

**Testing treatments interactive (TTi) website**  
**User-friendly PDF document – methods used for selecting health information websites**  
Version 1 - 31 October 2016

The following methods were used to select and analyse health information websites with trustworthy information about effects of treatment for health problems:

- searching for a description of each health information website
- developing and using a set of criteria for inclusion and assessment.

#### **Description**

- What is the stated purpose of the health information website (ie. aims/objectives)?
- Does the site make recommendations (ie how are the recommendations made, is a warning given for sites that make recommendations, what disclaimers are made) (yes, no)?

Use the websites' own language/text for description, plus provide additional details where applicable.

#### **Inclusion criteria**

- available in English
- free access to health information (ie. no cost to end-users, non-commercial, not requiring host organisation membership)
- target users are patients and the general public
- scope is not limited to specific conditions or type of information (ie. provides a generic scope of topics)
- includes a description of how information is prepared, and that description includes a statement about using or being based on evidence (ie. systematic reviews of research evidence)
- regular reviews of the evidence base to inform website content.

#### **Assessment criteria**

- Is the health information based on systematic reviews or research evidence (yes, no, can't tell)?
- Are there links to the systematic reviews (ie. evidence base) (yes, no)?
- Is information provided about the certainty of the quality of evidence (ie. confident, uncertain)?
- When was the health information last updated/reviewed (stated, not stated)?
- Does the website provide links to registered/ongoing clinical trials (eg. WHO International Clinical Trials Registry Platform) (ICTRP) (yes, no)?
- Is the information in plain language (ie. use of lay terms to define/explain biomedical/clinical and research terms) (yes, no)?
- Are other features provided (eg. background information, search function, print icon) (yes – what are these, no)?
- Are there any other advantages/disadvantages of the health information website(s) (yes/no – what are these)?

Include information on how to navigate the website to find information

Health information website	Include reviews/updates	Access to systematic reviews	Links to other evidence	Ongoing research (eg. clinical trials)	Navigating the website to find information
<b>Cochrane Evidence</b> <a href="http://www.cochrane.org/evidence">www.cochrane.org/evidence</a> International Range of health topics. Scientific research has been systematically reviewed by different Cochrane Groups	<b>Yes</b> Regular reviews of systematic reviews	<b>Yes</b> Available by topic (keyword) or title	<b>Yes</b> Direct links to references (other evidence)	<b>No</b> Many systematic reviews are an analysis of previous clinical trials and their outcomes	Use the Search function using keywords for finding titles. See the plain language summary. For more details, see full review, available in the Cochrane Library (click on weblink)
<b>Informed Health</b> <a href="http://www.informedhealth.org">www.informedhealth.org</a> Germany Range of health topics	<b>Yes</b> Indicates the date of content creation, update and next review	<b>Yes</b> Some information in German. Provides research summaries for each topic	<b>Yes</b> Provides links to content sources (including systematic reviews). Some references are in German	<b>No</b> Use Search function and keyword 'clinical trials' to find an explanation of clinical trials	See various Topic Areas, Further Topics or Health Topics A-Z
<b>HealthLink BC</b> <a href="http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/common-health-concerns">www.healthlinkbc.ca/common-health-concerns</a> Province of British Columbia, Canada Range of health topics (A-Z)	<b>Yes</b> States currency of content	<b>Yes</b> Some content includes systematic reviews (see references)	<b>Yes</b> All references for content are listed	<b>No</b> Search 'health topics' or use generic website search function to locate comprehensive information/explanation on clinical trials	Provides links to a range of topics
<b>NPS Medicinewise</b> <a href="http://www.nps.org.au/conditions">www.nps.org.au/conditions</a> Australia Range of topics & medicines (A-Z)	<b>Not stated</b> Indicates when date published only (not updated/reviewed)	<b>Can't tell</b> Multiple sources of evidence are used to inform content	<b>Yes</b> Direct web links to references provided for each type of condition, treatments and resources	<b>No</b> Use Search function and keyword 'clinical trials' - provides plain language explanation and links to some websites	Click on the list of conditions, or A-Z list, or use the Search function with a keyword
<b>Healthdirect</b> <a href="http://www.healthdirect.gov.au">www.healthdirect.gov.au</a> Australia (national) National health information website, with range of health topics (A-Z), medicines, symptom checker & national health services directory (locations)	<b>Yes</b> Content is reviewed for accuracy every 1-4 years. 'Last review date' is stated on the web page	<b>Can't tell</b> A range of evidence sources is used by 3 <sup>rd</sup> party providers of content	<b>Mixed</b> Provides links to 3 <sup>rd</sup> party providers of content who use evidence to inform content	<b>Yes</b> Use Search function to locate links to clinical trials via 3 <sup>rd</sup> party websites (for general search/medical professionals) (eg. Australian Clinical Trials hosted by the National Health and Medical Research Council)	Click onto the different areas of the website and also use the Health A-Z search function
<b>Better Health Channel</b> <a href="http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au">www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au</a> State of Victoria, Australia Health information website with range of health topics, healthy living (health promotion), surgical brochures, medicines & health services directory (Victoria) (locations)	<b>Yes</b> 1-yearly review of content	<b>Can't tell</b> A range of evidence sources is used by 3 <sup>rd</sup> party providers of content	<b>Mixed</b> Not directly for each topic. Website content from multiple 3 <sup>rd</sup> parties. References may refer to a other organisation(s)	<b>Yes</b> Use Search function to locate links to clinical trials via 3 <sup>rd</sup> party websites (eg. Australian Clinical Trials, Victorian Cancer Trials Link)	Click onto the different areas of the website. Can also use Conditions and Treatment A-Z or Healthy Living A-Z, or Search function to find information
<b>NHS Choices</b> <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/pages/hub.aspx">www.nhs.uk/Conditions/pages/hub.aspx</a> UK Health information website with range of health topics (A-Z), healthy living (health promotion), social care & UK health service directory (locations)	<b>Yes</b> All content is based on scientific research (evidence) and reviewed within 2-3 years. Publication date and next review date of content are stated on the web page	<b>Can't tell</b> Systematic reviews may be part of many sources of evidence (scientific research)	<b>No</b> Unable to locate direct links to evidence for content	<b>Yes</b> Use the Search function to locate World Health Organization International Clinical Trials Registry Platform (ICTRP) and follow the weblinks to the search portal, using keywords (eg. vaccines, cancer)	Click onto common conditions, childhood conditions, different areas of the website, or select a body part in the table
<b>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</b> <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/diseasesConditions/">www.cdc.gov/diseasesConditions/</a> USA Range of health topics	<b>Yes</b> The dates of content 'last reviewed' and 'last updated' on webpage	<b>Can't tell</b> Multiple sources of evidence used	<b>Yes</b> Multiple sources of evidence	<b>No</b> CDC home page - use search function to locate specific clinical trials (eg. influenza vaccine, Ebola virus). No direct link to WHO ICTRP	Go to Diseases and Conditions webpage for A-Z search and Popular Health Topics