

MEDICINE on the Net[®]

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- The Heart Rhythm Society is an organization that provides science, education, and advocacy on heart rhythm disorders for professionals and patients.

The Quicken way to track health expenses

by Cynthia Johnson

As a self-proclaimed type A personality, project manager **Cecilia Anderson** is the epitome of orderliness. At the beginning of each year, she purchases a bill folder from her local Staples. Throughout the year, she dutifully files all of her copayment receipts, explanations of benefits, and doctor's bills into the partitioned section marked "Medical." She pulls receipts out when she needs to pay bills and refers to them when she completes her taxes. Then she files the folder away and buys another.

However, all that changed this year.

Anderson's husband received an e-mail from his employer asking CIGNA healthcare members whether they would be interested in using Quicken Health Expense Tracker by Intuit, Inc., of Mountain View, CA. Health Expense Tracker is an online, interactive way for individuals to organize, file, and reconcile their healthcare financial information. Intuit is also the maker of Quicken, a popular personal finance management tool.

Anderson, who banks online and keeps budget spreadsheets, swiftly signed up for the tool, hoping it would improve the way she manages her family's medical finances and do away with the manual and painstaking process associated with her ever-expanding file folder.

"There's nothing else that I know of that summarizes all of your medical appointments, copayments, and drug store payments into one tool," says Anderson. "You can quickly lose track of when medical events happened and what you paid. Throwing paper receipts into a folder that



you put in your basement isn't a very effective system."

Shred your bills; they've got you covered

The inspiration for Health Expense Tracker came from Dan Robinson, an engineering manager at Intuit, says **Peter Karpas**, senior vice president and general manager of Quicken Health Group.

At the time, Robinson had a child with medical bills in excess of \$1 million. He approached Intuit, which has a process that allows employees to suggest ideas for new products.

"He felt out of control and couldn't track the influx of paper," says Karpas. "He found this big

Track health expenses

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unmet need. Out of that came Quicken Medical Expense Manager.”

Users can purchase a desktop version of Medical Expense Manager for \$50, but to use it they would need to enter their medical data manually. Intuit further developed the product and created Health Expense Tracker, which allows insurers to download member data into the tool. Anderson has given permission to CIGNA to download her family’s medical information.

“There’s nothing I need to enter,” she says. “It’s not extra work. It’s like checking your bank account.”

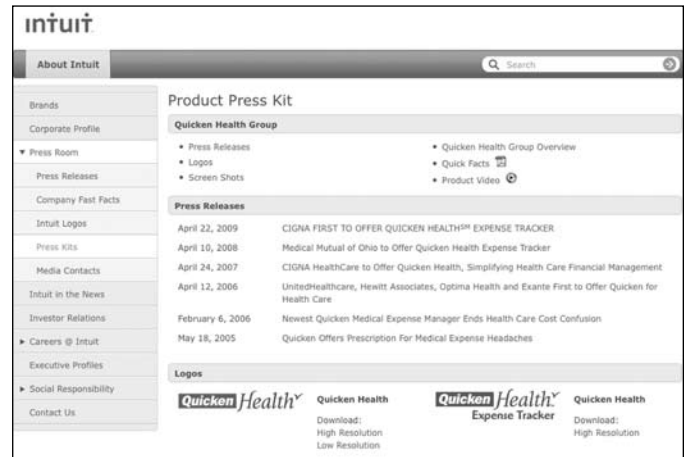
“Because we can get the raw data feeds from CIGNA, we can do so much more,” says Karpas.

The tool is free to members of participating insurance plans such as CIGNA, which was the first insurer to make the tool available to its members in April.

Karpas says the tool can be particularly helpful to people with families, caregivers, and those with chronic conditions. “If you interact with the healthcare system and you care about your money, Health Expense Tracker will help you,” he says.

Breaking a claim down into its components

These days, after a family member visits a healthcare provider, Anderson logs on to Health Expense Tracker to make




sure the visit has been added and reviews the available information. Users can also opt to receive e-mail alerts when a new claim is added to the tool.

You don’t have to be technically savvy to use the tool. “If you have any kind of Internet skills at all, you can at least review the information,” Anderson says. “It’s something that someone could do at work during lunch. It’s not time-consuming.”

Anderson can review how much her health plan has paid, how much she has paid, and how much she may still owe. In the future, CIGNA will enable users to pay medical bills online using a credit or debit card.

“It takes a claim and breaks it down into its components,” says **Jim Nastri**, CIGNA’s vice president of new product

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development. “Users can easily see how their benefits plan was applied, how much CIGNA paid, how much they would owe for the service, and why. It’s taking the guesswork out of that very complicated process today and making it easy for people to understand.”

The information users can review includes the date of the visit, the provider, and the services billed to the insurer. If a user doesn’t understand the medical term for a service, he or she can click on it for a definition. For example, if a service is listed as “squamous blepharitis,” a user can click on the mysterious term and find out that it refers to swelling of the eyelid.

If users disagree with the way a service was billed, Health Expense Tracker has a built-in Claims Assistant that provides advice for troubleshooting a claim, such as who to call and common questions to ask to resolve the problem. Although Anderson hasn’t needed to use the Claims Assistant yet, she did notice that her children’s pediatrician actually owed her \$20 for a well visit copayment that she was not required to pay. It showed up as a credit within the tool.

In addition to becoming a new Health Expense Tracker user, Anderson and her husband signed up for CIGNA’s healthcare flexible spending plan this year. She says the tool helps her identify what she needs to submit for reimbursement from the plan so she doesn’t lose the money that her family puts into it at the end of the year.

“It’s just one more thing that we keep track of using this tool,” she says.

The ‘aha’ moment

Seeing the full picture of what her insurance plan provides her family has been an eye-opener for Anderson. She says people complain about how expensive medical insurance is, but they rarely have the opportunity to see what they get in return.

“Health Expense Tracker gives you a dollar amount on the bottom of the page describing what the insurance has paid for you this year,” she says. “After one emergency room visit and some immunizations, your insurer has paid thousands of dollars and they’ve only taken out hundreds from your check. It really puts in front of you how much medical would cost you if you weren’t insured.”

Karpas says the ‘aha’ moment that Anderson experienced is transformational. “When she got that aha and if she takes

action against that aha, she wins, the health plan wins, the employer wins, and the doctor wins,” he says.

PHR qualities

“The goal of this project was simply to make the claim process easier and take away the administrative burden that can become frustrating and distracting for people,” says

continued on p. 4

Win-win for insurer, Intuit, and working mom

“It is the first and only product that makes the financial side of healthcare easier for consumers. We really are striving to transform the way they manage their healthcare finances.”

—Peter Karpas, senior vice president and general manager of Quicken Health Group

“The goal of this project was simply to make the claim process easier and take away the administrative burden that can become frustrating and distracting for people. The last thing we want is for people to spend an exorbitant amount of time trying to figure out their medical bills when they’re also trying to be compliant with care regimens.”

—Jim Nastri, vice president of new product development for CIGNA

“Health Expense Tracker gives you a dollar amount on the bottom of the page describing what the insurance has paid for you this year. After one emergency room visit and some immunizations, your insurer has paid thousands of dollars and they’ve only taken out hundreds from your check. It really puts in front of you how much medical would cost you if you weren’t insured.”

—Cecilia Anderson, CIGNA member

Painstaking process

Recent studies conducted by Intuit found that although 83% of individuals spend a significant amount of time trying to organize, file, and reconcile their healthcare financial information, only 34% read and understand their explanation of benefits.

Track health expenses

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Nastri. “The last thing we want is for people to spend an exorbitant amount of time trying to figure out their medical bills when they’re also trying to be compliant with care regimens.”

As the busy mother of two small children, Anderson, like many other mothers, takes her children to the pediatrician several times throughout the year, in between responsibilities such as driving her son to tennis and attending school board meetings. Although some visits are routine, other visits are for events such as her son’s hernia surgeries and her daughter’s broken nose.

Although it is not a personal health record (PHR), the tool provides users with some ability to track the medical experiences of their family members. Since the tool documents routine physicals, Anderson says she can look back and determine when a member of the family is due for his or her next physical.

The precare-to-postcare experience

Nastri says Health Expense Tracker is an interactive tool that complements the explanation of benefits and on-line claim view that CIGNA will continue to provide to its members.

“We are an enhancement of the offerings that CIGNA has in the market to enable individuals and patients to understand their healthcare finances,” says Karpas.

Nastri describes the tool as an important part of a suite of tools offered to members. Precare, CIGNA has tools that help members understand what their financial responsibility may be before a medical event.

“When someone actually has the event, the next piece of that is making that easy for them to understand and reconcile,” Nastri says. “This Quicken tool really fills that gap for us.”

Future development efforts

Intuit performed extensive research to develop Health Expense Tracker, including talking to more than 7,800 people, performing quantitative and qualitative studies, conducting in-depth interviews, and even going into people’s homes and watching them interact with the healthcare system as part of their “Follow Me Home” program. Intuit plans to

continue to pay attention to user feedback and improve the product in response.

Anderson has already put in one enhancement request. She would like CIGNA to incorporate data from the insurer’s dental plan into the tool. CIGNA and Quicken are working on making that happen in a future release.

In addition to making healthcare finances easier, the tool also aims to reduce costs for everyone involved. Through use of the tool, Karpas says CIGNA will be able to attract new business, employers will reduce costs, and consumers will be able to better manage their healthcare finances. ■

Tracking H1N1 with Twitter

The screenshot shows a Twitter profile for 'CDC Emergency'. The bio includes the name, location (Atlanta, GA), website, and a description of the CDC's role in emergency preparedness. It shows 74 followers and 133,332 following. A recent tweet from 'Following' reads: 'Conference Call Today 4-5PM ET, Pediatrics and novel H1N1 flu, 800-369-1826, passcode: 5072327 CDC COCA #h1n1 #swineflu'. Below it is an update from May 11, 2009: 'Update 5/11/09: 2618 total cases of novel H1N1 flu, 3 deaths, 44 states affected in US: http://bit.ly/dVJKO #swineflu #H1N1'. At the bottom, there is a transcript and audio file link for a CDC Press Conference on H1N1 Flu.

The popular social networking tool Twitter is being used by health organizations worldwide to provide the public with up-to-the-minute information as part of their disaster preparedness response to the H1N1 (swine) flu.

To access the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Twitter updates, visit <http://twitter.com/cdcemergency>. As of May 11, the CDC reported that there were 2,618 total cases of H1N1 flu, three deaths, and 44 affected states in the United States.

If you are interested in tracking the global spread of the virus, the World Health Organization (WHO) also has a Twitter account at <http://twitter.com/whonews>. As of May 11, the WHO stated that 30 countries officially reported 4,694 cases of the infection. Mexico has reported 1,626 laboratory-confirmed cases of the infection, including 48 deaths.

If you already use Twitter, click on the Follow button, and the updates will display on your Twitter home page.

New, on the net

Computer worm affecting hospital devices

A computer worm has affected hundreds of medical devices, such as MRI machines, at dozens of hospitals in the United States and other countries.

According to the *San Jose Mercury News*, the worm, known as Conficker, has not harmed any patients; however, technologists say it poses a potential threat to hospital operations.

Around March 24, researchers monitoring the worm noticed that an imaging machine used to review high-resolution images was reaching out over the Internet to get instructions. They presume the device was attempting to get instructions from the programmers who created the worm.

Conficker spreads by copying itself onto machines that are running Microsoft's Windows operating system and have not installed Microsoft's October 2008 security patch. After installing itself, the worm periodically reaches out for directions from its maker that causes it to rewrite its code.

At the peak of the worm's infection in early spring, the Conficker Working Group estimates that there were more than 10 million devices infected worldwide.

Experts have patched infected machines, but they have not been able to stop the worm's spread.

Few hospitals taking advantage of open-source VA software

West Virginia has created a paperless records system for its state-run hospitals and nursing homes, which serve the indigent elderly and mentally ill.

According to *The Boston Globe*, the state did so using an electronic medical

records system built by the Veterans Administration (VA). The VA software, known as VistA, is open-source and includes features such as a bar-coding system to track drug dispensations.

VistA has saved the state millions in licensing fees charged by commercial software vendors. In the United States, only 1.5% of hospitals have fully

AHRQ urges patients to ask doctors questions

The screenshot shows the AHRQ website with a navigation bar at the top including 'U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' and 'www.hhs.gov'. Below that is the AHRQ logo and 'Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality' with the tagline 'Advancing Excellence in Health Care'. A search bar is visible. The main content area features a large image of a doctor in a white coat holding a clipboard, with the text 'Questions are the Answer. Get More Involved With Your Health Care.' overlaid. To the left of the image is a vertical menu with links: Home Page, Reducing Medical Mistakes, Talking With Your Clinician, Getting Medical Tests, Planning For Surgery, Getting a Prescription, Build Your Question List, Resources, and Glossary. At the bottom of the screenshot, there is a section titled 'Improve Your Health Care' with a 'TEXT SIZE' selector and a 'Do You Know? the Right Questions to Ask' button. Below this button is a small text block: 'Clinicians, the Government, and many other groups are working hard to improve health care quality, but it's a team effort. You can improve your care and the care of your loved ones by taking an active role in your health care. Ask questions. Understand your condition.'

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is launching a campaign to encourage Americans to research and ask questions of their healthcare providers. According to *The Washington Post*, the public service announcements are meant to prompt people to ask questions and get involved with their healthcare.

The AHRQ's Web site has a tool that helps patients create a list of questions based on the nature of their visit to the doctor. The site contains nine categories that house suggested questions for encounters such as getting a new prescription or getting a recommendation to have surgery.

To use the tool, go to www.abrq.gov/questionsaretheanswer and click Did You Know?

New on the 'net

computerized records. Wealthier hospitals typically choose to buy more expensive, custom systems from private vendors. Smaller and more rural hospitals often continue using paper records.

U.S. health czar says EHRs need help from the government

According to a Reuters article, David Blumenthal, MD, head of the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, has said that electronic health records (EHR) need help from the government if the technology is to become widespread.

"It is clear that this field has not advanced [enough] ... when left exclusively to the private sector, so there is a public role," said Blumenthal.

Virtual patient advocate could enhance health literacy

Researchers at Boston Medical Center (BMC) are investigating whether a virtual patient advocate can improve real-life health literacy.

According to a HealthLeaders Media article, the virtual patient advocate is on clinical trial at BMC to increase patient understanding of postdischarge self-care regimens.

At the head of the study is Timothy Bickmore, PhD, an assistant professor of computer and information science at Northeastern University in Boston. Bickmore and his team of researchers hope the system can decrease patient

readmissions within 30 days of hospital discharge. He says about 20% of patients get readmitted within that time frame.

The system operates by having a clinical trial nurse enter a pre-discharge patient's information into a computer database. This generates an "After-Hospital Care Plan" personalized booklet for the patient.

After the booklet is created, the nurse wheels the computer to the patient's bedside on a kiosk and

gives the patient his or her pamphlet. The patient interacts with the advocate character using a touch-screen display to go over his or her care instructions.

The system allows patients to review medication lists, follow-up appointments, primary diagnoses, pending lab tests, durable medical equipment needed at home, and recommendations for diet and exercise. It also creates a list of questions the patient can review with the nurse at the end of the interaction.

Kaiser says 3 million enrollees are tracking their health online



Kaiser Permanente says more than 3 million of its 8.6 million enrollees now use Kaiser's My Health Manager, an online personal health record (PHR). According to the *San Francisco Business Times*, this accounts for more than one-third of its total enrollment, making it the most used PHR nationwide. About 80,000 enrollees are signing up per month.

My Health Manager is available to all adult enrollees in the Kaiser Foundation Health Plan. It allows members to access PHRs from home, e-mail their physicians, order prescriptions, view lab results, and make, change, and cancel appointments for themselves or family members.

Industry weighs use of virtual colonoscopies

Invented 16 years ago, the virtual colonoscopy has become an increasingly popular alternative to standard, or optical, colonoscopy. According to *The Washington Post*, the procedure has received endorsements as a first-line screening test from influential medical groups.

However, in February, officials at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a preliminary decision not to cover the procedure as a mass screening test for Medicare recipients.

CMS cited concerns about radiation exposure and the number of patients who would require follow-up colonoscopies to remove polyps. It also noted the inability of CT scans to reliably detect small or flat growths.

CMS officials voted May 12 not to approve virtual colonoscopies.

Kaiser members to store health information on USB drive

Kaiser Permanente has developed a system that lets its members store their health information on a USB flash drive that they can carry with them on business trips and vacations.

According to *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, for \$5, Kaiser members can get a thumb-sized digital memory device that contains an accurate, up-to-date summary of their health information in a format that any doctor with a computer can read.

The device contains information such as the member's emergency contacts, physicians, medical issues, allergies, current medications, lab results from the past year, and readings and images from recent EKGs and chest x-rays. It cannot hold a patient's complete electronic medical record.

The drive is encrypted and password protected. The information cannot be changed by the member or the doctor, but patients can get their devices updated for free.

AMA to offer electronic shopping for doctors

The AMA is developing a Web-based service offering doctors electronic prescribing, up-to-date reference material, and other resources.

According to the Associated Press, the goal of the service is to make it easier for physicians to adopt the technology President Obama is promoting for healthcare reform, streamline their workload, and improve patient care.

The service is being pilot-tested and will be offered to doctors nationwide early next year.

No details have been given regarding what the AMA will charge for the service, which will be offered to members at a discount.

HHS issues guidance on securing personal health information

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has issued a proposal for a security breach notification.

According to a HealthLeaders Media article, the 20-page HHS report defines acceptable conditions for covered entities and business associates to encrypt or destroy their private patient data to secure protected health information (PHI) and prevent a breach.

The guidance also includes the technologies and methods specified by the secretary of HHS that render PHI "unusable, unreadable, or undecipherable to unauthorized individuals."

Covered entities and business associates are not required to follow the guidance. However, if they do, it creates a safe harbor and protects them from the notification requirements should a security breach occur. It will also help them determine whether their facility had a breach of patient privacy.

The final guidance will be released by August 17.

Personal health records raising doubt

Doctors are raising concerns regarding personal health records (PHR) such as Google Health, saying that inaccurate information from billing data could lead to improper treatment if the information is used clinically.

According to *The Boston Globe*, some of the information in these records is drawn from billing records, which sometimes reflect imprecise information plugged into codes required by insurers.

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Inaccuracies could pose problems. For example, an inaccurate diagnosis of gastrointestinal bleeding on a heart attack patient's PHR could stop an emergency room doctor from administering a life-saving drug.

Survey: More IT workers are dissatisfied

An *Information Week* survey has revealed that more information technology (IT) professionals are feeling less secure about their jobs.

According to the *South Florida Business Journal*, staff-level IT professionals earn an annual median of \$80,000 in total compensation, whereas managers earn a median of \$105,000. The survey found that median raises were just 0.7% for staff members and 1.6% for managers.

Fears about job security among IT professionals is at its highest rate since 2004, with 13% saying they felt their jobs were insecure, up from 8% last year.

Thirty-seven percent consider their jobs to be very secure, which is down from 51% last year.

Two-thirds of the professionals are satisfied or very satisfied, whereas 11% are dissatisfied.

The results of the survey were compiled from 12,410 responses from IT professionals in the United States.

Senate confirms Sebelius

The Senate has confirmed Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius as the 21st secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Google and Microsoft executives named to Obama's council

Google CEO Eric Schmidt and Microsoft chief research and strategy officer Craig Mundie have agreed to be part of President Obama's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology.

According to *The Washington Post*, the remaining council appointees consist of academics.

Schmidt and Mundie have both been Obama supporters. Schmidt campaigned for Obama and served as an advisor on technology issues during the campaign. Mundie donated \$25,000 to the president's inauguration.

Beth Israel stops sending insurance data to Google

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center's (BIDMC) top technology

executive acknowledged that it was a mistake to send insurance claims data to Google Health as a way of summarizing patients' medical histories.

According to *The Boston Globe*, BIDMC has discontinued the practice as of April 17.

In the past, the *Globe* has reported that claims data is prone to inaccuracies, especially for patients with complex health problems.

These inaccuracies could make their way into medical records if doctors make decisions based on bad information.

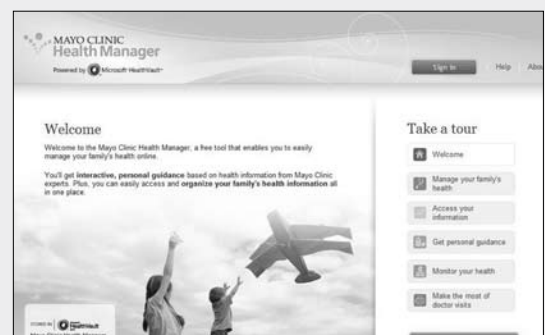
Obama names Chopra as chief technology officer

President Obama has named Aneesh Chopra, currently Virginia's secretary of technology, as chief technology officer.

Mayo opens private medical data Web site

Mayo Clinic is the latest to offer a free, secure Web site where anyone can store and organize their medical information. According to the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, unlike tools such as Google Health, Mayo Clinic Manager will also push out customized information, such as reminders for checkups. The more information a patient enters, the more personalized the healthcare reminders and guidance he or she will receive. The clinic is using Microsoft's HealthVault software for the site.

To visit the site, go to <https://healthmanager.mayoclinic.com/Default.aspx>.



New on the net

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota to roll out virtual clinic

Starting this fall, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota will offer its 10,000 employees and dependents the opportunity to use a virtual clinic. According to the *Star Tribune*, the clinic is a Web site that, for a flat fee, can connect members with a doctor for a live 10-minute consultation.

When the system goes live, doctors throughout Minnesota will be able to use a video camera or instant messaging to diagnose and treat anything from headaches to urinary infections without seeing patients in person.

GE Healthcare to eliminate jobs

GE Healthcare informed the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development that it will eliminate 179 jobs later this year at its plant on Milwaukee's northwest side.

According to BizTimes.com, the medical systems and bioscience division of General Electric Co. will

continue to employ about 725 people at the manufacturing site. Layoffs will begin June 9 and continue through December 31.

TELUS licenses Microsoft HealthVault to launch Canada's first e-health platform

TELUS Health Solutions, a Canadian telecommunications company, has signed an agreement with Microsoft Corp. to license the HealthVault platform and develop a consumer-driven health information technology offering for Canadians: TELUS Health Space.

The service will be the first of its kind in Canada. It will let users manage and store their personal health information and have access to applications such as personal health records, chronic disease management, pediatric care, and wellness products that will allow them to better manage their health and the health of their family.

"What was once thought impossible is now a reality. Canadians have been

demanding the ability to manage their health electronically, and soon they will be able to do it with a lifelong record provided by TELUS," François Côté, president of TELUS, said in a press release. "We are very excited to be working with Microsoft because of their clear commitment to healthcare, their track record in delivering world-class software solutions, and ability to attract leading application providers to their platforms."

Ovid expands its medical e-book offerings

Ovid, which develops and delivers customized electronic research information, has announced that 60 e-books from Clinical Publishing, an independent medical publisher, will be available on OvidSP this year. Many of the titles are already for sale and accessible through Books@Ovid, OvidSP's e-book platform. All titles will be available to Ovid's global customer base as an annual subscription or for one-time purchase. ■

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HEALTHCARE GUIDE TO THE INTERNET

Focus: Heart rhythm disorder resources

by Cynthia Johnson

World Heart Rhythm Week will be held June 8–14 to raise awareness about cardiac arrhythmias. Arrhythmias are disorders of the heart’s regular rhythmic beating.

According to the American Heart Association (AHA), approximately 2.2 million Americans are living with atrial fibrillation (a type of rhythm disorder). Some arrhythmias are minor, whereas others may indicate a serious problem and result in heart disease, stroke, or sudden cardiac death.

The AHA’s arrhythmia page (www.americanheart.org) contains information aimed at healthcare professionals and patients. The site contains helpful medical illustrations and animations of arrhythmias. It also contains an overview of the disorder, symptoms, treatment options, and much more.

CardioSmart (www.cardiosmart.org) is another great site to visit. It is the patient education site of the American College

of Cardiology (ACC). In addition to a video library, the site houses basic information about the disorder and detailed information about the tests and procedures that healthcare professionals use to diagnose it.

The Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes (SADS) Foundation (www.sads.org) is the third site you should consider visiting. The foundation works to support the families of children and young adults who are genetically predisposed to sudden death due to heart rhythm abnormalities. The site contains guidance for the newly diagnosed, advice for living with SADS, school care plans, support group resources, discussion boards, and much more.

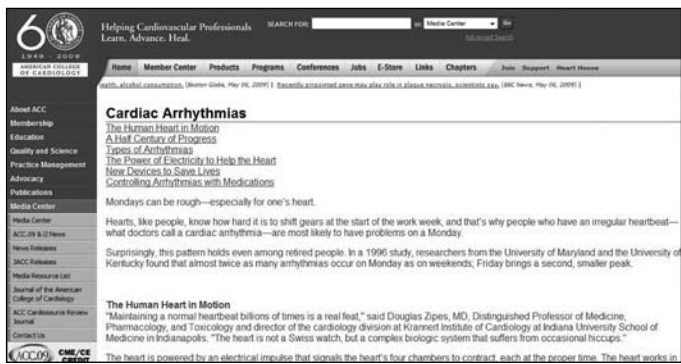
Several heart rhythm disorder resources are described and reviewed in the following pages, as listed in the index below, using the five-star system to rate each on content, interface, and style.

OUR SITE-RATING SYSTEM

| | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|------------|-----------|----------|
| ***** | **** | *** | ** | * |
| Excellent | Very good | Good | Fair | Adequate |

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American College of Cardiology: Cardiac Arrhythmias

www.acc.org/media/patient/chd/cardiac_arrhythmias.htm

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: ****

The ACC advocates for quality cardiovascular care and to influence healthcare policy through education, research promotion, development, and application of standards and guidelines. You can navigate the ACC site using the top or left-hand navigation links. You can also click on links to featured content on the site’s home page, such as videos.

The arrhythmia section of this site contains the following key features:

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- » A description of the human heart in motion
- » Information on the types of arrhythmias—premature beats, atrial fibrillation, bradycardia, tachycardia, and ventricular arrhythmias
- » How doctors use electricity to help a patient’s heart through the use of pacemakers
- » Other devices that save the lives of patients who have arrhythmias
- » How healthcare professionals can control arrhythmias with medications, such as warfarin and beta-blockers

Unique elements: The site looks at progress in the field of arrhythmias compared to 50 years ago, including the development of many lifesaving treatments.

Comments: The site contains a wealth of additional resources on other cardiovascular topics; simply enter what you’re looking for in the Search field.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: arrhythmia, heart rhythm abnormalities, cardiac arrhythmias, American College of Cardiology, ACC.

American Heart Association: Arrhythmias

www.americanheart.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

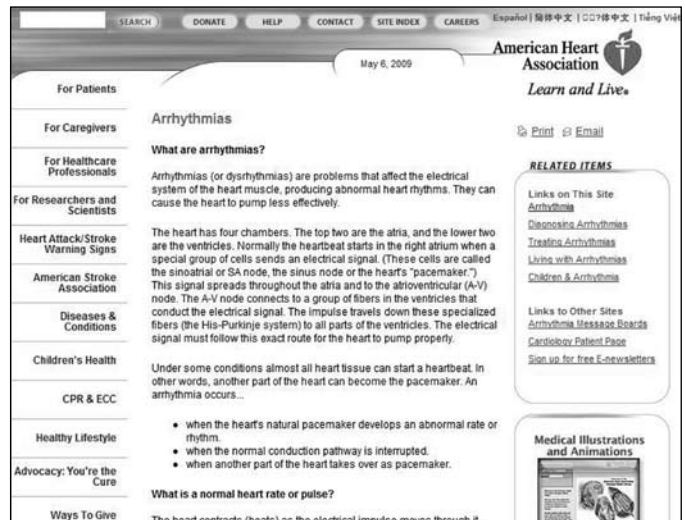
The AHA is a national voluntary health agency whose mission is to build healthier lives free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. The association aims to reduce coronary heart disease, stroke, and risk by 25% by 2010. According to the AHA, arrhythmias may lead to stroke or sudden death.

You can navigate the AHA Web site using the top or left-hand navigation links. You can also click on links to featured content on the site’s home page.

To access the information on arrhythmias, click Diseases & Conditions, then select Arrhythmias. The arrhythmia section contains two areas: one for patients and families and another for healthcare professionals.

The professionals area contains in-depth information about the cardiac conduction system, electrocardiography, atrial and ventricular depolarization changes, myocardial ischemia, heart block, and much more.

The patients and families section contains the following key features:



- » An overview of the disorder
- » Information on types of arrhythmias
- » Causes and symptoms associated with the disorder
- » How healthcare professionals diagnose arrhythmias
- » How arrhythmias affect children
- » Risk factors for arrhythmias
- » Treatment options
- » Patient stories
- » Arrhythmia-related news articles
- » How to obtain a personalized atrial fibrillation treatment plan

Unique elements: The site contains medical illustrations and animations of arrhythmias and other topics so users can see the heart at work.

Comments: Users can sign up for the association’s free monthly arrhythmia e-newsletter.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: Visit <http://americanheart.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=95> to view a complete list of feeds, or select News, then click RSS Feeds.

Keywords: arrhythmia, heart rhythm abnormalities, American Heart Association, AHA.

CardioSmart: Arrhythmias

www.cardiosmart.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

CardioSmart is the patient education side of the ACC. The site’s mission is “to engage, inform, and empower

patients to better prepare them for participation in their own care.”

Users can navigate the site using the top-level navigation links, some of which lead to drop-down menu options. You can also click on links to featured content on the site's home page, such as cardiology-related news articles. To access the arrhythmia content on the site, click “Learn about heart disease” and select Arrhythmias.

Key features of this site include:

- » Basic facts about arrhythmias
- » Information on the types of arrhythmias, such as premature (extra) beats
- » Causes of the disorder, such as stress, heavy exercise, and alcohol use
- » Risk factors, such as heart attack, heart failure, and congenital problems
- » Signs and symptoms of arrhythmia, such as chest pain, sweating, fainting, and weakness
- » How healthcare professionals diagnose the condition
- » Tests and procedures used on patients who have arrhythmia, including EKGs, blood tests, and chest x-rays
- » Treatment options, including medications, medical procedures, and surgery
- » Sources of additional information
- » Cardiology-related news
- » Patient stories

Unique elements: The site contains a video library.

Comments: The site is free of advertisements.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: arrhythmia, heart rhythm abnormalities, cardiac arrhythmias, American College of Cardiology, ACC, CardioSmart.

FamilyDoctor.org

www.familydoctor.org

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: ****

FamilyDoctor.org is operated by the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), a national medical organization representing more than 93,700 family physicians, family practice residents, and medical students.

You can navigate this site using the top-level navigation tabs or by clicking on links to featured content on the site's home page.

To access the arrhythmia information on the site, select Conditions A–Z, click A, and select Arrhythmia.

Key features of this site include:

- » An overview of arrhythmia
- » Causes of the disorder
- » Arrhythmia symptoms
- » Information about whether arrhythmias are serious
- » A description of the various types of arrhythmias
- » Treatment options, such as surgery, medication, pacemakers, and atrial defibrillation
- » Links to external sites with additional information

Unique elements: The information on the site has been written and reviewed by physicians and patient education professionals at the AAFP.

Comments: The information on the site is available in Spanish and English.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: arrhythmia, heart rhythm abnormalities, FamilyDoctor.org, American Academy of Family Physicians, AAFP.



HeartHealthyWomen.org: Arrhythmias
www.hearthealthywomen.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

HeartHealthyWomen.org is a joint project of the Cardiovascular Research Foundation, the Office on Women's Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and WomenHeart.

The mission of the site is to provide women with in-depth information on the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of heart and blood vessel diseases. The site also aims to encourage women to participate in clinical trials of cardiovascular disease.

You can navigate this site using the top-level navigation tabs. You can also click on links to featured content on the site's home page, such as links to hot topics. To access the arrhythmia information on the site, select Cardiovascular Disease, then click Heart Rhythm Problems.

Key features of this site include:

- » An overview of the disorder
- » Guidance on what causes arrhythmias
- » Symptoms associated with the disorder, such as heart flutters, dizziness, faintness, and chest pain
- » Information about what happens in the heart during an arrhythmia
- » A definition of heart block
- » Health and wellness information
- » Descriptions of various tests

- » Descriptions of the different types of arrhythmias, such as sinus arrhythmia, sick sinus syndrome, sinus tachycardia, and atrial flutter
- » How physicians diagnose the disorder
- » Treatment options, such as medication, cardioversion, implantable cardioverter defibrillators, pacemakers, and surgery
- » News articles
- » Links to additional resources
- » An ask the expert feature

Unique elements: Users can subscribe to the site's monthly newsletter by entering their e-mail address on the home page and clicking Submit.

Comments: The site contains information on several other cardiovascular topics that may be of interest to users, such as coronary artery disease, heart attack, and angina.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: Cardiovascular Research Foundation Publications, HeartHealthyWomen.org, arrhythmia, heart rhythm abnormalities.



KidsHealth: Arrhythmias

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/medical/heart/arrhythmias.html>

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

KidsHealth is a popular Web site that contains information about health, behavior, and development from before

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birth through the teen years. It is part of The Nemours Foundation's Center for Children's Health Media. The site provides families with advice on a wide range of physical, emotional, and behavioral issues that affect children and teenagers.

You can navigate this site using the left-hand navigation menu. Note that the site contains information aimed at parents, children, and teens, so select the content that best meets your needs and point of view. You'll find tabs at the top of the page with these selections.

The Parents article on arrhythmia contains the following key features:

- » Information on what causes arrhythmias
- » Signs and symptoms of the disorder
- » Information about a normal heart rate
- » How healthcare professionals diagnose arrhythmias in children
- » Treatment options for arrhythmias
- » When to consult with a medical professional
- » Links to additional resources

Unique elements: The For Parents and For Teens tabs at the top of the page contain links to additional articles within the site that are related to arrhythmias, such as High Blood Pressure, Heart Murmurs and Your Child, When Your Baby Is Born with a Health Problem, and much more.

Comments: You can click on words that you are unfamiliar with and the site will define the term for you.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: arrhythmia, heart rhythm abnormalities, Nemours Foundation, KidsHealth.

National Heart Lung and Blood Institute: Arrhythmia

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/diseases/arr/arr_what.html

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: ****

The National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The institute provides leadership for a national program in diseases of the heart, blood vessels, lung, and blood; blood resources; and sleep disorders.

NHLBI developed a Diseases and Conditions Index site that contains plain-language health information for patients and the public.

You can navigate this site using the top navigation links. Access arrhythmia information by selecting A and clicking Arrhythmia.

Key features of this site include:

- » An overview of the disorder
- » A description of the types of arrhythmias
- » Causes of arrhythmias, such as stress, smoking, heavy alcohol use, strenuous exercise, and certain drugs
- » Risk factors for arrhythmias
- » Signs and symptoms of arrhythmias
- » How healthcare professionals diagnose the disorder
- » Advice for living with arrhythmias, many of which are harmless
- » Links to external resources

Unique elements: The site contains detailed information on available treatment options, such as medication, medical procedures, and surgery.

Comments: To view a high-level summary of the information in the arrhythmia section, click the Key Points link on the left-hand side of the page.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: arrhythmia, heart rhythm abnormalities, National Institutes of Health, NIH, National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, NHLBI.

Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes Foundation

www.sads.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

The mission of SADS is to save lives and support the families of children and young adults who are genetically predisposed to sudden death due to heart rhythm abnormalities.

You can navigate this site using the top-level navigation links, many of which lead to drop-down menus. You can also click on information based on your point of view (e.g., patient and family support or medical professional education). There are also links to featured content on the site's home page, such as surveys.



The Medical Professional Education section of the site is a good place to start. It houses scientific articles and a quarterly literature review. It also contains links to other areas of interest within the site, such as SADS special programs.

Key features of this site include:

- » Advice for the newly diagnosed
- » An overview of SADS
- » Guidance for living with SADS, such as drugs to avoid and advice about playing sports and exercising
- » How physicians diagnose SADS
- » Treatment information
- » School care plans
- » Support group resources
- » Stories from families affected by SADS

- » Genetic testing advice
- » Arrhythmia-related news
- » Event information, including a calendar
- » Newsletter archives
- » Links to external resources

Unique elements: The site contains an online discussion board where users can exchange thoughts and experiences with like-minded people.

Comments: Visitors can request awareness materials through the site.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: arrhythmia, heart rhythm abnormalities, sudden arrhythmia death syndrome, SADS, SADS Foundation.

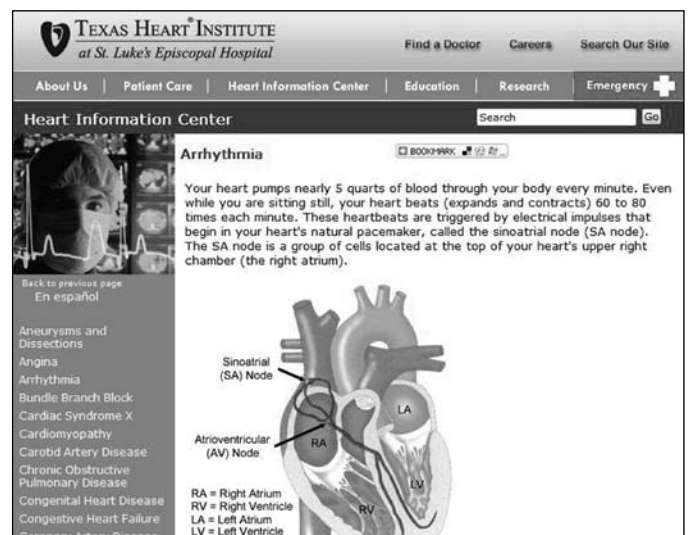
Texas Heart Institute at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital: Arrhythmia

www.texasheartinstitute.org/hic/topics/cond/arrhythmia.cfm

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: ***** Style: *****

The Texas Heart Institute at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital works to reduce the toll of cardiovascular disease by offering reliable information to site visitors. The site contains patient care information, heart health content, and risk factor information.

You can navigate this site using the top-level navigation links, some of which lead to additional drop-down menu



options. You can also click on links to featured content on the site's home page, such as how to recognize the signs of a stroke.

To access the content on arrhythmias, click Heart Information Center, select Heart-Health Topics, select Heart Conditions, and click Arrhythmia.

Key features of this site include:

- » An overview of arrhythmia
- » Information on the types of arrhythmia—bradycardia, tachycardia, and fibrillation
- » A definition of heart block
- » Symptoms of arrhythmia, such as shortness of breath, dizziness, and a racing heartbeat
- » How healthcare professionals diagnose arrhythmia using electrophysiology studies, Holter monitoring, EKGs, and other techniques
- » Arrhythmia treatments, such as radiofrequency ablation, pacemakers, and medications
- » Categories of arrhythmia
- » Content about related syndromes such as long QT and sick sinus

Unique elements: Users can quickly bookmark and share the page with others using tools such as Twitter and Facebook.

Comments: The arrhythmia section contains links to external resources.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: arrhythmia, heart rhythm abnormalities, Texas Heart Institute, THI, St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital.

Understanding Arrhythmias

www.fluttertreatment.com

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

The mission of Arrhythmia in Practice Today is to advance collaboration between cardiologists and other practitioners and influence the management of arrhythmias to achieve better outcomes and improved quality of life for patients. The site is sponsored by Boston Scientific.

You can navigate this site using the top-level navigation links or by clicking on links to featured content on the site's home page.

Key features of this site include:

- » A description of how the heart works
- » An overview of arrhythmias
- » Information on the various types of arrhythmias
- » Information on treatment options, including lifestyle changes, medication, cardioversion, and cardiac ablation
- » A glossary of terms related to arrhythmia
- » Answers to FAQs
- » An overview of atrial flutter
- » Clinical evidence
- » Clinical practice guidelines
- » Case studies
- » Clinical trials
- » Journal articles
- » A resource center that contains a multimedia gallery, an image library, a print library, and links




Unique elements: The site contains a video series that explains how the heart works, how arrhythmias affect the way the heart beats, and the various treatments that are available.

Comments: Users can download the site's "Guide to Arrhythmias." Healthcare professionals can order copies for patients.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: arrhythmia, heart rhythm abnormalities, atrial flutter, understanding arrhythmias, Boston Scientific, Arrhythmia in Practice Today. 

HEALTHCARE GUIDE TO THE INTERNET

Focus: Dystonia resources

by Cynthia Johnson

Dystonia is a movement disorder that causes the muscles to contract and spasm involuntarily. According to the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation (DMRF) (www.dystonia-foundation.org), the neurological mechanism that makes muscles relax when they are not in use does not function properly in dystonia patients. The involuntary contractions force the body into repetitive and often twisting movements and irregular postures.

The DMRF is a great place to start searching for information. The site contains basic and detailed information on dystonia as well as specific information aimed at teens and children, which other sites do not have.

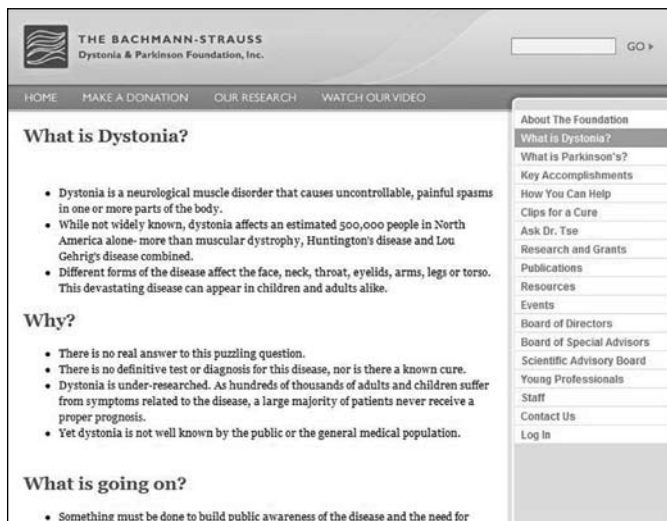
Another great resource is the Movement Disorder Society (MDS) (www.movementdisorders.org). The international professional society's site contains e-learning, online journals, slide sets, a video library, and a case of the month. You can also research other movement disorders on the site.

The third site you should consider visiting is We Move (www.wemove.org), an Internet-based resource for movement disorder information and activities. The site contains Webinars, discussion forums, awareness videos, online polls, patient stories, and much more.

Several dystonia resources are described and reviewed in the following pages, as listed in the index below, using the five-star system to rate each on content, interface, and style.

OUR SITE-RATING SYSTEM

| | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|------|------|----------|
| ***** | **** | *** | ** | * |
| Excellent | Very good | Good | Fair | Adequate |



The Bachman-Strauss Dystonia & Parkinson Foundation, Inc.

www.dystonia-parkinsons.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

Established in 1955, The Bachman-Strauss Dystonia & Parkinson Foundation works to find better treatments and cures for movement disorders such as dystonia and Parkinson's disease and to provide medical and patient information. The foundation often provides seed money to help explore promising research hypotheses.

You can navigate this site using the top and right-hand navigation links. You can also click on links to featured information on the site's home page, such as its 2009 marathon team.

- Key features of this site include:
- » A basic overview of dystonia
 - » Information on the three types of dystonia: primary, secondary, and tardive

Index: Dystonia resources

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- » A list of symptoms associated with the disorder, such as muscle spasms, twitching, and abnormal and painful postures or poses
- » Insight into the potential causes of dystonia
- » Treatment information, which depends on the region of the body affected and the severity of the symptoms
- » Surgical options
- » How physicians diagnose the disorder
- » Areas of the body where dystonia may occur, including an anatomical chart
- » A list of the foundation's key accomplishments
- » Research and grant information
- » Event information

Unique elements: Users can access *The Newsletter of the Bachmann-Strauss Dystonia Foundation, Inc.* by clicking on the Publications link.

Comments: The site contains an ask the expert feature in which users can pose questions to a medical specialist.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: dystonia, movement disorders, neurological disorders, The Bachmann-Strauss Dystonia & Parkinson Foundation.

Care4Dystonia

www.care4dystonia.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: **** Style: *****

Care4Dystonia is a nationwide, community-based health organization. The organization's mission is to improve

patient care, create awareness, collaborate with other organizations, and educate others about the diagnosis and treatment of dystonia.

You can navigate this site using the left-hand navigation menus, some of which expand to display additional menu options. The home page also contains links to featured content.

Key features of this site include:

- » Research news
- » Dystonia community news
- » Access to an online newsletter called *In Motion* that covers issues related to disability, healthcare reform, new treatments, personal stories, research updates, and much more
- » An overview of the disease
- » Risk factors
- » A section aimed at kids that contains information about the nervous system, brain teasers, mazes, and other activities
- » Treatment options for dystonia, such as oral medications, botulinum toxin, deep brain stimulation surgery, nutrition, and selective denervation
- » How to manage pain
- » Coping with the disorder
- » Alternative therapy options
- » An online library containing stories, experiences, struggles, and accomplishments of others with the disorder

Unique elements: The home page contains an informative awareness video.

Comments: The site contains a blog by the organization's founder.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: dystonia, movement disorders, neurological disorders, dystonia awareness, Care4Dystonia.

Dopa-Responsive Dystonia Central

www.drdcentral.com

Ratings: Content: *** Interface: *** Style: ***

The Dopa-Responsive Dystonia Central site is aimed at patients and parents of patients looking for information about dopa-responsive dystonia (DRD). DRD is a term used to classify a group of movement disorders that are effectively treated with L-Dopa drugs such as Sinemet.



Key features of this site include:

- » Links to additional external resources
- » An informational medication registry
- » A message board

Unique elements: The site contains links to YouTube videos.

Comments: The site is pretty bare-bones, but it will point you in the direction of additional resources.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: dystonia, movement disorders, neurological disorders, Dopa-Responsive Dystonia Central.

Dystonia Medical Research Foundation

www.dystonia-foundation.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

Founded in 1976, the DMRF is a 501(c)(3) organization that serves people with dystonia and their families. The Chicago-based foundation's mission is to advance research for more treatments, promote awareness and education, and support the needs and well-being of affected individuals and their families.

You can navigate this site using the top-level navigation links. You can also click on links to featured content on the site's home page, such as upcoming event listings.

Key features of this site include:

- » Basic information about the disorder
- » How physicians diagnose dystonia
- » Forms of dystonia, such as focal dystonia, musicians' dystonia, early onset, and secondary dystonias
- » Prognosis for those with the disorder

- » A list of related and differential disorders, such as deafness-dystonia-optic neuropathy syndrome
- » Information on available treatments, such as nondrug therapies, oral medications, botulinum toxin injections, surgery, and complementary therapy
- » Support group information
- » Research into the disorder
- » Information about clinical trials looking for participants
- » A calendar of events
- » Brochures and materials
- » Answers to FAQs
- » A glossary of terms



Unique elements: The site contains information aimed at kids and teens. You'll find an example of this in the Treatment section.

Comments: Other resources on the site include dystonia-related news articles, a physician locator tool, and links to external resources.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: dystonia, movement disorders, neurological disorders, Dystonia Medical Research Foundation, DMRF.

The Dystonia Society

www.dystonia.org.uk

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: ****

Based in the United Kingdom, The Dystonia Society (DS) provides support for dystonia sufferers and raises awareness of the condition through education and the promotion of research.



You can navigate this site using the left-hand navigation link. You can also click on links to featured content on the site's home page, such as news and events.

Key features of this site include:

- » Basic information about the disease
- » Answers to FAQs
- » Information about the types of dystonia
- » Treatment options for the disorder, such as botulinum toxin
- » Fact sheets about living with dystonia
- » Access to the society's newsletter, *Dystoniamatters*

Unique elements: The site has a message board that contains notices and news items related to society members.

Comments: Other resources on the site include news and event information.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: dystonia, movement disorders, neurological disorders, The Dystonia Society, DS.

The Movement Disorder Society

www.movementdisorders.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

Founded in 1985, MDS is an international professional society invested in the research and care of patients with movement disorders such as dystonia, Parkinson's disease, chorea, Huntington's disease, ataxia, tremor, and restless legs syndrome. MDS is a society of clinicians, scientists, and other healthcare professionals who are interested in movement disorders. The society's mission is to disseminate

knowledge, promote research, and formulate and promote public policy.

You can navigate this site using the top-level navigation links, which lead to drop-down menus. You can also click on the heading to view the drop-down menu options within the page.

Key features of this site include:

- » Access to upcoming and past educational courses
- » E-learning
- » Online journal continuing medical education
- » Information about the society's visiting professor and ambassador programs
- » Slide sets
- » A video library
- » A case of the month
- » A "curbside consult" that encourages constructive clinical and scientific exchange among members
- » Conference information
- » Announcements regarding grants, fellowships, and other opportunities
- » Publications, including the *Movement Disorders* journal and *Moving Along* newsletter

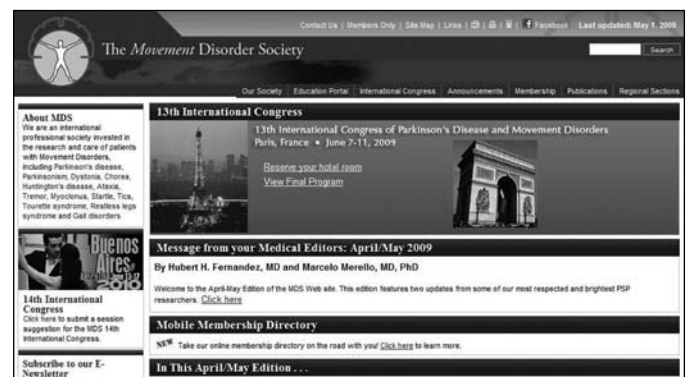
Unique elements: The society has a link to its page on Facebook.

Comments: You can subscribe to the society's e-newsletter by clicking the Subscribe link on the home page. You can also access past e-newsletters on the site.

Cost: The majority of the information on the site is free, with certain content restricted to members. To learn more about membership, click on the Membership link.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: dystonia, movement disorders, neurological disorders, The Movement Disorder Society, MDS.



National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

www.ninds.nih.gov

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

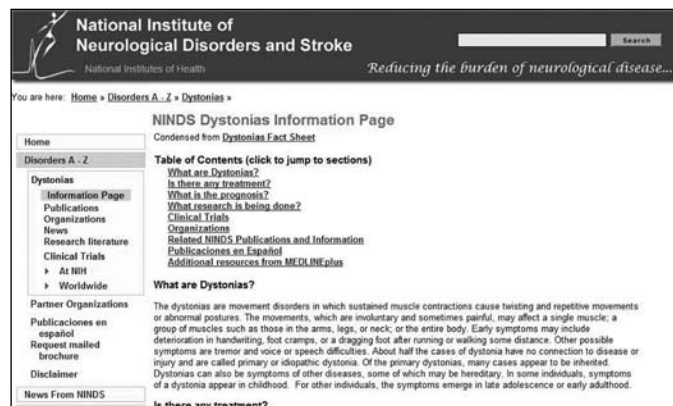
The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) works to reduce the burden of neurological disease. It is one of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The institute's work includes research, providing grants and fellowships, funding research, and collecting and disseminating research information.

You can navigate this site using the left-hand navigation links. You can also click on links to featured content on the site's home page, such as stroke awareness information.

To access the dystonia information on the site, select Disorders A-Z, click D, then select Dystonias.

Key features of this site include:

- » A basic overview of dystonias
- » Treatment options for these disorders
- » Prognosis for dystonia sufferers
- » Research progress on dystonias
- » Contact information for clinical trials
- » Links to related organizations



Unique elements: The site offers a dystonia fact sheet that contains more detailed information.

Comments: The site provides information in Spanish and English.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: dystonia, movement disorders, neurological disorders, National Institutes of Health, NIH, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, NINDS.

National Spasmodic Dysphonia Association

www.dysphonia.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

The National Spasmodic Dysphonia Association (NSDA) is a national organization for people living with spasmodic dysphonia, a form of dystonia that involves involuntary spasms of the vocal cords, causing interruptions of speech and affecting voice quality. You can navigate this site using the top-level navigation links.



Unique elements: The site offers a dystonia fact sheet that contains more detailed information.

Comments: Information is available in Spanish and English.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: dystonia, movement disorders, neurological disorders, National Spasmodic Dysphonia Association, NSDA.

Spasmodic Torticollis/Dystonia

www.spasmodictorticollis.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

Spasmodic Torticollis (ST)/Dystonia is a nonprofit organization dedicated to people living with ST. Its mission is to help people find a faster diagnosis and more effective treatment, empowering them to achieve a higher quality of life.

You can navigate the organization's Web site using the top navigation links, some of which lead to drop-down menus. You can also click on links to featured content on the home page.

Key features of this site include:

- » Patient stories
- » Legislation affecting patients
- » An overview of the disorder and a list of symptoms
- » Insight into the potential causes of ST
- » The muscles involved in the disorder
- » Advice to help patients cope
- » A treatment center with more than 100 pages of information
- » More than 900 questions and answers
- » Information on treatment options, such as oral medications, botulinum toxins, Botox, and deep brain stimulation
- » How nutrition and exercise may help
- » ST-related news articles
- » Online forums where users can post messages for other users to read (free with account registration)
- » A calendar of events and an online store

Unique elements: The site contains YouTube videos to help educate viewers about ST.

Comments: You can sign up for the organization's e-mail newsletters using the field at the bottom of the home page.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: dystonia, movement disorders, neurological disorders, Spasmodic Torticollis/Dystonia, ST.

We Move

www.wemove.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: **** Style: *****

We Move is an Internet-based resource for movement disorder information and activities. The site contains information

on dystonia, ataxia, Huntington's disease, Parkinson's disease, Rett syndrome, Tourette's syndrome, Wilson disease, and other well-known and rare disorders and syndromes.

You can navigate this site using the top-level navigation tabs. The home page contains links to featured content on the site. You can also click on links along the left-hand side of the page for the disorder you are interested in learning more about. To access dystonia information, click on the Dystonia link to display an information tree containing available content.

Key features of this site include:

- » An overview of dystonia
- » How physicians diagnose the disorder
- » Genetic designations for dystonia
- » Treatment approaches to dystonia
- » Information about cervical dystonia, including Webinars
- » Links to additional resources
- » Discussion forums and online polls
- » Patient stories
- » Resources for physicians and professionals, such as online continuing medical education, a dystonia slideshow, and content on pediatric dystonia

Unique elements: The site contains video clips from an award winning awareness campaign called "Life in Motion."

Comments: The site contains a find-a-doctor lookup tool.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: dystonia, movement disorders, neurological disorders, We Move. ☒

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SITE OF THE MONTH

Heart Rhythm Society

www.hrsonline.org

by Cynthia Johnson

The Heart Rhythm Society (HRS) is an organization that provides science, education, and advocacy on heart rhythm disorders for professionals and patients. Its mission is “to improve the care of patients by promoting research, education, and optimal healthcare policies and standards.”

You can navigate this site using the left-hand navigation menu or by clicking on links to featured content on the site’s home page. The majority of the Web site is free, with certain areas restricted to members.

To learn more about becoming a member, click the Join Now! link on the right-hand side of the site. Membership is open to physicians, scientists, nurses, technicians, and other allied health professionals who work in cardiac electrophysiology and/or pacing.

Annual dues for members in the United States range from \$170 for an allied health professional to \$480 for a physician. The society is currently composed of more than 5,100 physicians, scientists, and associated professionals from more than 70 countries.

One of the unique aspects of this site is its animations on the electrical system of the heart. Other key features include:

- » Professional education offerings in electrophysiology, including live courses with experts in the field
- » Patient education resources in the form of PDFs, including “The Normal Heart,” “Substances Causing Arrhythmias,” “Rapid Heartbeat,” “Slow Heartbeat,” and “Pacemaker”
- » Health policy information, including topics such as coding and reimbursement, quality/outcomes, device and drug safety, and clinical guidelines

- » A section titled Electricity and the Heart, which contains historical information about technical and scientific advances in cardiac devices
- » Information about specific heart rhythm disorders, such as atrial fibrillation, long QT syndrome, and sick sinus syndrome
- » Treatment options, including lifestyle changes, medications, electronic devices, cardioversion, catheter ablation, and surgery



- » Risk factors, such as coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, thyroid disease, sleep apnea, and drug abuse
- » Advice for preventing heart rhythm disorders, such as stress reduction, healthy lifestyle choices, and maintaining a healthy weight

- » Symptoms associated with heart rhythm disorders, such as rapid heartbeat, fluttering, and syncope
- » How healthcare professionals diagnose heart rhythm disorders using heart tests such as echocardiograms, EKGs, electrophysiology studies, exercise stress tests, and implantable loop recorders
- » Answers to FAQs
- » A find-a-doctor lookup tool
- » Access to *Heart Rhythm Journal*
- » A calendar of events
- » Abstracts, slides, and Webcasts of previous HRS meetings
- » Heart rhythm news and information
- » A glossary of terms
- » An online store containing coding and reimbursement guides, patient education materials, and online preparatory courses