

## MedlinePlus: Suggested Exercise

### Finding appropriate, understandable materials for patients with lower literacy skills; limited or non-English speakers

- 1) See if there are any easy-to-read materials on chemotherapy for cancer. There are two ways to do this; what are the two methods? Now, are there any materials in other languages? Again, what are the different ways of finding multilingual materials? On the Health Topic page for Cancer Chemotherapy, toggle to the Spanish (español) page. Does the content appear to be the same?
- 2) Discussion (if time allows)
  - a. Name some of the content areas of MedlinePlus that contain easier-to-understand materials, and what it is about them that makes them easier.
  - b. Discuss the differences between the Spanish language section of MedlinePlus and the multilingual collection.

## PubMed Exercises

### Go to PubMed.gov and run these searches. Try using the Advanced Search page. Compare your answers.

1. I need recent articles on binge drinking among college students.
2. I need articles showing a link between antiperspirants and breast cancer.

Extra credit searches are:

- 1) Are there any studies proving that electric toothbrushes are better than manual ones?
- 2) I need recent research on treatment options for Nevus of Ota.

## Supplementary MedlinePlus Exercises

### Understanding the content areas and structure of MedlinePlus.gov from the patron or searcher's point of view

- 1) Take about three minutes for this part. Start at the Home Page. Do not use the search box, but instead use your mouse to see how many tabs or links starting on the home page will take you to information about high blood pressure (or other condition of your choice). Keep track of the number of ways. NOTE: If you encounter a search box and you cannot go any further unless you type in a term, you may use it. See if you can find something in another language, a current news item, a video, a pronunciation, an image, or other interesting items.
- 2) Take about three minutes for the following exercise. Using the Search Box, do a search for high blood pressure (or the condition you searched for in part 1.) Again, look for something in another language, a current news item, a video, a pronunciation, an image, or other interesting items.

For discussion: Compare the two different methods of searching. How are they different, and when might you use one over the other? If you were demonstrating MedlinePlus to a patron, would you show one or both search methods?

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- 2) An older patient asks for images that illustrate the effect of osteoporosis on the bones and body. She is especially interested in hip fractures and the hip joint, because she will be having hip replacement surgery. She would also like something that she could read or view at her own pace to complement other information her doctor has given her.
- 3) A patron tells you he is confused by all of the things he is supposed to do about his high cholesterol. Are there any simple explanations or instructions that could be printed out for him to take home?

For the discussion:

- a. Name some of the content areas of MedlinePlus that contain easier-to-understand materials, and what it is about them that makes them easier.
- b. Discuss the differences between the Spanish language section of MedlinePlus and the multilingual collection.

### Finding evidence-based information about herbs, supplements and complementary/alternative therapies

- 1) A patient who is scheduled for surgery in a week tells you he is taking bilberry to help improve his night vision. The pre-op instructions say to stop taking all herbal supplements, and he asks if there is anything that proves it's okay (or not) to take bilberry. Also, he wants to know if it really will help improve his night vision.

## Locating PubMed articles on health topics via MedlinePlus pre-formulated searches

Choose any Health Topic page in MedlinePlus.gov, then navigate to the Journal Articles section. Click on the link that says "see more articles". PubMed will launch in a new window. Scan the first page of results, then look at the search details. Further refine your search if desired by adding in additional search terms, limiting to free full text or by applying other limits.

## Getting the most out of your search

- 1) Try some advanced search techniques
  - a. using phrases with and without quotes (weight loss surgery, "weight loss surgery")
  - b. using a wildcard or operators; compare the following:

key words (default is AND):	<i>allergy triggers</i>
wildcard with key words:	<i>allerg* trigger*</i>
operators:	<i>allergy triggers NOT asthma</i>
  - c. topic with type of media: *melanoma image*
- 2) Do a search for the phrase *quitting smoking* in Google, WebMD.com and MedlinePlus.gov. At a glance, what do you see? What can you point out to patrons about evaluating health information at a glance?