

Cochrane Corner

Practical evidence-based internet resources

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An article in the *Journal of Family Practice* reported an article by Brian Alper on 'Practical Evidence-based Internet resources (J Fam Pract July/August 2003 49–52'. In the adjoining table I have reviewed four of them that allow you to have free access on a trial basis. There are numerous other medical textbooks such as the Merck Manual and Harrison's textbook of medicine but these don't claim to be evidence based. I tried to find evidence about the use of steroids for chronic paronychia, a topic on which I knew there was a new and revolutionary randomised controlled trial.¹ I was also interested in the use of corticosteroids for aphthous ulcers for which there is limited evidence.

Other sites for free clinical resources:

1. Cochrane database through the RNZCGP. For the access codes to the Cochrane library contact Cherylyn Pearson at the College: cpearson@rnzcgp.org.nz
2. Trip database: www.tripdatabase.com
3. National clearing house (USA): www.guideline.gov
4. Dr Alper's Links: <http://www.myhq.com/public/a/l/alper/> – internet portal designed by the author with several hundred links organised primarily for patient care.
5. For users of Palm handhelds this is a differential diagnosis site that is free: <http://books.mcgraw-hill.com/medical/diagnosaurus/index.html>
6. The New Zealand Guidelines group has a set of great links nzgg.org.nz

Table 1. A review of four evidence-based internet resources

	Clinical evidence	Dynamed	Infotriever	Uptodate
Uses systematic searching	Yes	No	No	No
Provides guidance where there is no evidence	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of topics (2003) figures	211	1796	1036	6000
Information on paronychia	No	No	Yes	Yes
Information on aphthous ulcers	Yes	Yes	Unsure had to use term canker and then only patient information	Yes
Cost in \$NZ	256	281	350 can be free if you offer to do reviews	700
Other formats	Print Desktop Palm Pocket PC	Desktop	Desktop Palm Pocket PC	Desktop Pocket PC

Free trial: This means you can take a free test drive. All four of the above offer free trials
Clinical Evidence www.clinicalevidence.com • **Dynamed** www.dynamedical.com
Infotriever www.infopoems.com • **Uptodate** www.uptodate.com

My pick:

Overall I would rate Uptodate and Dynamed as the best for day to day clinical work. Uptodate is slightly better than Dynamed as it had an article on Paronychia and Dynamed did not. Dynamed has an advantage that you can get a free subscription if you are willing to review for them. It is half the price of Uptodate even if you pay for it.

Reference

1. Tosti A, Piraccini BM, Ghetti E, Colombo MD. Topical steroids versus systemic antifungals in the treatment of chronic paronychia: an open, randomized double-blind and double dummy study. *J Am Acad Dermatol* 2002; 47:73–6.