

Need to Know

Utilizing Information in Practice

Welcome!

Welcome to this first issue of the *Need to Know*. This email newsletter is designed to bring you hints and tidbits to help you continue utilizing evidence based information in your practice. It is being distributed to all who have attended a National Library of Medicine Workshop. Please feel free to share the information with colleagues.

More Details

Is this the TRUTH?

We all stand in the check out line at the grocery store, reading the covers of popular magazines.

This regular feature will highlight a health item from one of those magazines, and include the evidence behind the scenes.

Today's topic: Myopia in Children and Use of Night Lights.

Woman's World (August 14, 2007) reported that children under the age of two who used a night light were 5 times more likely to develop nearsightedness by the time they were 16. This was based on a study at University of Pennsylvania.

Thus it may seem that use of night lights and myopia is related. Perhaps.

The truth—

This study had two major flaws. The first was that subjects used in the study were not randomly selected. They were referred to a center in Philadelphia, PA. This is called selection bias.

The researchers also failed to control for an important variable---parental myopia. Myopic parents often have myopic children. (1) Socioeconomic factors also influence utilization of night lights in homes. Higher socioeconomic status is associated with night light use (2)

A study at Ohio State University indicated that parents who are myopic tend to use night lights to help them see around the home at night. (3, 4). So is it night lights or genetics? Long term studies which control for genetics and selection bias are needed.

References

1. Zadnik et al. The effect of parental history of myopia on children's eye size. *JAMA*. 1994; 271: 1323-1327.
2. Appen, RE, Mares-Perlman, J. Are the sky and night lights falling? *Archives of Ophthalmology*. 2000; 118: 707-702.
3. Zadnik et al. Myopia and ambient night-time lighting. *Nature*. 2000; 404:143-144.
4. Gwiazda et al. Myopia and ambient night-time lighting. *Nature*. 2000; 404:144.



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Historical Spotlight



Sara Josephine Baker, 1873-1945 **Public Health Physician, New York**

- Established a city-wide school nurse program
- Secured licensing of midwives
- Developed a fool-proof dispensing system for instilling silver nitrate into newborns' eyes
- Developed infant formula by adding water, calcium carbonate and lactose to cow's milk
- Tracked down "Typhoid Mary"
- Significantly reduced infant morbidity and mortality

Source: *Women Life Scientists: Past, Present and Future*, by Matyas and Haley-Oliphant, 1997.

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TEACH IT

You've just returned from the first workshop on *Utilizing Information in Practice*, and you are very excited about teaching everything you've learned to your colleagues.

HOLD ON!

Did you know that *adults learn best when they have use for new knowledge?* And that they will learn best if they can *integrate the new information into previous knowledge?*

Considering these two principles of adult learning, you decide to give hints about what you learned as the occasion arises. You make a point to let colleagues know that you were able to access new information about your work project quickly and accurately because of attending the workshop. Remind them subtly. Then when one seems to be stumbling while looking for information, you are there to help and teach.

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Searching Tips

Combining Terms, building a search

For those of you who search in PubMed.gov, you may not know that there is a way that you can easily combine searches. First go to PubMed.gov and perform a search. Next, click on the History tab. You will be taken to a list of your searches. On this screen you may combine the different searches with "operators" such as AND, OR, NOT.

What's the benefit? If you type in a long phrase and find that you didn't get back what you need, you'll have to retype your terms. However, if you divide your search into concepts, you can then search these concepts or terms separately. You can then select the History tab which will allow you to mix and match your terms to see which combinations get the best results.

For example, typing in: "obesity and diet in children" brings back 2775 citations. Typing in "obesity", "diet", and "nutrition" as separate terms allows you to make the following combinations without having to retype all of your terms.

Obesity and (diet or nutrition)
Obesity and diet
Obesity and nutrition

If you decide to follow up on other ideas such as "obesity and exercise", you only need to type in "exercise" and combine it with your search on "obesity."

For more on how to combine searches, check out:
http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/techbull/mj07/mj07_history_skill_kit.html

NEW TO THE WEB

Health issues in 08

Kaiser Launches health08.org
<http://www.health08.org/>, a Hub for

Information about Health Care and the Presidential Campaign

With health care emerging as a top domestic issue in the 2008

presidential election, the Kaiser Family Foundation launched a new website this week -- health08.org.

The free website will serve as a hub of information about health and the election, including original content produced by Kaiser and easy access to health-related resources from the campaigns, other organizations, and news outlets. Elements of the site include: analysis of health policy issues, summaries of health reform proposals, and basic facts and information about the health system from Kaiser's research staff; Kaiser tracking surveys examining the public's views on health issues and perceptions of the presidential candidates on health care, as well as links to the latest polls by other organizations; news summaries of election-related health policy developments; video and pod casts from the campaign trail, including candidate speeches, and health-related highlights from forums and debates; interviews with candidates and other key players in the health reform debate; dedicated pages for the candidates, with links to their health positions; and a weekly email roundup. Health08.org is one of a number of projects Kaiser will undertake throughout the election season. Sign up for the email at <http://www.health08.org/email> [posted on Kaiser Weekly Update]