

## Views and Practice

### My favorite websites

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It is my pleasure to share with readers of the journal my favorite and most visited hangouts in the world of cyberspace. Like recommending my favorite restaurants to friends, I always remind them that despite my enjoyable experiences, they may not share the same level of satisfaction at their visits. Moreover, due to the dynamic nature of the Internet, beware that the sites may no longer be available. But how bad could it be surfing through some recommended websites? Quite distinct from exploring a restaurant, it is entirely free! I have divided my favorite sites broadly into the following categories: A) work-related sites, B) educational sites and C) leisure sites.

#### A) Work-related websites

The Hong Kong Doctors site (<http://www.hkdoctors.org>) contains vast amounts of information on many doctors who are also members of the Hong Kong Medical Association (HKMA). Apart from the essentials such as names, correspondence details, specialty and services

provided, it also lists out the year of acquisition of the quotable degrees and consultation charges. Developed and maintained by the HKMA, I find it most helpful when I am referring a patient to another colleague but have run out of his/her name cards. It is also a site that I sometimes refer my patients to for finding out more about their doctors. On the downside, you will not be able to find a colleague here if he or she is a non-member (you will be surprised) and occasionally many members choose not to disclose the above information and you will just get their names after searching.

The official website of the Hong Kong Medical Council (<http://www.mchk.org.hk>) is another very useful source of information. If the doctor that you are looking for is a non-HKMA member, you will find them here under "list of registered doctors". Again it lists out when and where the doctor qualified, thus for those who do not want to disclose their ages, I am sorry there is no privacy privilege here! It is indeed an awe-inspiring and humbling experience to discover that many of our respected senior dermatologists had been practicing doctors before I was even born. I still remember my visits to their offices as a patient, and I am sure that these childhood experiences in some ways encouraged me to choose dermatology as my lifelong career. Another useful function of this website is specialist registration verification as there is an updated list of specialist doctors under their respective specialties.

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#### Private Practice, Specialist in Dermatology

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In clinical practice, especially in private medicine, you will be bombarded daily by many unfamiliar trade names of medication. For those who still routinely take a drug history, this can be extremely frustrating in a busy clinic. Assuming that you can decipher the written drug label brought forward by your patient, if you are not primed, does anyone know what lenoxil suspension and elosone tablets are in generic terms? (Answered at end of article) The website by Pharmaceutical Service, Department of Health (<http://www.psdh.gov.hk/eps/productSearchSimpleAction.do>) is a practical lifesaver here. Type the trade name in the appropriate place and your answer will appear after a click. Apart from tackling this problem, this site is also useful when your favorite generic medication is no longer available and you have to find a replacement.

The Epocrates Online drug reference (<http://online.epocrates.com/>) is a site that every practicing doctor should know about. I first came across it as software on my handheld Palm personal digital assistant. Limited as a drug reference for USA, this site provides fast access to dosing for thousands of brand and generic drugs. It also provides full formulary information including caution and contraindications, drug interactions, adverse reactions, safety and monitoring, pharmacology, pricing, patient education and pill picture. You will need to register to get access but registration is free. Its MultiCheck drug interaction checker is my favorite tool. I find it most helpful and reassuring when prescribing for patients who have been treated with multiple medications.

Incidentally, for those of you who have yet to learn to type Chinese characters, I find the website [www.cantoneseinput.com](http://www.cantoneseinput.com) extremely handy. Designed for Cantonese-speaking Chinese, for any Chinese character, just type in its Cantonese pronunciation in English or its English translation, and the Chinese character will appear.

## **B) Education sites**

I still remember the days when I had to visit the medical library, flick through the heavy volumes of Index Medicus to search for my interested subject, copy down the references, then go to the respective shelves to pull out the dusty journals, and have the research paper copied at the photocopier. If you were unlucky before you could leave, the librarian might make you print out the details that you had photocopied for copyright protection declaration! It was a very time-consuming process doing literature search back then, but the arrival of PubMed, a service of the US National Library of Medicine (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed>), has revolutionized this process. We can now literally access through this website all of mankind's latest and archived published medical database 24 hours a day at the comfort of your desktop. Given this, it becomes indefensible when you fail to complete your CME self-study!

With the worth of free academic dermatology sites now available, I suspect that it is now unnecessary for trainees to purchase the traditional Rook Textbooks or the Fitzpatrick volumes. Used to be mandatory, the disadvantages of these large textbooks include their cumbersome sizes, difficulty in locating information (it's never in the volume that you are looking in) and the fact that they arguably become outdated soon after you have bought them. It will be very difficult to fail your exit examinations if you learn the E-medicine Dermatology online articles (<http://emedicine.medscape.com/dermatology>) by heart. This site with its updated and practical layout has become my first online dermatology reference. I also want to recommend two online atlases: Dermatlas (<http://dermatlas.med.jhmi.edu/derm>) from Johns Hopkins University and DermIS.net from University of Erlangen (<http://www.dermis.net/dermisroot/en/home/index.htm>). Both sites offer elaborate images and the later also includes differential

diagnoses, case reports and additional information. Locally, our journal site (<http://www.medicine.org.hk/hksdv/journal.htm>) archives the writings, research and local experiences of many dedicated colleagues and should not be missed by trainees and practicing dermatologists. I just wish that I had more time exploring these powerful sources of information.

### 3) Leisure sites

For food lovers, they should not miss [www.openrice.com](http://www.openrice.com). This site offers practical restaurant reviews written by local consumers as well as essential information of the restaurant's location, price range, opening hours and phone number for reservation. For those on a diet, they should not visit this site as many visitors also upload photographs of the food that they ordered. It has become my favorite Hong Kong restaurant reference. It gives you a virtual taste and is particularly helpful when you want to decide whether to visit a new unfamiliar restaurant or not.

Lastly, if you have time, you must visit <http://www.ted.com>. True to its motto, this site delivers "riveting talks by remarkable people, free

to the world". Technology, Entertainment, Design (TED) is an academic organization owned by The Sapling Foundation, a private non-profit foundation. Well-known for its annual, invitation-only conference devoted to "ideas worth spreading". TED talks has now expanded in scope to a broad set of topics including science, arts, politics, education, culture, business, global issues, technology and development. Speakers have included such people as former U.S. President Bill Clinton, molecular biologist James D. Watson, former Vice President of the United States Al Gore and Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates. Just click on the site, turn up the volume, pick the lectures that you like and instantaneously you become a free participant of the conference presented by the best and brightest among us. Be prepared for a mind inspiring and heart opening experience!

Without the support of any placebo-controlled trial, the recommended websites that I have listed here are based entirely on personal bias and anecdotal evidence. I hope we share the same taste and that you will find these sites useful and enjoyable. If you know of a good restaurant or site, your kind reciprocation will be appreciated.

(Answer: Lenoxil and Elosone are both trade names for Erythromycin!)