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Overview

This site is a sub-section of the University of Washington's Bone and Joint site and is co-authored by the Washington/Alaska chapter of the Arthritis Foundation. It contains information relevant to both patients and healthcare professionals. The site has been awarded a StudyWeb award for the quality of its content. All parts of the site are freely available without registration or subscription.

Overview

The site is divided into two sections.

The first section is aimed at patients and is a comprehensive overview of arthritis and related conditions. Most of the information is drawn from the Arthritis Foundation's published literature. For each condition, the cause and likely progression is clearly described; where technical terms are used a lay explanation is also given. There are links to diagrams and cross-references to other parts of the main Bone and Joint site. There are extensive sections dealing with the benefits of exercise, lifestyle modifications and limitations, and the medical management of arthritis (including pros and cons of common antiarthritic drugs). There is also an alphabetical index containing hundreds of concise entries on all the above topics, and the option to retrieve further information if required.

The second part of the site is a Continuing Medical Education section edited by Dr GC Gardner, Associate Professor of Rheumatology at the University of Washington. Six topics are dealt with: joint pain; osteoarthritis; polymyalgia rheumatica; spondyloarthropathy; rheumatology tests; and evaluation and treatment of knee disorders. Each topic consists of plain text with few diagrams and links, although the articles are fully referenced. For the topics on specific medical conditions, various aspects are covered including history, epidemiology, pathophysiology, clinical features and treatment. The laboratory section includes links to downloadable PowerPoint slides summarising keypoints.

Evaluation

The patient section is extremely comprehensive and well-written, and is a useful resource for any lay person seeking simple explanations of the causes and treatment of arthritis and related conditions.

The CME section would be useful as a textbook-level reference for medical students but little use to anyone with a specialised knowledge of the subject area. The references were all at least five years old, so recent progress in the field will be absent.

Miscellaneous

Site last updated 30th December 1999. The site was inconsistent and rather messy in appearance, with few animations or illustrations. Navigation was hindered by the lack of a 'home' button, and the Arthritis Source site seemed indistinct from the main Bone and Joint site.

References

1. Arthritis Source. [<http://www.orthop.washington.edu/Arthriti/>]