



**1st National Nursing Informatics Conference 2005 Proceedings**

Nurses & Informatics: Transforming Healthcare

Sept 14 – 16th, 2005 – University of Toronto, Ontario

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS THEME 2: Research Initiatives in Nursing Informatics**

## **Patient Use of Online Healthcare Information**

*by Linda Mayhew, PhD Candidate*

### **ABSTRACT**

As Internet usage becomes more widespread, more and more people are using the Internet to search for health information. Little is known, concerning how people use this information in managing a chronic medical condition, and if they report the use of this information to their healthcare providers. In this study, we examine how patients find, evaluate, and use information, as well as examining the types of Internet resources that they use (e.g. Web pages vs. online discussion groups, patient produced sources vs. government sponsored sources), and what they see as the advantages and disadvantages of online healthcare information. Twenty interviews were conducted, ten with rural patients and ten with urban patients, in order to determine if rural and urban patients differed in their use of online healthcare information. Interviews were taped and transcribed, and grounded theory was used to analyse the interviews transcripts.

In addition, ten rural healthcare providers and ten with urban healthcare providers were also interviewed concerning their use of online healthcare information to determine if patients had different views and usage patterns from healthcare providers in their use of online healthcare information. Study participants were also asked to submit Internet addresses for frequently used online health resources, and a comparison was performed on the resources submitted for each group.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

#### **Linda Mayhew, PhD Candidate**

Linda Mayhew is a PhD Candidate in the Rural Studies program at the University of Guelph, where she is studying the impact of Internet technologies on rural healthcare. The results presented at this conference are based on her dissertation research for the program.

Linda's background also includes working as a research analyst at the Centre for Behavioural Research and Program Evaluation at the University of Waterloo, designing, managing, and implementing the 1996 Rural Internet Survey at the University of Guelph, and owning and managing a small ISP and Internet consulting business for several years in the Guelph and Wellington county areas.