

WEBSITE

Dedicated to elderly care: geriatric medicine on the internet

SOUVIRA MADAN, IBRAHIM Y. O. BODAGH

Elderly Care Department, Southampton General Hospital, Tremona Road, Southampton SO16 6YD, UK

Address correspondence to: I. Y. O. Bodagh. Fax: (+44) 2380796965. Email: ibodagh@aol.com

Abstract

The internet and world wide web make it easier for professionals, patients and carers to access medical expertise and technology. Websites providing information about geriatric medicine and gerontology include those of general and specialized journals and textbooks—including publications on geriatric psychiatry, geriatric emergency medicine, nutrition, ethics and law and geriatric nursing—and those of professional and research organisations. Also of use are sites related to allied branches of medicine—particularly dementia, stroke, Parkinson's disease, pain and geriatric rehabilitation. Topic-based mailing lists facilitate discussion; in addition, some websites include discussions areas. Information specifically targeted at patients and carers is available at sites created by research charities and patient information and support groups.

Keywords: *geriatric medicine, gerontology, internet, website, world wide web*

Introduction

The internet has its roots in the 1960s, when the United States defence services created the ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network) and developed internet protocol technology. This defined how electronic messages were packaged, addressed and sent over the network. In 1985, the National Science Foundation began a programme to establish internet access across the USA. In doing so, it created NSFNET and opened the network to all educational facilities, academic researchers and government agencies. Since that time, the internet has undergone unprecedented growth.

The internet and world wide web have created a great opportunity for professionals, patients and carers to have access to medical expertise and technology. We have undertaken an extensive search for information on the internet on geriatric medicine and gerontology in the English language. This is not a complete account, as changes are always taking place, but we hope that it will help health professionals to gain access to useful information.

Searching the internet

A search engine can locate thousands of websites. The following guidelines should make searches more

efficient:

1. Do not use 'the'—it is too non-specific.
2. Use as many words as you want to narrow the focus of your search.
3. Use * to broaden your search (a search on 'age*' will find sites including the terms aged, ageing and ages as well as age).
4. Use + in front of a word to ensure that word appears in the results; use – to exclude a word.
5. For advanced queries, you must use the binary operators or their symbols: AND or &, OR or I and NOT or !
6. Never forget to save or print your desired search!

Information related to medicine

General

Some of the most useful websites giving access to medical information are shown in Table 1.

Sites related to practice in the United Kingdom can be found at OMNI (Organising Networked Medical Information) and the sites of the Cochrane database, the National Health Service (NHS) and the National Institute of Clinical Excellence.

Table 1. Health information websites^a

OMNI	http://omni.ac.uk
Cochrane	www.cochrane.co.uk
National Health Service	www.nhs.uk
National Institute for Clinical Excellence	www.nice.org.uk
National Institute of Health	www.nih.gov
Pubmed	www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov
Publist	www.publist.com
National Electronic Library for Health	www.nelh.uk
National Health Service Information Authority portal site	www.nhsia.nhs.uk

^aAll these sites were accessed during June 2001.

Free access to a searchable catalogue of selected medical sites is available via the OMNI website. Although the Cochrane database has a subscription fee, it is the best site to find evidence of the effectiveness of health-care interventions. The NHS site and the NHS Information Portal site provide a gateway to the NHS organization on the internet. The site of the National Institute of Clinical Excellence is an important source of information on British guidelines and technology appraisals.

Comparable sites from the USA include those of the National Institute of Health and the Pubmed service.

For a detailed list of journals in medicine Publist is a useful link, although some of the web addresses are out of date. The National Electronic Library for Health is working with NHS libraries to develop a digital library for staff, patients and the public. Many sites have a hyper-text link to related reports, which can be immediately accessed by clicking on the underlined, coloured link.

Geriatric medicine

Websites dedicated solely to geriatric medicine are listed in Table 2. The list is not complete, but provides useful starting points. All these sites provide useful links to other related sites. The Novartis Foundation of Gerontology's website 'Health and Age' is a good site for both geriatricians and the public. Age Info, run by the Center for Policy on Ageing, is another good site from which to begin your search.

Journals and books

A list of journals in geriatrics and associated areas that have websites is given in Table 3. The site www.free.medicaljournals.com gives complete lists of journals that allow free access to full-text articles. Some of these can be accessed through the publisher's site, which is often a convenient route by which to locate a journal.

Geriatrics

Many journals that specifically cover geriatric medicine have websites. Most give free access to abstracts, but not full-text articles.

Table 2. General geriatrics websites^a

Health and Age	www.healthandage.com
The Geriatric Institute	www.geriatricinstitute.com
Huffington Center on Aging	www.hcoa.org
Centre for Policy on Ageing	www.cpa.org.uk

^aAll these sites were accessed during June 2001.

Gerontology

Information specific to gerontology is vast and the list of journals found on the web is increasing. Most of these sites provide information on ageing research and contain either abstracts or a table of contents.

Geriatric psychiatry

Geriatric psychiatry forms an integral part of geriatric medicine and is well represented on the web. *Signpost Journal* is a UK-based not-for-profit subscription journal for old-age psychiatrists.

Geriatric emergency medicine, nutrition, ethics and law

Some specialized journals related to nutrition, ethics and law, and emergency medicine have websites. Both the *Journal of Nutrition, Health and Aging* (www.serdi-fr.com) and *Journal of Nutrition for the Elderly* (<http://web-spectra.net>) address nutrition and ageing. For matters related to ethics, *Ethics, Law and Aging Review* (www.springerjournals.com/elar) is a good starting point. *Geriatric Emergency Medicine Reports* (www.ahcpub.com) is also worth visiting.

Geriatric nursing

The web addresses of two dedicated geriatric nursing journals are given in Table 3. *Nursing Older People* is a particularly important journal for specialist nurses. Nursing net (www.nursingnet.org) also provides a wealth of resources and information.

Books

Merck Manual of Geriatrics is the only geriatrics textbook that is available online in full-text format. Details of this and other online textbooks are given in Table 3.

Geriatrics societies and organizations

The websites listed in Table 4 are improving, and offer increasing amounts of information on governance, training, guidelines and audit in the specialty.

The sites of allied societies such as the International Psychogeriatric Association (www.ipa-online.org) are another useful resource.

Table 3. Websites of geriatrics, gerontology, geriatric psychiatry and geriatric nursing journals, and of geriatrics books^a

	Web address ^b	Material available online
Geriatrics		
<i>Age and Ageing</i>	http://ageing.oupjournals.org	Free abstract, free sample issue
<i>Journal of American Geriatric Society</i>	www.blackwellscience.com/journals/geriatrics/index.html	Free abstracts
<i>Geriatrics</i>	www.geri.com	Free full-text
<i>Journal of AntiAging Medicine</i>	www.liebertpub.com/jaa	Free sample issue
<i>Clinics in Geriatric Medicine</i>	www.wbsaunders.com	Table of contents
<i>Clinical Geriatrics</i>	www.mmhc.com/cg	Free full-text
<i>Journal of Aging & Health</i>	www.sagepub.com	Free sample issue
<i>Geriatric Times</i>	www.geriatrictimes.com	Free for US professionals only
<i>Annals of Long Term Care</i>	www.mhc.com/nhm	Free full-text
<i>Drugs and Aging</i>	www.adis.com/journals/drugsaging	Free abstracts
Gerontology		
<i>Gerontology</i>	www.karger.ch/journals	Free sample issue
<i>Gerontology and Geriatrics</i>	www.elsevier.com/locate/gerongerica	Free online sample copies
<i>The Journals of Gerontology (series A and B)</i>	http://intl-biomed.gerontologyjournals.org	Free full-text
<i>The Gerontologist</i>	http://intl-gerontologist.gerontologyjournals.org	Free full-text
<i>Reviews in Clinical Gerontology</i>	http://uk.cambridge.org/journals.rcg	Table of contents
<i>Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics</i>	www.elsevier.com/locate/archger	Free abstracts
<i>Experimental Gerontology</i>	www.elsevier.com/locate/expgero	Free sample copy
<i>Contemporary Gerontology</i>	www.springerjournals.com/cg	Table of contents
Geriatric psychiatry		
<i>International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry</i>	www.interscience.wiley.com	Free abstracts
<i>American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry</i>	http://ajgp.psychiatryonline.org	Free abstracts
<i>Journal of Mental Health and Aging</i>	www.fmhi.usf.edu/amh/journal	Table of contents
<i>Psychology and Aging</i>	www.apa.org/journals/pag.html	Free abstracts
<i>Aging and Mental Health</i>	www.tandf.co.uk/journals	Table of contents, Free sample copy
<i>International Journal of Geriatric Psychopharmacology</i>	www.stockton-press.co.uk/ijgp	Table of contents
<i>International Psychogeriatrics</i>	www.springerjournals.com	Free abstracts
<i>Signpost Journal</i>	http://signpostjournal.connect-2.co.uk	Table of contents
<i>Dementia and Geriatric Cognitive Disorders</i>	www.karger.ch/journals	Free sample issue
Geriatric nursing		
<i>Nursing Older People</i>	www.nursing-standard.co.uk	Selected articles in continuing professional development
<i>Geriatric Nursing</i>	www.harcourthealth.com	Free abstracts
Geriatrics textbooks		
<i>The Merck Manual of Geriatrics</i>	www.merck.com/pubs/mm-geriatrics	
<i>Topics in Geriatrics</i>	www.mayo.edu/geriatrics-rst	
<i>Geriatric Assessment Methods for Clinical Decision Making</i>	http://text.nlm.nih.gov/nih/cdc	

^aAll these sites were accessed during June 2001.^bSearch under periodicals/journals.**Table 4.** Websites of geriatrics societies^a

British Geriatrics Society	www.bgs.org.uk
Age Concern	www.ace.org.uk
American Geriatrics Society	www.americangeriatrics.org
National Institute on Aging	www.nih.gov/nia
Australasian Society for Geriatric Medicine	www.asgm.org.au
The Gerontological Society of America	www.geron.org
Society of Geriatric Cardiology	www.sgcard.org

^aAll these sites were accessed during June 2001.

Research in geriatrics

The number of websites dedicated to research in geriatrics is expanding (Table 5). The site of the American Federation for Aging Research is particularly useful, especially the newsletter *Lifelong Highlights*.

From a UK perspective, the Medical Research Council site provides information on research, while the National Research Register provides a register of ongoing and recently completed research projects funded by the NHS. The Sheffield Institute for Studies on Ageing gives a comprehensive list of research and training projects.

Geriatric rehabilitation

Some of the websites detailed in Table 6 are dedicated to geriatrics; others contain a variety of information for therapists. Ptworldmag is an interactive internet magazine for therapists. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy provides the latest information on physiotherapy in the UK. Also of use are PT network and the site of the International Society of Orthotics and Prosthetics.

Allied branches of medicine

Dementia

The list of information available in the field of dementia is impressive.

Dementia Voice is a useful site for information and links (www.dementia-voice.org.uk). Two sites for people with Alzheimer's disease and their carers—(www.alzheimers.org and www.alzheimernews.com)—are also very useful.

Pain

The American Pain Society (www.ampainsoc.org) and The World Congress on Pain (www.pain.com) provide very useful information and related links.

Table 5. Geriatric research websites^a

American Federation for Aging Research	www.afar.org
Aging Research Center	www.arclab.org
Center for Neurodegenerative Disease Research	www.med.upenn.edu/cndr
Medical Research Council funded projects database	www.mrc.ac.uk
National Research Register	www.doh.gov.uk/research/nrr.htm
Sheffield Institute for Studies on Ageing	www.shef.ac.uk

^aAll these sites were accessed during June 2001.

Table 6. Geriatric rehabilitation websites^a

<i>Physical and Occupational Therapy in Geriatrics</i>	http://bubl.ac.uk/journals
<i>Rehabilitation Clinics of North America</i>	www.harcourthealth.com
Ptworld Mag	www.PtworldMag.com
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy	www.csphysio.org.uk
PT network	www.pt-network.com
Society for Research in Rehabilitation	www.srr.org.uk
American Society for Neurorehabilitation	www.asnr.com
The International Society of Prosthetics and Orthotics	www.i-s-p-o.org

^aAll these sites were accessed during June 2001.

Stroke

There are many stroke sites: we list a selection of the best in Table 7. The site of the US National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke is highly recommended. The journal *Stroke* provides full text and abstracts, while *Journal of Stroke and Cerebrovascular Disease* provides abstracts only.

From the UK, the Stroke Association offers various services and publications. The Division of Stroke Medicine, University of Nottingham (British Association of Stroke Physicians) contains useful stroke links, including one to the Department of Clinical Neurosciences of Edinburgh. European Stroke Initiative provides information on stroke management in Europe.

Parkinson's disease

Websites dealing with Parkinson's disease are listed in Table 8. The Parkinson's disease section of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke site provides useful links and information. The site of the British Geriatrics Society's Parkinson's disease special interest group is essential for geriatricians and neurologists with a special interest in movement disorders.

Information for patients and carers

Useful websites that aim to give lay people access to information on ageing are listed in Table 9.

Table 7. Stroke websites^a

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke	www.ninds.nih.gov
<i>Stroke</i>	http://stroke.aha/journals.org
<i>Journal of Stroke and Cerebrovascular Disease</i>	www.strokejournal.org
Stroke Association	www.stroke.org.uk
British Association of Stroke Physicians	www.nottingham.ac.uk/stroke-medicine
European Stroke Initiative	www.eusi_stroke.com

^aAll these sites were accessed during June 2001.

Table 8. Parkinson's disease websites^a

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke	www.ninds.nih.gov
Parkinson's Disease Society	www.parkinsons.org.uk
American Parkinson's Disease Association	www.apdaparkinson.com
Parkinson's Foundation	www.pdf.org
British Geriatrics Society Parkinson's disease special interest group	www.parkinsons-bgs-sig.org.uk

^aAll these sites were accessed during June 2001.

Table 9. Recommended websites for older people^a

Age Concern	www.ace.org.uk
Association of Retired Persons	www.arp.org.uk
Yahoo seniors site	http://seniors.yahoo.com
Help the Aged	www.helptheaged.org.uk
American Society on Aging	www.asaging.org
The American Geriatrics Society foundation for Health in Aging	www.healthinaging.org
Elderhope	www.elderhope.com
Elderweb	www.elderweb.com
Eldersearch	www.eldersearch.com
Seniornet	www.seniornet.org
Carer's National Organisation	www.cna.org.uk
National Health Service Information for Patients	www.patient.co.uk/ nhs-info.htm

^aAll these sites were accessed during June 2001.

Age Concern is the best UK site for old people and their carers. In the USA, the American Society on Aging and the American Geriatric Society Foundation provide information on all aspects of ageing.

The UK-based charity Help the Aged provides information to help older people live independent lives. The American sites Elderhope, Elderweb and Eldersearch provide information for elderly people. Seniornet gives adults over the age of 50 access to and education about computer technology and the internet. The NHS Information for Patients site is also useful.

Table 10. Geriatrics mailing lists

List	Joining details
GERINET	LISTSERV@LISTSERV.NET
Geriatric Medicine trainees	www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/bgs-training.html ^a
Geriatric Nursing Forum	http://medi-smart.com/forums ^a
Geriatric Medicine	www.medlist.co.uk ^a
Geriatric Neurology	Listserv@maelstrom.stjohns.edu
Geriatric Neuropsychiatry	Majordomo@avocado.pc.helsinki.fi
Geriatrics Interest Group	Geriatric@lists.amsa.org

^aThese sites were accessed during June 2001.

Geriatrics mailing lists

Various geriatrics mailing lists are available, covering various topics. Details of how to join can be obtained via the email addresses or websites listed in Table 10.

Key points

- A lot of information related to Geriatric Medicine is now available on the internet and this article will help find that information quicker.
- Although search engines can give a lot of websites related to a subject, going directly to the website will save time and the search will be more focussed.