1. Orthopaedic outcome scores
2. Peyronie's disease
3. Virtual colonography

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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.

Orthopaedic outcome scores

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As part of daily clinical practice, healthcare professionals commonly use outcome measures often in the form of questionnaires to assess the impact of illness on patients. There is great pressure on hospital trusts to assess their performance both in terms of clinical outcome as well as cost effectiveness. Collection of data for audit and research is an essential part of this. Outcome questionnaires greatly ease this task by providing common formats for data collection and analyses. There are several different instruments available for clinicians and this can be complicated by the existence of different measures for different specialties. In orthopaedics, for example, specific measures exist for different regions of the body. The authors of many of these have posted the questionnaires on the internet for ease of access and use. This article reviews some common orthopaedic scores that have web-based access.

Orthopaedic Scores

www.orthopaedicscores.com

This site provides access to the majority of outcome scores commonly quoted in the orthopaedic literature. This is the only site

of its kind, containing a comprehensive list of outcome scores all available from one easy-to-access webpage. The site is very user-friendly as the scores are organised by body region and also classified into clinician-completed and patient-completed scores. The latter can also be used over the phone or by post and then assessed by a clinician at a later date. All are freely available for use. The site will calculate the outcome score once details have been entered and provide the user with a printed copy. However, it is not possible to store information on the website to preserve patient confidentiality. In addition, a simple interpretation of the score is provided for ease of reference into excellent, good, fair and poor. This site is an excellent tool for professionals who regularly use orthopaedic outcome scores. ****

Shoulder Doc

www.shoulderdoc.co.uk

This is the home of the 'Oxford Shoulder Score' and is oriented towards providing information for patients on shoulder-related injuries and operations and also educational material for physicians. Created by Manchester-based orthopaedic surgeons, this site is easy to navigate as the information is split into relevant sections. The Oxford Shoulder Score can be accessed easily but users are required to interpret results themselves. In summary, this is a very user-friendly site with information regarding the Oxford Shoulder Score as well as information regarding common shoulder conditions. ****

Short Form 36

www.sf-36.org

The Short Form 36 was developed in 1990 and provides an 8-scale functional health profile, of both physical and mental health outcomes. The form can have various uses including population survey, assessing burden of disease, and determining the benefits produced by treatment. The website provides descriptions of the SF-36 and other tools from the same family. However, the forms and associated manuals are obtained from another website <www.qualitymetric.com> and are available after an online registration process and at a cost. The site is relatively easy to use providing a general introduction to the various forms, but more detailed information is available through the purchased manuals. The site also has a useful discussion forum whereby problems or difficulties can be remedied, often by the creators of the forms. ****

DASH Outcome Measure

www.dash.iwh.on.ca

DASH or 'Disabilities of the Arm, Shoulder and Hand' score is devised partly by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. This is a patient-filled questionnaire designed to measure functional outcomes. The site is straightforward and easy to orientate through. As the title of the website suggests, it only refers to the DASH outcome score and the shortened version, the QuickDASH. Both are available through the site; however, a manual is required to interpret the scores and a small fee is levied for this.***

Knee Injury and Osteoarthritis Outcome Score

www.koos.nu

This is a collective site for several measures focused at lower limb morbidity. The site also includes the Foot and Ankle Outcome score (FAOS), the Hip Disability and Osteoarthritis Outcome score (HAOS), and Rheumatoid and Arthritis Outcome Score (RAOS). The site is simply laid out and all scores are easy to access in several different languages. The authors also provide an Excel spreadsheet to input your scores making this site well rounded and easy to use.***

Peyronie's disease

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Peyronie first described this condition as 'rosary beads of scar tissue to cause an upward curvature of the penis during erection'.¹ Essentially, it is an acquired disorder of the tunica albuginea, characterised by a fibrous plaque. This may be associated with penile curvature, painful erection and erectile dysfunction. The prevalence of the disease may be as high as 3.2%.² Management is either non-surgical or surgical for severe symptomatic cases.

Peyronies.org

<http://www.peyronies.org/>

This refreshing site has a historical perspective with an etching of François de la Peyronie on the home page! The illustrations are clear and labelled well. The eMail forum is easy to access and the links to related sites are confined to a separate page. This site is suited to both doctor and patient alike. All in all, this is a brilliant website for this condition.*****

Peyronie's disease

<http://www.peyroniesdisease.co.uk/>

This is a high quality website that is somewhat in its infancy. Some of the pages are incomplete, but the sections relating to the disease and the management are excellent, with clear illustrations. Each page is free from non-Peyronie's related material. There are some helpful links on the site; unfortunately, half of them are not running as yet. Despite the fact the site is incomplete, it promises to be a first rate website with excellent background information and easy navigation.****

Urology Channel

<http://www.urologychannel.com/peyronies/index.shtml>

This sponsored website is designed by Healthcommunities.com an American on-line service for patients and doctors, with easy links to a variety of other Healthcommunities speciality websites. The overview is concise and clear, with some reference to medical and anatomical jargon. Although the subject is divided by headings that link to another page, this seems to work quite well – I imagine a patient will not feel swamped by a full screen of continuous text. An enduring criticism of this sponsored site is the busy appearance to each webpage. Sponsors' links are placed literally in the middle of each section. An offer to Join Our Forum and to Stay Updated via eMails is available, but requires registration. A couple of inoffensive line drawings may complete what is otherwise an easy-to-navigate website. It is unlikely to be well suited to the experienced urologist or trainee.**

bbc.co.uk

http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/ask_the_doctor/peyronies.shtml

A straightforward description of the condition, its diagnosis and management by Dr Trisha Macnair (a freelance medical journalist with a medical background). It is set in the style of a response to a patient enquiring about the disease. The prose is broken down by subheadings 'The causes', 'Treatment' and 'Surgery'. One might easily imagine it is a script from the perfect out-patient consultation. The lack of specific technical points means the site is better suited for patients. Nevertheless, the broad outline of the condition is not at all patronising to the professional or enthusiastic amateur alike. This section is in the 'Ask the Doctor' section of the BBC website. It is easy to navigate back to the search page with a subject index. This website is exactly what you would expect from the BBC – perfect grammar, plain English and free.***

Andromeda Andrology Centre

<http://www.peyroniesdisease.org/>

This site is run by an Indian group based at Hyderabad. The site seems more suited to a medical audience with blunt medical descriptions and quite a lot of jargon. Once again, the historical perspective (a single line explaining who Peyronie was) feels like the authors are keen to share as much as possible about this condition with us. The Krishnamurthi penile dorsal flap operation is referred to, and there is even a downloadable PDF – with fully illustrated operative instructions. The YouTube links that outline the surgical technique are quite impressive. This site is free to use, and is better suited to the medical profession than patients.****

Andrology Australia

<http://www.andrologyaustralia.org/pageContent.asp?pageCode=FSPEY>

This is an Australian Government funded initiative. The site is well laid out and easy to navigate. The site is aimed at patients more than professionals. The presence of a well-labelled illustration complements this easy-to-follow website. It provides limited detail regarding the specifics of treatment, but would be a clear reference for patients keen to learn more about this condition. As a medical research tool this site is limited, but for patients and relatives it would be ideal.****