THE WEBSITE REVIEW


Developer and sponsors
The Health, Environment and Work website has been developed by Raymond Agius, newly appointed Professor of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at Manchester University. The site is self-funded and no conflicts of interest are declared. Professor Agius (Raymond) will be well known to many occupational physicians, but if you do not know him there is a link on his home page which tells you all about him and his hobbies, and provides a photograph as well. This really typifies the site in that it is an individual effort, albeit impressive. If you are not convinced, then the author also publishes his credentials. Score: 5/5

Purpose
The self-stated purpose of the site is to provide free up-to-date advice and knowledge relevant to health, environment and work to anyone who wants to access it through the medium of the World Wide Web. Importantly, the site states that it wishes to make this knowledge available quickly, without it having to seep slowly through the traditional limestone of peer review, journals and text books. Score: 5/5

Content
Most of the material appears to have been written by the author, and therefore reflects many of his interests or topics he has been asked to advise on in the past. There are some omissions if this is to be regarded as a truly encyclopaedic site. But, as Samuel Johnson said, 'knowledge is of two types: you either know something or you know where to find it', and this site certainly knows where to find it. It has one of the most comprehensive links sections I have ever seen. It is so good that the Society of Occupational Medicine use it instead of designing their own. The site appears to be very regularly updated by the author. Score: 4/5

Confidentiality
The site subscribes to the Health on the Net Foundation (HON) Code Principles and has a stamp of authority from the HON. The HON site is worth a visit in its own right. Subscribers to the HON Code adhere to eight principles, including confidentiality and authenticity. Score: 5/5

Design
The design of the site is superb. There are excellent pictures throughout, the pages are easy on the eye and well formatted, and the links work well. Score: 5/5

Evaluation
A feedback form is present for users, but no information is given regarding user satisfaction. Score: 2/5

Overall
This is an essential site for occupational physicians, if only for its incredible links section. It has had almost 100 000 visits in the last year, which is testament to the impressive achievement this site represents. The only weaknesses (and these are minor) derive from the site being the work of one man, but if Raymond cannot answer your question himself he can undoubtedly point you to a site that can. It may not be a one-stop shop, but it is certainly the first stop if you want to find something occupational out. Visit it and bookmark it! Score: 5/5

John Hobson

Readers’ suggestions for websites to be reviewed are welcomed. Please send details to the SOM office at the address given in Notes for authors.