



Beyond personal injury: Practical online medical resources for all attorneys

The Net has leveled the playing field in litigation that includes medical or personal injury issues



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When you think of the types of lawyers that need access to medical Web sites or databases, the first thought that comes to mind are personal injury attorneys. Of course, lawyers representing injured clients certainly need access to medical resources. However, knowing about medical conditions and accessing medical treatment information can be helpful in other legal specialties, including discrimination, wrongful termination, elder law, and workers compensation. For example, in a sexual harassment case having information regarding your client's stress-related medical condition can be helpful in proving damages.

The purpose of this article is to provide Internet links that may yield medically related information to assist you in proving your case.

General medical resources

- **Medical dictionary:**

http://www.emedicinehealth.com/medical-dictionary-definitions/article_em.htm

Knowing medical terminology is essential for attorneys needing to prove the injury or medical component of a case or cause of action. According to this Web site, it includes over 16,000 health-care words including diseases, medical jargon, and abbreviations. The dictionary is easy to use. To find a specific term, just enter the word you are looking for in the search box or click on a letter in the A to Z list.

- **Medical Abbreviations:**

<http://www.medilexicon.com/>

The MediLexicon Web site is a great place to find the meaning of medical abbreviations. In addition, the

site also has a medical dictionary, provides links to recent medical news articles, has drug information, gives details on medical and surgical equipment, and provides facts on hospitals and pharmaceutical companies.

- **Atlas of the Body:** <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/7140.html>

This Web site by the American Medical Association gives users a complete "atlas" of the human body, labeled color diagrams, along with an easy-to-understand explanation of the area of the body. Some of the areas of the body covered include the brain, circulatory system, respiratory system, muscles, the hand, the skeleton, and the skull. The diagrams are from AMA resources and could be printed out for use at settlement conferences or trial.

How to research medical issues

- **Attorneys Medical Services:** <http://www.attorneysmedicalsolutions.com/index.html>

Janabeth Evans (Taylor), R.N., R.N.C., a former AAJ Paralegal of the Year, has been a successful medical-legal consultant since 1990 and this is her Web site. This is a valuable resource for anyone who needs to research a medical issue. In addition to an extremely thorough links page, the articles page provides extremely valuable information for anyone dealing with a medical issue in a case, including how to research medical issues, ways to locate drug information, and what to do to prepare for the defense medical expert's deposition, to just name a few.

- **Cancer Guide:** <http://www.cancerguide.org/research.html>

Cancer Guide is a cancer information page written by cancer patient, Steve Dunn. He strongly believes



that information can save your life and has created this Web site to help cancer patients find the best treatment for their disease by finding, and understanding, the best and latest medical information. Although this site focuses on cancer, the information contained in the article, "How to Research the Medical Literature," explains in an easy-to-understand manner how to research medical issues, where to find information, and gives an overview of various research options. This is an excellent starting place for anyone who needs to conduct medical research.

Sources of Medical Information

- **National Institutes of Health:** <http://www.nih.gov/>

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the main federal agency that conducts and supports medical research. The site provides important details about the body's systems, information about health conditions and diseases, and explains various medical procedures.

- **United States National Library of Medicine:** <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/>

The National Library of Medicine located on the campus of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, claims to be the "world's largest medical library." Once you visit the site, you will certainly agree. Topics covered include health information, environmental health and toxicology, and public health. To avoid being overwhelmed by all of the information contained on the site, you may want to start at the site map page.

- **Medline Plus:** <http://medlineplus.gov/>

The Medline Plus Web site is described as a "goldmine of good health information" from the National Library of Medicine. This site provides information on over 750 diseases, various health topics, as well as facts about drugs, herbs and supplements. This site also includes

other helpful medical tools, including a medical encyclopedia, a medical dictionary, and a directory of health-care providers, hospitals and health clinics. The site is updated daily so the Web site is always current.

- **Johns Hopkins Medicine Podcasts:** <http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/mediaII/Podcasts.html>

The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine provides a weekly health and medicine podcast. These podcasts are usually about five to seven minutes long and discuss recent medical developments. Topics discussed in the podcasts include, among other things, medical conditions and current treatment, newly released drugs, and factors to consider when selecting a doctor. Since this feature was only just created, the number of podcasts is not large, but that should change as more are added each week.

- **OmniMedicalSearch.com:** <http://www.omnimedicalsearch.com/>

This Web site allows you to search over 30 different medical sources in five different categories [web, news, images, forums, and medpro] so you can find everything you need from one convenient Web site. Jason L. Morrow created this Web site "to bring the best sources of medical information together on one comprehensive search platform to help make user research more thorough, practical and convenient. . . . When it comes to health and medical information, the integrity of the search results is a priority." Unlike general search engines, the sources searched are legitimate, reputable, and authoritative sources so that the information obtained is credible and reliable.

- **US News Health Articles:** <http://health.usnews.com/sections/health/>

This is a fantastic Web site by the U.S. News & World Report. Here you can find out which are the best hospitals, learn about the features of various health insurance plans, and obtain information

on medical conditions and diseases. The site also features a symptom checker, where after selecting a symptom, the user is directed to a page describing the possible medical causes associated with that symptom. The site is simple to navigate and the information provided is written in plain language and easy to understand.

Specific Medical Conditions

- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder:** <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/posttraumaticstressdisorder.html>

Because Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is such a common condition among plaintiffs, it is included in this article. People who have experienced a traumatic event [i.e., surviving a car crash, witnessing a horrible event, or even being wrongfully fired] often feel like the event is happening again, may have trouble sleeping or suffer from nightmares, don't feel close to people, get angry easily, or feel guilty. This site explains who experiences PTSD, when it usually starts, and provides resources for dealing with PTSD. The fact sheet, "What Can I Do If I Think I Have PTSD," is a helpful resource that lawyers can give to their clients.

- **All you "KNEEd" to know about the Knee:** <http://www.kneeguru.co.uk/KNEEnotes/node/473>

This is a wonderful resource for anyone handling a case involving a knee injury. This site provides all kinds of information about the knee, including anatomy, arthritis of the knee, surgeries, and rehabilitation. The knee dictionary is a feature that really enables the user to understand everything related to the knee.

Conclusion

The Net has leveled the playing field in litigation that includes medical or personal injury issues. As this article shows, you can get up to speed fairly quickly by



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spending a few hours on the Internet researching the issues and finding answers to questions you might have. And most important, you can appear to others to know what you are talking about!

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