With Liver Disease, Practice Makes Perfect

July 9, 2018 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

Like many others, I rely on the internet for health information, including hepatitis and liver disease. However, the internet can be a wildly unreliable resource. For a really great example of just how undependable the web can be, see Rick Nash's blog, Google Hep C. Since that blog was written, Google has updated it's aggregated info, but it is still wrong.

Where does a person who is looking for solid information about liver disease go? There are many websites. Obviously I recommend Hepmag.com and HCVAdvocate.org, since if I didn't believe in them, I wouldn't write for them. There are many other really good sites for consumers. But today, I want to mention a website that you may have overlooked: The American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD).

AASLD is a professional site, and as such, you may think it a bit too dense for your needs. However, AASLD provides something that everyone with liver disease really should have access to: practice guidelines.

Practice guidelines are standards by which physicians should operate. These guidelines are like the instruction manual. not only showing what the best course is, but why it is the best.

Currently, AASLD provides 21 practice guidelines. I regularly refer to the guidelines for chronic hepatitis B and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). For hepatitis C information, I prefer AASLD/IDSA's HCV Guidelines.

If you haven't been to these sites, check them out. If you have any questions, talk to your health care provider. If he or she isn't following the guidelines, ask for the reason. There are many good explanations for why a provider might stray from the guidelines, but if you don't ask, you won't know why.

And sometimes, just by asking, you are pointing your medical provider to information that they may need.

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