WORLD WIDE WEB.....

Surfing for neurological infection

When one first searches the internet for infectious diseases and neurological disorders (for example, an unfiltered search at www.google.com) you could be forgiven for thinking that HIV is the only link between these two topics. The majority of the first few pages of the 171 000 results direct you towards HIV sites, but due to recent media interest there are quite a few sites discussing West Nile virus. Of these the best all round site seems to be www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/westnile/index.html. This is Health Canada's website and provides downloadable pamphlets and information sheets along with tips for avoiding mosquito bites, and contains regularly updated information on the areas most affected/infected. www.medadvocates.org/diseases/hiv/systemicdisorders/neuro.html provides links to abstracts about the central and peripheral nervous system disorders associated with HIV such as myelopathy, lymphomas, toxoplasmosis, meningitis, and movement disorders. This is a site aimed solely at healthcare professionals interested in the most recent research on the neurological sequelae of HIV infection. Many sites cater for patient information, but the most user-friendly of these is www.equip.nhs.uk/topics/aids.html which is an NHS site labelled "Electronic Quality Information for Patients".

For more general information on infections of the nervous system www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/index.htm is a useful and sober site with links to fact sheets and articles from journals such as *Emerging Infectious Diseases* for clinicians and clear and concise advice articles for patients. Another US site with very straight forward advice and detailed information for all is the National Institutes of Health's site at <http://health.nih.gov/index.asp> which links you to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke at <http://www.ninds.nih.gov/index.htm> which has a very good search engine for patient information on many diseases.

A UK site that provides easily understood yet detailed patient fact sheets as well as links to British support groups for many neurological diseases is www.netdoctor.co.uk. This is easy to navigate, eye-catching, and not overly simplistic. It should satisfy most of the requests from patients and their families for information on all the common disorders.

Saving the best until last, try www.neuropat.dote.hu/infection.htm (the Internet Handbook of Neurology on the Hungarian University of Debrecan's website). This site provides all the links you will ever need to any possible topic on infections and the nervous system. Thanks to its comprehensive table of contents and access to a variety of neuropathology websites, this site will satisfy most patients, trainees, and even consultants.

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