

## ■ REVIEWS OF WEB SITES

James C. Eisenach, M.D., Editor

### **Worldwide Congress on Pain**

**URL:** <http://www.pain.com/>

**Institution:** Dannemiller Memorial Educational Foundation

**Information Manager:** Ed Dyer ([editor@pain.com](mailto:editor@pain.com))

**Webmasters:** Jeff Milligan, Ed Dyer

The Worldwide Congress on Pain is devoted to providing interested professionals and consumers with current information regarding pain and pain management. Since it went on-line January 31, 1997, it has been identified as the premier Web site devoted to pain on the Internet.

### **Professional Resources**

The bulk of information useful to the pain professional is located in "The Library" and "Online CME/CE" areas. The Library contains more than 1,700 journal articles, case studies, and abstracts from professional medical publications. The newest article is linked on the "What's New" area of the Home Page for that day. On-line continuing medical education (CME) for physicians and continuing education (CE) for certified registered nurse anesthetists and registered nurses is organized into monthly sets of three modules, each containing 10 abstracted articles and a posttest. The articles and posttests are viewable without charge, but to obtain category 1 CME/CE credit the cost is \$10.00/h, payable on-line. Examples of other Dannemiller CME/CE products can be viewed and purchased on-line. "Forums & Chatrooms" contains a professional forum in which providers can share information with peers. Additional resources include links to other pain-related Web sites, pain meetings, and an on-line bookstore. The Pain.Com Bookstore is a portal to the on-line bookstore [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). Unfortunately, it only had references to consumer-oriented books, although a specific textbook could be searched for by title or author. For instance, entering "Pain Raj" revealed three texts.

### **Consumer Resources**

The majority of resources for patients are linked to the "Consumer Information" page. Practicing pain management physicians answer patient questions at "Ask The Pain Doctor." "Celebrities in Pain" has interviews with favorite stars and their encounters with pain. At "Straight From The Top" a patient with long-term pain shares some survival secrets in this weekly column. "Pain Specialist or Pain Clinic" provides a means to search for specific clinics near the consumers' homes. "Support Groups & Stories" provides links to Web sites that provide support and that may be uplifting. "Ask the Expert" is an extension of "Ask the Pain Doctor" and provides links to other expert health professional specialists. Links are provided to pain associations, health resources, and the virtual pain Library. Another resource is "Pain News," which provides a usually patient-specific news article every day from various sources.

"Forums & Chatrooms" is a great place for the long-term pain patient to discuss problems, give advice, and relay experiences.

### **Quality of Information**

The quality of the Library and CME articles is outstanding and the information is relevant, although these areas are completely text based without graphs, charts, or tables. The information found at other areas is accurate and up to date. Navigating the Web site for physician-specific information can be difficult. There is no single page on which all professional resources are organized, and finding these resources takes some effort. It is also somewhat laborious deciphering what information is free and what is charged or is an advertisement. As an example, the "Pain Meetings" on the home page only links to Dannemiller-sponsored meetings. One has to view the "CME/CE Programs" page to find a list of other meetings organized by year. The majority of this page contains a list of CME products for sale, with a few examples that could easily be mistaken for more articles. Although frustrating at first, as one becomes more familiar with the Web site these shortcomings become less significant. They are no doubt caused by the rapid expanse of the site. The editors are very open to criticism and answered my questions *via* electronic mail in less than an hour!

### **Quality of Links**

All links within the Web site are functional and applicable to the specialty of pain management. Links to external Web sites are located in the "Pain Resources" area, where one can obtain pain related listings and links to domestic and international societies, associations, foundations, organizations, and publications. The publications listing contained hundreds of entries, but few had Web site links or contact information. Also included are links to news and health resources that are not pain related but are possibly helpful.

### **Search Capabilities**

Although no global searching capabilities are available, navigation of the Web site is made possible by various other means. The "Site Map" page provides access to main sections and subsections and is the easiest way to navigate for the new visitor. "The Library," which contains the majority of pain articles, is the only area with direct search capability and it allows searches by author, article title, or key word. The key



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word search is *via* "pop-up" menu that contains all general categories but that does not allow for searching through the text of the articles. There are no search capabilities for the on-line CME/CE articles, and it is not clear that these articles are included in "The Library." Because this site continues to grow, better search capabilities will become a necessity.

**Summary**

The late Dr. Dannemiller had a vision of not attempting to provide all anesthesia knowledge, but to motivate others to recognize what they did not know and needed to learn. This philosophy lives on through his educational society and now through the Worldwide Congress on Pain Web site. It is an educational and informative resource for professional pain managers and their patients. Easy access to succinct reviews of the most recent literature about pain management will no doubt improve the quality of care provided by physicians. The

resources for pain patients provide expert advice and information, along with a place to discuss feelings and personal experiences. A patient with long-term pain who wants answers will be well served by reviewing the information at this Web site. The interaction may even prove to be therapeutic. The Worldwide Congress on Pain is well on its way to providing the most comprehensive resource for pain information on the Internet. It is no doubt worthy of its easily remembered URL, [www.pain.com](http://www.pain.com).

**Jeffrey M. Cusick, M.D.**

Chief of Anesthesiology  
374th Medical Group  
Yokota Air Base, Japan  
APO, AP 96326  
[jeff@cusick.com](mailto:jeff@cusick.com)