

## Favorite Web sites for International Health Work

By Dr Ann Behrmann

### 1) National Center for Infectious Diseases

Likely you are aware of the myriad of resources from the CDC concerning traveler's health: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>.

### 2) Relief Web

Relief Web is a project of the United National Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). <http://www.reliefweb.int>. This website is good for finding out what is going on politically and in disaster relief work at most of the sites where UN personnel are working around the world.

### 3) MAP International

For a source of inexpensive drugs to take with you on that unexpected overseas trip (or for your colleagues who call you in desperation less than a month before they plan to show up with boxes of donated supplies for their sister's church's mission clinic), see

Map Packs (prepackaged essential drug kits at low cost): <http://www.map.org>. And for one of the most underrated and most welcome organizations, one that supplies low-cost healthcare, training and teaching materials, see <http://www.talcuk.org>

### 4) id21

id21 is a fast-track research reporting service funded by DFID. It aims to bring UK-based development research findings and policy recommendations to policy makers and development practitioners worldwide. id21 aims to be part of the process of putting policy into practice. Online, in print and through the southern media, id21 showcases recent research findings and policy lessons on major development issues.

The id21 Insights Health #4 (September 2003) issue has as its guest editor Professor Anthony Costello of the International Perinatal Care Unit at the Institute of Child Health, London. He discusses the barriers facing the achievement of the infant mortality Millennium Development Goal in 2015. Professor Costello's editorial highlights how vital the reduction of newborn mortality rates is if the goal of a two thirds cut in the global under five infant mortality rate is to be accomplished. Other articles discuss: what the best options are for preventing mother to child HIV transmission through breastfeeding; the obesity epidemic amongst adolescents in urban China; and the significance of the connection between epilepsy and malaria in children in sub-Saharan Africa.

Email group list serve that sends monthly updates on current published research on international health, id21 health, at <http://www.id21.org> It comes from the United Kingdom's (UK) Department for International Development (DFID). I emailed Tom Barker who is id21's health editor.

### 5) HINARI: <http://www.healthinternetwork.org>

The Health InterNetwork Access to Research Initiative (HINARI) provides free or very low cost online access to the major journals in biomedical and related social sciences to local, non-profit institutions in developing countries.

HINARI was launched in January 2002, with some 1500 journals from 6 major publishers. Twenty-two additional publishers joined in May 2002, bringing the total number of journals to over 2000. Since that time, the numbers of participating publishers and of journals and other full-text resources has grown continuously. The HINARI offer is currently guaranteed through 2006.

HINARI was developed in the framework of the Health InterNetwork, introduced by the United Nations' Secretary General Kofi Annan at the UN Millennium Summit in the year 2000. Led by WHO, the Health InterNetwork aims to strengthen public health services by providing public health workers, researchers and policy makers access to high-quality, relevant and timely health information, via the Internet. It further aims to improve communication and networking.

### 6) Topics in International Health: <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk>

From the Wellcome Trust in London, a group of 12 interactive teaching CD ROM "books" on tropical medicine. To peruse the group, click on the "Int Health" cross link. These include most all the major health issues in the developing world, such as HIV/AIDS, TB, Nutrition, Leshmaniasis, Trachoma, Diarrheal Diseases to name a few. The Wellcome Trust also provides some research grant opportunities and sponsors specific international symposia.

7) Hesperian Foundation: <http://www.hesperian.org>  
Books for Community Health Workers and practitioners with little access to technology

No doubt all of you are more than familiar with the low tech “Pulitzer” of International Health texts, David Werner’s classic text, Where There Is No Doctor, now translated into 90 languages. These folks have some exciting new projects and new books in development, including [A Community Guide to Environmental Health](#), [The Early Assistance Series](#) (to provide information for parents and other caregivers of young children (0 to 5 years old) with disabilities), [A Health Book for Workers in Export Processing Zones](#) -- a resource for workers dealing with unhealthy working conditions in and around EPZ's or Free Trade Zones, and [The Community Mental Health Book](#), to name but a few. Check out (and consider a donation to) their Gratis Book Fund.

8) MEDSHARE INTERNATIONAL: [www.medshareinternational.org](http://www.medshareinternational.org)  
“ Every year, thousands of patients in the economically developing world are turned away without medical aid ...Yet federal regulations compel hospitals in the United States to discard more than \$6.25 billion worth of unused medical supplies and equipment each year. “ Medshare not only encourages donations, but has a means to apply as a recipient for their materials. Their product list is extensive, ranging from ventilators to gloves and pens and pencils. They do not stock or send any pharmaceuticals.

9) REMEDY: [www.remedyinc.org](http://www.remedyinc.org)  
Remedy was the brainchild of Dr. William H. Rosenblatt, an anesthesiologist at Yale in 1991. “REMEDY is a group of health care professionals and others promoting the nationwide practice of recovery of open-but-unused surgical supplies. The end goal of our [mission](#) has been to provide international medical relief while reducing solid medical waste from US hospitals. “ After studies done in collaboration with Dr. David Silverman to demonstrated efficacy, cost-effectiveness, environmental impact, and usefulness of supplies recovered through the REMEDY program, Recovered Medical Equipment for the Developing World, became a non-profit organization committed to teaching and promoting the recovery of surplus OR supplies. Drs. Rosenblatt and Silverman developed a comprehensive [In-service Teaching Packet](#) with information needed to start a standardized recovery program based on the REMEDY model, applicable to any surgical procedure in any hospital in the U.S. The REMEDY Teaching Packet is distributed free of charge to all requesting hospitals. “Since inception, Yale-New Haven Hospital's pilot program alone has donated several millions of dollars worth of supplies and has recovered from what was previously considered waste, in excess of 30 tons of material aid.

The cost of recovering these supplies has amounted to not more than \$200 a year (disinfectant and bags are provided by the hospital). The avoided incineration of the 22 tons of solid medical waste has saved the hospital \$2,530 annually or more than \$25,000 over the life of the program. As a byproduct of the program's in-house exposure, hundreds of thousands of dollars in new disposables and equipment (excess inventory) has also been donated by YNH to the REMEDY pilot program. ” Check out the website to see if your institution is a REMEDY provider.

10) MD TRAVEL HEALTH: <http://www.mdtravelhealth.com>

This website suggested by Nancy Curtis MD, Children’s Hospital and Research Center at Oakland. She writes, “It has good information about conditions in other countries, but additionally, it has ‘social’ information about problems related to scams in the airports, etc. that are common to that country.” This is an alternative to the CDC website, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), with some of the same info, with a cultural slant.

11) RESULTS: [www.results.org](http://www.results.org)  
Again a great recommendation from Nancy Curtis, “RESULTS is a citizen's lobby responsible for increasing US government funding for basic global health measures and child survival funding by hundreds of millions of dollars.” The following has been taken directly from their web site. “RESULTS is a nonprofit grassroots advocacy organization, committed to creating the political will to end hunger and the worst aspects of poverty. RESULTS is committed to individuals exercising their personal and political power by lobbying elected officials for effective solutions and key policies that affect hunger and poverty. Our vision is of a world where persistent hunger and the devastating impact of poverty no longer cripple the chances of individuals and families to sustain themselves, thrive, and contribute their talents to the world in which they live — where all people have a fair chance at success. A 1976 report by the National Academy of Sciences reported that we possess all of the resources, structures and technology to end hunger in a single generation, but that the political will to make it a priority is missing. We envision a world where citizens actively voice their concerns to their elected officials and thereby choose the policies and priorities of their governments. A world where the end of hunger and the worst aspects of poverty has become an international priority.

12) DOLPHN: [www.phnip.com/dolphn](http://www.phnip.com/dolphn)

“The Data Online for Population, Health and Nutrition system is an online statistical data resource containing selected current and historical country-level demographic and health indicator data. The DOLPHN system is designed to provide users with quick and easy access to frequently used statistics and can be helpful as both a reference and analytical tool... While most of these data are accessible from other Web sites [WHO, CDC, World Bank, etc.], DOLPHN’s principal advantage is to bring specifically filtered data from various sources together in one place to facilitate comparative and trend analyses.” The database was developed and is maintained by the Population, Health and Nutrition Information (PHNI) Project of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

13) POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU: [www.prb.org](http://www.prb.org)

“For more than 70 years, the Population Reference Bureau has been informing people about the population dimensions of important social, economic, and political issues. Our mission is to be the leader in providing timely and objective information on U.S. and international population trends and their implications.

PRB's mission is carried out through these major activities:

- Publish, disseminate, and promote print and electronic material
- Collaborate with organizations to develop and implement strategies for communicating with policymakers
- Conduct training on policy communications and Internet use. Through short-term workshops, PRB helps individuals and organizations in developing countries, especially journalists, educators, and researchers, to find and use demographic data in their work.
- Collaborate with journalists to expand the coverage of population, health, and environment subjects.

14) WORLD FACTBOOK: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

I never thought I'd be touting work from the CIA, but in doing research on maps and health statistics for grand rounds on pediatric health care in Cuba, I stumbled across this great web resource for maps and population, health and literacy, GNP and other economic indicators. I can't remember looking at the CIA homepage, but think it might have raised suspicions at work....

One more great must read (sometime) article on nutrition suggested by Donna from UNICEF.

15) UNICEF: [http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_19965.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_19965.html)

Donna's comments on Vitamin and Mineral Deficiency, A Global Progress Report: “ This is a comprehensive but very readable 40 page report that will enlighten readers about the urgent and severe problem of micronutrient deficiencies worldwide, as well as specific solutions to this crisis. “

16) HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF WAR: <http://sphcm.washington.edu/healthandwar/links.asp>

Three of the included 34 sites from U. WA that give detailed health data include:

Iraqi Body Count

<http://www.iraqbodycount.net/> a running tally of the Iraqi civilian body count, compiled with a minimum and maximum number gleaned from online news sources.

Collateral Damage: the health and environmental costs of war on Iraq

[http://www.mapw.org.au/iraq/2002/ippnwiraq/MedAct\\_report\\_Iraq\\_12\\_11.html](http://www.mapw.org.au/iraq/2002/ippnwiraq/MedAct_report_Iraq_12_11.html)

Report by Medact - an affiliate of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), winner of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize. Much of the fall 2003 SOICH outline on predictions of health effects from a war in Iraq were taken from this article. To see Medact's updated report “Continuing Collateral Damage” from November 2003 as a PDF from [www.medact.org](http://www.medact.org) .

ReliefWeb

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf>

ReliefWeb is a project of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.