

Web report **eMedicine**

David T Huang

Research Fellow, Department of Critical Care Medicine, CRISMA Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, USA

Correspondence: David T Huang, huangdt@ccm.upmc.edu

Reported: 25 July 2003

Published online: 13 August 2003

This article is online at <http://ccforum.com/content/7/5/396>

© 2003 BioMed Central Ltd (Print ISSN 1364-8535; Online ISSN 1466-609X)

Critical Care 2003, **7**:396 (DOI 10.1186/cc2363)

Website eMedicine

URL <http://www.emedicine.com>

Cost Free

Keywords critical care, intensive care unit, internet

This website was founded in 1996 by a US emergency physician, Dr Scott Plantz, to provide a free, peer reviewed and up-to-date medical reference for health care professionals. Originally an emergency medicine website, it quickly expanded to include other specialties. Although it is not specific to critical care medicine, it is a valuable resource for intensive care unit practitioners, providing up-to-date reviews.

To access this website one must complete a single page registration form, which requests basic information such as e-mail address and specialty. There is also an option for receiving weekly e-mail electrocardiograph, radiograph, and image quizzes. I found the quizzes fun and challenging, and they did not flood my mailbox. The site is organized by specialty, and although critical care is not specifically listed it is easy to find information on many critical care topics using the search option. For instance, a search for 'sepsis' yielded nine relevant articles and 'ARDS' six, as well as articles on related topics such as bacteremia and barotrauma. Each chapter includes author affiliations and contact details, as well as information regarding the editors (usually multiple). In general, the chapters are evidence based and well referenced, with links to PubMed abstracts. Most reviews are thorough, including information on pathophysiology, differential diagnoses, diagnostic techniques, radiography, and often a number of figures and photos. For an additional fee, one can access enlarged images, as well as chapter and textbook PDA downloads. Readers may also submit their reviews for consideration.

This website is a good starting point for learning about a given disease, particularly for residents and fellows. Physicians requiring more detailed information may not be satisfied. Finally, the website has an excellent Emergency Medical and Family Health Guide, composed of layperson-directed chapters that exclude medical jargon. These chapters make useful handouts for families.

In summary, this website is an excellent free alternative to other medical database resources such as UpToDate and MDConsult (see below), which require paid subscriptions.

Best feature

Free, current, peer reviewed, and well organized chapters.

Worst feature

There are a few small banner advertisements.

Wish list

A separate critical care section would be welcome.

Other links

UpToDate – www.uptodate.com

MDConsult – www.mdconsult.com

The annual subscription charge for UpToDate is US\$495; MDConsult offers different price levels for varying levels of access. Both offer discounts to residents/fellows. UpToDate provides frequently updated comprehensive reviews of many disorders. MDConsult provides online access to the major textbooks in most specialties and complete articles from most medical journals. It is very useful for literature searches because one may print articles directly from the internet, as opposed to PubMed (<http://www.ncbi.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi>) which offers only abstracts.

Competing interests

I have authored one chapter for this website. No financial compensation was received.