

Parallel Sessions B

B4 - From Consumer Health Information to Evidence Based Health Care

Friday, September 20, Room E, 10.30

## **Building MEDLINEplus – From Analysis to Enhancement**

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MEDLINEplus, the National Library of Medicine's consumer health website, was introduced in October 1998 to respond to an expressed need for health information written for the general public. In its first three years, it has grown from a site providing information on 22 major health conditions, to a comprehensive site offering the user selected information on over 550 topics. Sources of information include the National Institutes of Health and other US government agencies, professional organizations, and other authoritative sources. MEDLINEplus provides daily health news coverage, a medical encyclopedia, prescription and non-prescription drug information, interactive health tutorials, as well as links to consumer health libraries, organizations, dictionaries and directories.

NLM designed the website for an audience of patients, their families and the public, understanding that information specialists and health professionals would be major users as intermediaries. MEDLINEplus now has a global reach, with over 11 million page views and 1.3 million unique visitors from over 170 countries using the site each month. NLM has used a variety of methods to determine who is using MEDLINEplus, what health information is most needed by our diverse user populations, and most recently, indications of the impact of this information on user knowledge or behavior. This paper will describe the analysis and evaluation efforts to date, report major findings, and outline plans for future enhancements.