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WEBSITE REVIEW

Using Best BETs [Best Evidence Topics]: Website Review

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Introduction

Whether you are a paramedic practitioner, academic or student, there are occasions when you will need to search for the best available evidence for a specific clinical situation. At times this may entail the daunting process of accessing electronic databases by guessing at key words in the search engine field only to filter through endless lists of unwanted information.

Recently while working on a clinical review, I discovered an interesting web site called *BestBETS* (Best Evidence Topics) which has made my life just a little easier in the pursuit of finding useful information to support best available evidence.

What is BestBETSs?

Best BETs is a medical information database initially developed by the Emergency Department of Manchester Royal Infirmary in the UK;

"to provide rapid evidence-based answers to real-life clinical questions, using a systematic approach to reviewing the literature. BETs take into account the shortcomings of much current evidence, allowing physicians to make the best of what there is". ¹

How can help BestBETS help you?

Firstly, the database allows for a specific topic to be answered through the option of a 3 part question.

Each question is structured with carefully selected words, which allows the user to find specific literature through a database search. The end process is an evidence based review which also provides a "clinical bottom line".² The BestBETS reviews are regularly updated and re-checked for the best available evidence, ensuring that information is up to date. This enables users to re-assess current evidence and note new information which may have been added to their chosen topic(s) or area of research.²

How to use Best BETs

Go to:

<http://www.bestbets.org>

The BET database can be accessed from the navigation bar under 'Databases'. You can also select from the other database subheadings on the navigation bar as follows:

- Browse by Title
- Browse by Topic

- Search
- Submit

For the purpose of this review we will select the 'Search' field and pose an existing question which is already located in the BETs database.

The Sample Question

Is a patient with head injury, after receiving cervical immobilization, more susceptible to increased intracranial pressure?³

Once you have entered the search, type in the term 'head injury' which will result in the total number of matches for that topic. Each result is known as a BET and is color coded.⁴

Table.1 Key to Status of Best BETs Reviews.⁴

- Red (incomplete)
- Blue (submitted but not checked)
- Orange (submitted and checked)
- Yellow (electronic pre-print)
- Green (complete)
- ✱ New (recently added to the database)
- 🔔 Modified (content recently changed)
- ✱ Complete (BET recently completed)
- 🔒 This BET title is available for another author to complete
- 📄 There are critical appraisals linked to this BET

If you look at the list of results you will notice the following:

"Green (complete) ● Cervical collars and intracranial pressure"⁴

Click on 'Cervical collars and intracranial pressure' and it will take you to the final results page. On the results page you will find that all topics have a specific format. This includes: the title, report by, search and checked by, the institution, date(s) submitted/completed/modified and of course the review status.³

In this review (at time of publication) you will note that a total of 7 papers were identified and only 4 of these papers are relevant to the initial question. Through an evidence based review Best BETs has identified in the clinical bottom line, that cervical collars can actually increase intracranial pressure when fitted correctly.³

Conclusion

There are many other evidence based reviews on BestBETs website. It is hoped that this brief introduction will encourage you to take a further look at the information BestBETs has to offer practitioners as a research tool or as a point of reference at the very least.

References

1. Best BETs [website on the Internet]. Manchester: Accident and Emergency Department, Manchester Royal Infirmary; c2000-2002 [cited 2004 Jul 23]. Available from: <http://www.bestbets.org/index.html>
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