

Medical Resources on the Internet

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Lawyers practising in the medical negligence area are well aware of the need to obtain medical information.

The need arises at an early stage, when considering whether to accept instructions on a proposed claim, and of course throughout the claim process as new material comes to hand.

Obviously expert medical evidence must be obtained in such cases however there is often value in undertaking some preliminary research. The lawyers task in that regard is now assisted by the availability of extensive medical information on the internet.

The availability of such information appears to be rapidly increasing and there is of course the advantage of access to information throughout the world regardless of the location of the lawyer. A number of sites are described below.

Avicenna describes itself as the "medical information super site" of the web¹ and indeed provides free access to the Medline and Medlars databases from the National Library of Medicine from 1990 onwards. A helpful search engine is provided and abstracts of papers can be viewed. The Medline database alone is said to have over 7.5 million references to articles published in 4000 international journals.

The American Medical Association maintains a publications home page². The site enables access to archives covering a broad range of areas such as ophthalmology and paediatrics and enables a search of the contents of the AMA Journal itself.

Both of the above sites require registration but do not charge a fee. Other such as BioMedNet³ charge a fee and provide access to online full text journals.

Another site which charges a fee for access to its database of full text journals is known as Health Gate⁴. It does provide free access to Medline and Cancerlit, the latter containing references to published journal articles and the like concerning cancer.

Medscape⁵ claims to maintain the web's largest collection of free full text peer reviewed clinical medical articles and also provides unrestricted free access to Medline, Aidslines and Toxline. The Medscape site has the added advantage of sending a regular newsletter (by electronic mail of course) reporting on additions to the site.

The Medical Matrix⁶ site has received favourable publicity of late as has the Karolinska Institutes Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases Catalogue⁷.

The British Medical Association maintains its own site⁸ however ap-

parently only makes its library accessible to member.

Australian resources include the Medical Journal of Australia⁹ which along with providing an online version of the Journal lists a number of other Australian based sites.

Those with access to the CompuServe system can access a wealth of material including the NORD Services/Rare Disease database, Paperchase (which allows simultaneous searching of Medline, Health, Aidslines and Cancerlit); and Physicians Data Query/four cancer databases.

Regular users of the Internet will of course be aware of the value of search engines such as AltaVista¹⁰, enabling wide-ranging searches of web based materials.

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1. www.avicenna.com
2. www.ama.assn.org
3. www.biomednet.com
4. www.healthgate.com
5. www5.medscape.com
6. www.medmatrix.org/index.stm
7. www.nic.ki.se/Diseases/
8. www.bma.org.uk
9. www.library.usyd.edu.au/MJA/
10. www.altavista.digital.com

Queensland seminars

Stephen Roche, Shine Roche McGowan, Toowoomba

Litigation at Sunrise

On 16 April 1997 a very successful Litigation at Sunrise was held at the Brisbane Hilton on the topic of sanctions when acting for plaintiffs with a legal disability. Alan Warnick, Barrister-at-Law and Catherine Phillips, Solicitor, spoke on the legal requirements. Hugh Carter, the legal friend, spoke on his role and Joy Stevens, a legal costs assessor, spoke on the difference between party and party costs

and solicitor and own client costs.

On 21 May 1997 a further Litigation at Sunrise was held on functional overlay. Speakers were Gerry Mullins, Barrister-at-Law, Dr Peter Mulholland, Psychiatrist and Trudy Lievesley, Clinical Psychologist.

Audio tapes are available and Ian Brown of Carter Capner is in the process of transcribing them.

Next LAS

9 July 1997: *Bringing an Application*

to Extend the Limitations Period in a Personal Injuries Action, Richard Douglas, Barrister-at-Law and *Recent Developments under the Motor Accident Insurance Act*, John Cunningham, Solicitor.

Stephen Roche is on the Queensland Committee of APLA.

If you would like further information on APLA's Litigation at Sunrise seminars, contact your state's APLA representatives (see page 31).