

## About INASP-Health

INASP-Health is a co-operative network created by health information providers for health information providers. Its goal is to facilitate co-operation across the health information community towards universal access to reliable information for health professionals in developing and transitional countries.

The network currently involves more than 800 participants, North and South, representing non-governmental organisations, international agencies, library services, publishers (print and electronic), and others.

To join the network, please contact:

Dr Neil Pakenham-Walsh  
Programme Manager  
INASP-Health  
27 Park End Street  
Oxford OX1 1HU, UK

Tel: + 44 (0)1865 248 124  
Fax: + 44 (0)1865 251 060  
Email: <health@inasp.info>  
WWW: <www.inasp.info>

**Please note, new email address for INASP-Health!**

We are grateful to the following organisations for their support:

- British Medical Association
- CDSI (ICSU-Press)
- Danida
- Department for International Development (UK)
- Exchange
- World Health Organization

# INASP Health Links

A gateway to information for health professionals in developing countries

An increasing minority of healthcare providers, students and researchers in the developing world are able to benefit from the Internet.

In addition, the

unconnected

majority can benefit indirectly from the Internet because those who are responsible for providing them with reliable, relevant printed health information (ministries of health, NGOs, publishers, libraries and others) are increasingly connected.

Internet 'Gateways' are a popular and useful method of helping Internet users to identify useful on-line resources. Selected links are organized and described in order to help users find what they need.

But there is a surprising lack of health information gateways for developing countries. One of the best is to be found at the University of Zambia School of Medicine Library

<www.medguide.org.zm>. This gateway was developed by library staff in cooperation with Lenny Rhine, Librarian at the University of Florida Health Science Center Library, U.S.

## INASP Health Links

In September 2001, Lenny Rhine approached INASP to help adapt the Zambia gateway for international use, for developing countries worldwide. The result, *INASP Health Links*, was launched in January 2002 and provides a gateway to selected Web sites and Internet resources of special interest to health professionals and medical library communities in developing and transitional countries.

*INASP Health Links* consists of three sections:

1. **General Resources** (search engines, gateways – global and regional,

bibliographic databases, abstracts, clinical trials databases, research networks, dictionaries, glossaries, disease classifications, evidence based medicine, full-text E-books,

image collections, journals, newsletters, medical education resources, news, useful email lists, and WHO sites)

2. **Subject Index** (e.g. anaesthesiology, basic sciences, dermatology, HIV/AIDS etc.)

3. **Library and Publishing Support, and use of ICTs** (information for development, Internet skills, medical informatics/e-health, publishing tools)

Each section comprises several pages of hyperlinks, arranged alphabetically, and each hyperlink carries a brief description of the site concerned.

## Focus on developing countries

It is estimated that there are at least 30,000 health-related sites on the Internet, but the vast majority are targeted at users in North America and Europe. The launch version of *INASP Health Links* contains links to 448 selected sites, of which 160 are specifically focused on health information in developing countries. New sites will be added every month.

Our impression is that the many and varied needs of *developing-country* health professionals (from specialist researchers to village health workers) and health information providers (librarians, publishers and others) are not adequately addressed by current Web resources. There are some excellent individual Web sites, but they are few and far between - there are doubtless huge gaps in coverage

*continued on page 10 ...*