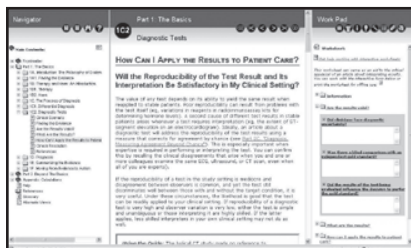**Users' Guides to the Medical Literature Interactive Web site**

www.usersguides.org

The *Users' Guides to the Medical Literature* Interactive Web site (www.usersguides.org) is an online resource with the stated goal of putting the "clinician in charge of the single most powerful resource in medicine," the medical literature. To achieve this goal, the resource has used the *Users' Guides to the Medical Literature: A Manual for Evidence-Based Clinical Practice* textbook (previously reviewed in *ACP Journal Club* [1] to develop interactive online materials designed to aid in understanding and teaching evidence-based medicine. Its target audience is "any clinician who wishes to understand the medical literature."

Designed and edited by Robert Hayward, the Web site is managed by the Centre for Health Evidence (www.cche.net) in collaboration with the Evidence-based Medicine Working Group and the editors and publishers of *JAMA* and the *Archives* journals. Anyone who purchases a copy of the *Users' Guides to the Medical Literature: A Manual for Evidence-Based Clinical Practice* textbook receives a free 60-day trial of the Web site. Subscribers to *JAMA* and the *Archives* journals also receive access.

Once you log onto the Web site, the initial screen shows you the Navigator (table of contents) adjacent to the text material. The Navigator can be closed to make the whole screen available for the text, but we preferred to keep it open to move easily from section to section within the Web site. The Navigator can be organized in several ways. The default method of organization is similar to that of the textbook and is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 provides an excellent review of evidence-based medicine basics, and Part 2 is a superb reference for those teaching evidence-based medicine or wanting to "practice evidence-based medicine at a more sophisticated level." You can also reorganize the Navigator into Validity, Results, and Applicability sections.

The text provided on the Web site is well written and easy to understand. The organization of materials is intuitive, and we particularly liked the use of clinical examples. You can review the materials by using the search option or by browsing and reading individual sections. We did not find the search option to be user friendly. You can also download the PDF version of each chapter for printing or transferring to your personal digital assistant.

The main strength of the Web site is its ease of interaction. For example, the Workpad screen can be opened beside the text screen. The Workpad offers an array of functions ranging from note taking to evidence-based medicine tips. The functions available in the Workpad differ according to section. The Workpad in the Diagnostic Tests section includes calculators for constructing 2×2 tables and calculating likelihood ratios, sensitivity, and specificity that you can use while reading the text or download to your personal digital assistant. It also provides an online interactive likelihood ratio nomogram (way cool!) and critical appraisal worksheets.

We found the extra tools available in the Diagnostic Tests section very useful, but unfortunately such tools were missing in most other sections. We were left wanting calculators for the number needed to treat in the Therapy section and a tool to calculate quality-adjusted life-years in the Economic Analysis section. The Workpads in these sections for taking notes and providing summary guides, definitions, and tips are fun but not as useful as those in the Diagnostic Tests section. Furthermore, we found that we could not save our work as we moved from one chapter to another.

References are dealt with in an amazing way. Not only are references provided in traditional bibliographies, a link to the entire reference also pops up, and you are often able to link directly to PubMed. The only way to make this more useful would be to have an export option into a reference manager system.

We found that the site worked well with Internet Explorer 5.0 but was less functional (no Workpad) and prone to glitches when viewed with Netscape. Some people may find this site easy to use immediately, but others may require a modest time investment to realize all of its benefits.

When we were asked to tackle this review, our initial thought was "not another book on evidence-based medicine." However, we were pleasantly surprised to discover that this resource is not just another evidence-based medicine book. It builds on the *Users' Guides to the Medical Literature: A Manual for Evidence-Based Clinical Practice* textbook and provides many useful tools. This Web site is a rare example of an online resource that takes advantage of the capabilities of online interaction. With some online books you are left asking, "What did I gain over a paper book?" But this is certainly not the case with *Users' Guides to the Medical Literature* Interactive Web site.

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Reference

1. **Kleinbart J, Williams MV.** Users' Guides to the Medical Literature: A Manual for Evidence-Based Clinical Practice [Resource Corner]. ACP J Club. 2002 Mar-Apr;136:A17.

Ratings:
Methods/Quality: ★★★★★
Clinical usefulness: ★★★★⯨