

OVERVIEW AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE ITALIAN PHARMACOLOGICAL SOCIETY WEB SITE

F. Casale[°], G. Lonardo*, G.P. Zara[°], V.I. Carbone[°], M. Eandi[°] and A. Mugelli*

[°]Department of Anatomy, Pharmacology and Forensic Sciences - University of Torino, Italy

*Department of Preclinical & Clinical Pharmacology - University of Florence, Italy

The last few years were characterized by the diffusion of communication technology, especially the World Wide Web is leading to a revolution in information production and distribution.

If used appropriately, Internet represents a very helpful research tool, and many resources have been released in the biomedical field. Universities employ the Web for student training, scientific journals have developed on-line versions including the electronic edition of articles, and medical associations have launched their web sites where members can find the latest scientific news.

In this contest, the Italian Society of Pharmacology (SIF) started an official Web site (<http://farmacologiaSIF.unito.it>) in March 2000, with the goal to realise an on-line management of members and society activities, and an information point for people interested in pharmacological issues, in particular Italian universities and industries.

We developed the SIF Web pages without highly sophisticated techniques or graphic effects, but by focusing on the contents and site management, by providing credibility and quality assurance in the pharmacological field, where the quality is often poor.

In accordance to the accepted guidelines (i.e. Silberg et al, JAMA 1997), all information are updated and the quality reviewed by SIF experts before they are published on the Net, and all external site links are verified before posting and successively monitored.

More than 1000 freely available documents discuss the main topics related to Pharmacology and Pharmacy, research- and teaching-related material, congress promotion, job and study opportunities, a guide to pharmacological resources on the Net, and much more.

In almost two years of activity, we recorded more than 100.000 user sessions, with an average of 7000 to 8000 visitors in the last months; our pages are also ranked in the most important search engines like Google, Altavista, Yahoo and Lycos.

In addition to the upgrades and developments of the current topics, like the English version of only-Italian material, the main projects will focus E-learning and On-line Publishing, because we think that Internet-based tools are very useful in the pharmacological training of students and young scientists.

The E-learning or Tele-didactics, taking advantage of multimedia capabilities of the Net, may be a valuable integration to classical lectures, and the teachers could employ on-line education, according to the core-curriculum of Pharmacology and related sciences. Moreover, interactive services like tutoring, evaluation tests and discussion lists will give a key-contribution to the success of these new teaching tools.

Finally, on Internet almost everybody can act as concurrently information producer and user, with a real acceleration in the elaboration and spread of scientific knowledge. Thus, we would like to develop publishing spaces in our site, after useful verification by SIF experts, in which young Pharmacologists, i.e. PhD students, can propose their contributions or comments about research, didactics and related topics.

SIF – Società Italiana di Farmacologia
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