrists. The Discern: <http://discern.org.uk> questionnaire which can be used to judge the reliability of a publication was funded from 1996-7 by The British Library and the NHS Executive Research & Development Programme. The QUICK: <http://www.quick.org.uk> designed to be used as a teaching aid in an educational setting is supported by UK Health Development Agency and the UK Centre for Health Information Quality. The OMNI (Organising Medical Networked Information): <http://www.biome.ac.uk> gateway to evaluated quality Internet resources in health and medicine, aimed at students and practitioners is created by a core team of specialists based at the University of Nottingham Greenfield Medical Library, and is funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee through the Resource Discovery Network (RDN). The MEDCERTAIN: <http://www.medcertain.org> for a self and third-party rating system enabling patients and consumers to filter harmful health information and select high quality information established a part of the project of the Action Plan on promoting safer use of the Internet (Decision no 276/ 1999/ EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 January 1999.

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