

Short Communication

Wikipedia: The Most Relevant Forum for Dental Public Health Information

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Disclaimer: I have received grants in the past from the Wikimedia Foundation to cover event expenses. I am not an employee of either the Wikimedia Foundation or Cochrane.

Received Date: September 10, 2020

Publication Date: October 01, 2020

Nearly two decades after its creation, Wikipedia has emerged as one of the widest-reaching websites on the Internet (1). It is frequently accessed by students of all ages and disciplines, consulted by academics and healthcare professionals and importantly, it is often the first place a patient will go when seeking health information (2), making it a potent tool for the dissemination of evidence-based dental knowledge.

With medical articles available in 283 languages (3), Wikipedia is the most explored website on the internet for health-related searches (2). One study suggested that the online traffic to Wikipedia's medical articles is equal to that of the National Institute of Health (NIH) website and even surpasses that of MedlinePlus and WebMD (4).

In addition to helping address health inequalities in an increasingly technology-driven world, well-developed Wikipedia pages can be a reliable tool for dental healthcare professionals and an excellent educational resource for patients.

Although Wikipedia articles can be edited by anyone, there is a movement toward dental pages being edited and monitored primarily by dental students and faculty in association with the Wikipedia Collaboration of Dental Schools (WCODS). WCODS is a student-led initiative in collaboration with Cochrane Oral Health. Articles are edited to ensure that the information is current, accurate and references high-quality peer-reviewed evidence. Students and faculty volunteer their spare time to this cause and are driven by a sense of obligation to improve free access to evidence-based dentistry.

Recognizing the impact Wikipedia has on the profession, we call upon the support and participation of the greater dental professional community to contribute to the development of quality articles either individually or by joining the WCODS. Together, we can join forces to reach millions.

Disclaimer

All authors actively contribute to content on Wikipedia pages, advocate for dental professionals' contributions to Wikipedia and are involved in Wikipedia training events at their affiliated Universities.

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Volume 1 Issue 2 October 2020

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