Beyond an Apple a Day:
Providing Consumer Health Information

National Network of Libraries of Medicine,
Pacific Northwest Region
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(800) 338-7657

Agenda
• History & evolution of consumer health
• Health information needs
• The reference interview
  — Challenges
  — Ethics
• Collection development
• Web resources
• Outreach & marketing

Links!
• http://tinyurl.com/beyondappleaday
Consumer Health – then and now…

- 1972 Patient Bill of Rights

Realities of Health Care today:
- Patients are now asked to make decisions about their own disease process.
- Most patients do not have the tools to make these kinds of decisions.
- Libraries can help!

Evolution of e-patients

- In 2000, 52 million Americans searched the internet for health
- In 2002, 73 million...
- In 2006, “Googling for a diagnosis” [BMJ]
- In 2006, only one quarter of online health seekers said they always or usually check the source and date of health information online!
- e-patients!
  - empowered, engaged, equipped, enabled

e-patient Dave

Photo by Roger Ramirez. Creative Commons Attribution ShareAlike 3.0
Health Literacy

- The ability to read, understand and act on health information [Pfizer 2002]
- The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions [Healthy People 2010]

Based on the isospin-dependent Boltzmann-Uehling-Uhlenbeck transport model plus the Skyrme force parameters, initialization effect is studied in heavy-ion collision at intermediate energies. We find that there are moderate initialization effects in the observables of free neutron to proton ratio (n/p), pion-n/pion + ratio, as well as neutron to proton differential flow (F_n-p). Effects of initialization are larger for charged pion-n/pion ratios than n/p ratios. And the effects of initialization are more evident in nuclear reactions at lower incident beam energies. We do not see large effects of initialization for light reaction systems or large asymmetric (neutron-richer) reaction systems. We also see relatively large effects of initialization on the neutron to proton differential flow at relatively lower incident beam energies or with large impact parameters. These results may be useful for the delicate studies of Equation of State (EoS) of asymmetric nuclear matter.

What is the strongest predictor of an individual’s health status?

- Age
- Income
- Employment status
- Educations
- Literacy skills
- Racial/ethnic group
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✓ Literacy skills
– Racial/ethnic group

Fill in the blanks

• One out of ? American adults reads at the 5th grade level or below.

Fill in the blanks

• One out of ? American adults reads at the 5th grade level or below.

one out of 5
Fill in the blanks

- The average American reads at the 8th to 9th grade level, yet most health care materials are written above the 7th grade level.

10th grade

Discussion

Thoughts on health literacy and how it impacts the individual and society?
Why is health literacy so critical?

Resources for health literacy

- **MedlinePlus**
  - Easy-to-read resources
  - How to write easy-to-read resources

- **Ask Me 3**
  1. What is my main problem?
  2. What do I need to do?
  3. Why is it important for me to do this?

Sharing

- Take 10 minutes to discuss with a partner or a group, some examples of consumer health questions.
- We wrap up this activity with a discussion of your examples together as a class.
Uncomfortable Patrons

Physically ill

Embarrassed, reluctant to share

Concerned about privacy

Emotional – angry, sad, frustrated, etc.

Uncertain

Uncomfortable Librarians

Intimidated by nature and complexity of questions

Moral & Ethical Conflicts

Anger directed at librarian & others
Medical Jargon
Tylenol vs. Tylenol PM
Hypothermia vs. Hyperthermia
Vertebrae?
Cervical
Lumbar
Thoracic
prednisolone vs. prednisone

Regain Self-Control

• Stop
• Breathe
• Reflect
• Choose

Provide Information, Not Advice

Sharing personal opinions, experiences, recommendations = Practicing medicine without a license, fraud, defamation of character
Nonverbal Tips

- Maintain good eye contact but watch for cultural differences
- Body language should be open and encourage patrons to approach
- Be attentive
- Environment is welcoming and accommodates privacy needs

Verbal Tips

- Explain why you have to ask questions to define information need
- “Compassionate Neutrality” & professionalism
- Use active listening techniques
- Speak calmly, clearly, not too fast, be patient
- Avoid medical jargon
- Provide information but do not overwhelm
- Hand off question or take a quick break

Disclaimers

- Keep library policies for services (reference, staff development, Web, etc.), collection development, etc. up-to-date
- Web sites
- Include or stamp disclaimer on handouts provided
Example Disclaimers

“Materials in the Resource Center represent the opinions of the authors and are intended as a complement, not a substitute for the advice of your healthcare providers.”

Others:
http://caphis.mlanet.org/chis/disclaimers.html

Summing Up

• Stop, Breathe, Reflect, Choose
• Provide information, not advice
• Help patrons evaluate information (just like with any other information)
• Teamwork works! – refer or ask for help when needed

Collection Development

• Book lists on CAPHIS
  – UCONN Healthnet
  – Bibel, B. Library Journal
Consumer Health on the Internet

- The ABC’s of evaluation
  - Accuracy
  - Authority
  - Bias
  - Currency
  - Coverage
  - And, user friendliness

Mobile MedlinePlus
Questions thus far?

Hands-on Exercises

1. What is Pyelonephritis? Where can I find some information about it in plain English?

2. I just found out that my husband has been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s Disease. What are some of the first things I need to do as his caregiver? Is there a video I could watch?

3. I heard that black cohosh is good for menopausal symptoms. Is it safe to take? Is there any evidence that it is effective for menopause?

4. My friend needs to find a nursing home for her father within 25 miles of Chubbuck, Idaho. What are the options?

5. My husband burned his hand on our outdoor grill. He said that he thought he should put butter on it. What is the best thing to do for a minor burn?

Collaboration + Health Information Outreach
NN/LM PNR funded projects

Potential Collaborators
Marketing Your Services

P Product

P Price

P Place

P Promotion
Marketing

• Sharing: Get together in groups of 2 or 3 and come up with a couple of good marketing ideas to share.
• We will discuss them as a group.

Other ideas:

• Bookmarks, websites, press releases, lecture series, videos in hospital waiting room, screening clinics, health fairs, Information Rx, newsletter, public speaking to community groups, pedometer program, consumer health database searching series.

The Elevator Speech

In 15 seconds or less:
• Who we are?
• What we do?
• Why does it matter?

InfoPeople, Building Leadership Skills: Community Engagement, 2007
Reflection

• Think of the three most important take home messages from today’s presentation.

• Think of three people with whom to share this information.
Thank you!

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