

REVIEWS OF WEB SITES

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Illustrated Notes in Regional Anesthesia

URL: <http://weber.u.washington.edu/~aelizaga/regional/welcome.html>

Author/Webmaster: Andrew M. Elizaga

This gem of a Web site is the brainchild of Dr. Elizaga. He writes, "These *Notes* serve as a personal statement on my enthusiasm for both regional anesthesia and the Internet . . . My hope is that sites such as this, made by individuals for the purpose of freely sharing information and experience, will continue to connect people—'mind to mind.'"

Diamonds are judged by the four "Cs"—clarity, color, cut and size in carats. Web sites can be judged using eight "Cs," assessing the text for content, comprehensiveness, clarity, credibility, and currency and assessing the design for convenience, creativity and connectedness. How does this site rate?

Content

The site contains 13 excellent monographs regarding issues related to regional anesthesia, including a description of seven common, major nerve blocks and four essays about relevant anatomy. An essay about ropivacaine and a case conference discussing the risks of epidural analgesia in a patient receiving low-molecular-weight heparin are especially topical.

Comprehensiveness

Although this is not an entire textbook of regional anesthesia, the topics discussed include many of the most commonly performed blocks, and the author promises to add more.

Clarity

The writing style is very crisp and clear. Use of bold one-line summaries to start each paragraph of the essay regarding ropivacaine is excellent; research has shown that most Web users skim pages of text on a screen and retain more information if the major points are highlighted or bulleted. The images used also are very clear.

Credibility

Dr. Elizaga is a clinical instructor with the Department of Anesthesiology, University of Washington. He is obviously enthusiastic about regional anesthesia and the Internet. He says, "There is no day in the operating room when I don't consult the Web from the anesthesia lounge and bring up PubMed." Some of the monographs are extensively referenced. The Web site, similar to a single-author journal, has not been peer reviewed.

Currency

The site has been developed for more than 1 year and is already in its third version. This suggests a commitment to keeping up to date. However, individual pages do not contain a date of last revision.

Convenience

The site has a clean look. Despite the use of some animated graphics, it loads quickly. There is no search engine, but the table of contents is quite clear and the site is relatively small. The site can be navigated in text-only mode.

Creativity

The site makes good use of tables to format the pages and frames to allow references or illustrations to be presented alongside the relevant text. There are some interesting graphic effects, including a spinning globe skewered by a regional block needle. There are a few QuickTime movies, but without a sound track it is difficult to understand what they are demonstrating. I prefer the use of streaming video technology, such as Real Player, which avoids the need to download the entire video file before starting to watch it.

Connectedness

A good site should allow readers to connect with the author and other relevant sites. Dr. Elizaga provides us with ample methods to reach him, even including a link to his pager. He also provides a few select links to other regional anesthesia resources.

Conclusion

There is a lack of good information about regional anesthesia available on the Internet. This site deserves to be more widely known because it makes a useful addition to the available resources. Dr. Elizaga should be commended, and encouraged to further develop this excellent site.

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