

# Answering Health & Medical Reference Questions: An Introduction for Information Professionals November 19, 2009

By Brian Peaslee.

Dean Giustini, reference librarian at the University of British Columbia's Biomedical Branch Library and instructor at the University of British Columbia and Langara College, presented this all-day workshop at the Lynn Valley Main Library. Fourteen librarians and library technicians from public, academic and special libraries attended.

## Identifying and using high-quality consumer and research-level sources of health information in answering reference questions

This class introduced the art of medical reference using primarily electronic sources. It began with a discussion of practical and ethical issues in the reference interview. Dean was able to call on his extensive experience as a medical reference librarian to provide tips and advice about effective reference service.

He then presented a core list of web sites for consumer health reference. These sites were explored through lecture and example. The discussion moved from here to systems for vetting and methods of analyzing the content of web sites.

Issues surrounding complementary and alternative medicine were used to introduce the importance of controlled studies and systematic reviews. Dean then went on to demonstrate and lead the class through exercises using the PubMed citation index for biomedical research with both the free and Ovid interfaces.

Notes for the course are available at:  
[http://hlwiki.slais.ubc.ca/index.php/Answering\\_health\\_%26\\_medical\\_reference\\_questions:\\_an\\_introduction\\_for\\_information\\_professionals](http://hlwiki.slais.ubc.ca/index.php/Answering_health_%26_medical_reference_questions:_an_introduction_for_information_professionals)

Links at:  
[http://hlwiki.slais.ubc.ca/index.php/BCLA\\_Continuing\\_Education\\_Workshop\\_-\\_November\\_19th,\\_2009](http://hlwiki.slais.ubc.ca/index.php/BCLA_Continuing_Education_Workshop_-_November_19th,_2009)

And PowerPoint slides at:  
<http://www.slideshare.net/giustinid/bcla-workshop-answering-health-and-medical-reference-questions?src=embed>

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