This issue features

1. Anatomy	J AINING
2. Breaking bad news	H ZAIDI
3. Thyroid disease	T SINGH, S RANDHAWA, A NAWAZ

Selected internet viewings

Welcome to the *Annals'* regular review of what's happening on the web, what your patients are reading and what caught our eye this month.

If you wish to review web sites in your area of expertise, please E-mail your completed reviews directly to me, **Richard Gibbs**, at r.gibbs@imperial.ac.uk. Authors must NOT submit their reviews more than once.

The editors regret that they cannot enter into correspondence with authors. It may be some months before your submission is reviewed.

Anatomy

JONATHON AINING

Gray's Anatomy of the Human Body

<http://www.bartleby.com/107/>

The online version of 'the bible' of anatomy. Very much in the format of the book, the home page consists of a chapter list and is simple to use. Topics can also be quickly accessed via the subject index and the site has a useful and reliable search engine. The illustrations are based on the original engravings and, although limited, are enlargeable and often in colour. As an online reference, this site is unsurpassed in terms of detail, although many will find the blocks of text dry and intimidating.**

Instant Anatomy

<http://www.instantanatomy.com/>

Designed by a current MRCS examiner, this site is specifically designed for examination preparation. The site is easy to navigate and consists of colourful and simple notes and illustrations. Although most of the contents including some self-test questions are accessible for free, further questions and higher resolution diagrams must be purchased on the CD-ROM advertised on the site. Nevertheless, this is still a superb site and ideal for those preparing for MRCS and similar examinations. This is definitely a website to tell your students and juniors about.****

Net anatomy

<http://www.netanatomy.com/>

This American website aimed at medical students and health professionals, covers radiographic, cross sectional and gross anatomy. The site is simple to navigate with good quality images and the format is consistent throughout the different sections. The comprehensive radiographic anatomy section includes plain films, contrast studies, CT and MRI scans. The cross sectional and gross anatomy sections contain photographs of organs and various cadaveric sections. All pictures are meticulously labelled and there is a useful 'test yourself' option. There are also useful revision notes on various topics downloadable in PDF for easy printing. Although some sections are still under construction, this site still offers an excellent library of cadaveric and radiological images and provides a useful resource for exam preparation or general revision.****

Anatomy TV

<http://www.anatomy.tv/default.aspx>

This easy-to-use site enables detailed inspection of any system in any part of the body in three dimensions. All images are of excellent quality. Orientations and angles can be altered and layers can be added or removed to understand anatomical relationships fully. This site also includes comprehensive text descriptions in every section and questions to test understanding. This is without question the best anatomy site encountered in this review, but unfortunately comes at a price. This site used to be free using an Athens password but was sadly withdrawn by NeLH for reasons of cost effectiveness. A 24-hour pass is freely available, although full access costs £179 a year for the site or £599 for the CD-ROM set.*****

Human Anatomy Online

<http://www.innerbody.com>

This site is designed to enable students and the general public to learn about the human body in a fun and interactive way. Each system is described using diagrams with further information available by clicking on the relevant part of the image. Accompanying animations and tutorials are also available for some topics. All systems are covered, although the information is brief and concise. We also had some difficulty viewing images on some hospital computers. A useful resource for non-healthcare professionals.**

Anatomy for beginners

<http://www.channel4.com/science/microsites/A/anatomy/>

This site accompanies the controversial television series *Anatomy for Beginners*. Only a simple overview of functional anatomy is provided covering movement, circulation, digestion and reproduction. Numerous photographs from public anatomy dissections are included. This is clearly aimed at a non-medical audience; therefore, the scientific benefit is limited.*

BBC The Human Body

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/body/>

This is a useful interactive site aimed at the general public. The main systems are briefly covered with helpful diagrams, interactive zones and useful facts and figures. This may be a good resource for patients, but the lack of detail limits its benefit for surgeons.**

Breaking bad news

H ZAIDI

Bradford Royal Infirmary, Bradford, West Yorkshire, UK

CORRESPONDENCE TO

Dr Hammad Zaidi, Clinical Fellow Surgery, Bradford Royal Infirmary, Duckworth Lane, Bradford BD9 6RJ, UK
E: drhammadraza@yahoo.com

Breaking bad news is one of a physician's most difficult duties; yet medical education typically offers little formal preparation for this daunting task. One source¹ defines bad news as 'any news that drastically and negatively alters the patient's view of her or his future'. Without proper training, the discomfort and uncertainty associated with breaking bad news may lead physicians to disengage from patients emotionally. Numerous studies show that patients generally desire frank and empathetic disclosure of a terminal diagnosis or other bad news. Following is a review of selected internet sites which provide insight to this topic and some up-to-date information and tips to breaking bad news.

Reference

1. Buckman R. Breaking bad news: why is it so difficult? *BMJ* 1984; **288**: 1597–9.

www.aafp.org

This web site was originally created by the American Association of Family Physicians. It is simple yet highly informative. It describes the basic steps involved in breaking a bad news. The use of ABCDE mnemonic makes the task very simple and explicable. This site is well constructed and a 'must read' for beginners.

www.breakingbadnews.co.uk

This website is designed to provide guidelines and practical suggestions to UK healthcare professionals on how to communicate

any medical information effectively and compassionately, and respond to a patient's and family's feelings and needs. The site discusses guidelines, strategies and resources. It outlines strategies to handle various difficult scenarios faced routinely in clinical practice. A good site for rehearsal and practice. But it could have been excellent if upgraded by practice videos and interactive materials.

www.communityoncology.net

Community Oncology is a journal website which publishes articles related to clinical research in the community setting. The website has broad relevance to the problems faced by clinical practitioners. It is a reliable, up-to-date and relevant clinical site which gives guidance on how to tackle common problems encountered in clinical practice. It describes in detail the famous SPIKE strategy used for breaking bad news, which includes: S, setting; P, preparation; I, invitation; K, knowledge; and E, empathy. A 'must read' site which eases the difficulties and removes any doubts regarding this difficult to tackle issue.

www.skillcascade.com

This website has been made possible with the support of Eastern Deanery and the resources are provided with the help of East Anglia communications skills cascade facilitators to promote and support the teaching of communication skills in health care. This web site covers important topics like preparation, setting the scene, sharing of information, being sensitive to a patient, planning and support, follow-up and closing. This site also gives information on various course plans, provides handouts, discusses specific issues and also gives good tips on communication skills.

www.gptraining.net

Welcome to gp-training.net, a new website derived from the Well Close Square website, one of the first GP surgeries in the UK to have its own web pages. The extensive site is divided into areas for doctor information and patient-related information. You can access the Neighbors 5 stage model of consultation used for breaking bad news. It is explained in a very simple yet logical manner. This is a well laid out site which is easy to read and follow.

Thyroid disease

T SINGH¹, S RANDHAWA², A NAWAZ¹

Departments of ¹Ear, Nose and Throat, and ²Medicine (Gastroenterology), New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton, UK

<http://www.endocrinesurgeon.co.uk/thyroid/index.html>

When searched for on Google, MSN or Askjeeves, information on thyroid disease is mainly provided by consultant endocrine or ENT surgeons. This website is a good example and was set up by two endocrine surgeons, a specialist endocrine anaesthetist and three biochemists. It certainly wins a prize for accessibility. This website is very easy to navigate. It goes through the basics of