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 AK. Al-Sheikhli. (21 January 2004)

**The Internet - Medical Friend or Foe : A personal insight** 16 January 2004

Mark D. Griffiths,  
 Professor of Gambling  
 Studies  
*Psychology Division,  
 Nottingham Trent  
 University, Burton Street,  
 Nottingham, NG1 4BU, UK*  
 Send response to  
 journal:  
 Re: The Internet -  
 Medical Friend or Foe :  
 A personal insight

I was interested to read Bentham and Todd's account of a mother's self-diagnosis using the Internet. The authors ended by saying that Internet self-diagnosis should perhaps be encouraged. I would also add that my own recent experience on the receiving end of medical treatment leads me to conclude that some medical practitioners are using the Internet as a way of bypassing some of their information-giving responsibilities.

Following an operation to remove some enlarged lymph nodes from my neck, the tissue biopsy results revealed that the most probable cause for my abnormal neck swellings was a form of toxiplasma. When I saw my consultant, he simply read out what was on the biopsy report and said "I know you will go away and look it all up on the Internet so there's no point me spending ages with you now". At that particular point I wanted to know there and then what toxiplasma was and what treatment (if any) that I needed. I did try and get as much information as I could but he did say that the Internet would be the best place to look to find out more about the diagnosis.

My consultant was well aware of my job as a university professor (and that may have explained his actions) but I still would have preferred to have heard more first hand from him rather than have to rely on the Internet for my initial information.

(1) Bentham J and Todd P. The internet—friend or foe? *BMJ* 2004;  
328: 133

Competing interests: None declared

### Need for net is daily Bread and Butter.

16 January 2004



Ali H Hameed,  
Psychiatrist  
*MOh-PTSD team*  
Send response to  
journal:  
Re: Need for net is  
daily Bread and Butter.

I feel that net surfing and email had made this globe a small village, all of us knows this fact. Its value for health care providers and also to patints who have net access is very appreciabe and in particular for physiciens who live in the 3rd world, and I like to give example of Iraq.

Net access was not only a hobby, but near addiction, and my favourite daily access was BMJ. and it was an aperture through which I could access the recent articles and know whatwas going on in the world, as we were just incarcerated in a big jail, we used to see ourselves as prisoners of war on our home land, and of course after Liberation Iraq Task, we are still having this feeling, but net access was the only avenue to see what is going in the world around us.

I hope one day there will be bylaws that govern what is presented on the net, and possibly suing those who abuse the net!!!!

Competing interests: None declared

### The internet--most of the time it acts as a friend,but could be a foe

21 January  
2004



AK. Al-Sheikhli.,  
Psychiatrist,Medical centre.  
*Nuneaton,CV11 5HX,UK.*  
Send response to  
journal:  
Re: The internet--most  
of the time it acts as a  
friend,but could be a  
foe

Dear Editor,

It was interesting to read the paper of Bentham and Todd,The internet-a friend or foe?(*BMJ* 2004;328:133). My comment: it acts as a friend most of the time, but could be a foe too if misused,for e.g a patient who is suggestible or hypochondrical it could act as a foe.

Thanking you,  
Yours sincerely,  
AK.AI-Sheikhli

Competing interests: None declared

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