

CARESEARCH PAGE PROFILE: FINDING OUT MORE (CNIN JAN 2009)

It is not uncommon for patients and their families to approach health professionals with information that they have found on the internet. This information seeking is a way in which many people can try and take some control over what is happening.



We know that Australians are increasingly using the internet to find out information. In 2007-08, 67% of Australian households had home Internet access and 75% of households had access to a computer. (ABS, 2008) The [Pew Internet and American Life Study](#) showed that eighty percent of American internet users have looked online for health information.

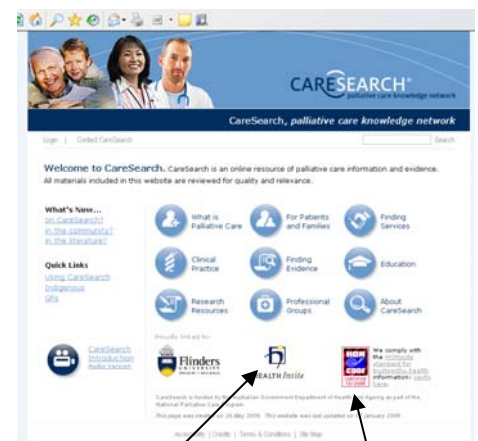
Some estimates suggest that there are over 100,000 health websites and more than 11.5 billion web pages which can make finding trustworthy information difficult.

Within the patients and carers pages is a section called '[Finding out more](#)'. This section includes information on a number of issues that can help patients and families safely seek for information on the internet. It covers

- where information can be found about [good information sources](#) and databases,
- [assessing the quality of information](#),
- thinking about [how to use this information](#), and
- [learning more about research](#).

Another useful strategy for patients and their families is being aware of the Health Insite and HONCode logos which are displayed on the home page of many reliable health websites'. They are indicators of quality accreditation schemes that require web providers to meet quality standards.

As health professionals one of the most helpful things we can do is to direct people to good quality sources of health information (such as CareSearch) but we can also help them to learn how to assess the quality of information and sites that they find on the web.



Health Insite logo HONCode Logo

CareSearch is an online resource funded by the Department of Health and Ageing to help clinicians find relevant evidence about palliative care. Available now at www.caresearch.com.au

1. CareSearch is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing as part of the National Palliative Care Program.
 2. CareSearch is managed by the Department of Palliative and Supportive Services, Flinders University.