

Review of the site <http://web4health.com>

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The purpose of the web4health was to give understandable and practical information about psychological problems to people having such problems themselves or have relatives or friends having psychological problems. The aim also was to give advices that are useable to mitigate the problems.

This website gives people a quick and inexpensive access to information about some common mental health and psychological problems. Web4health contains questions of others and responses of an expert panel to these questions. A reader of the site, who has elected a specific problem area, may get some information about the own problem from the responses to questions made by others. By reading the site people will become aware of the fact that some problems are common to people in different countries. However, the representativeness of those 20 items discussed at web4health.com can be discussed. It can be questioned why these problem areas and not others were selected. No information about how representative the persons that wrote the questions were is presented. If the problem areas discussed are assumed to mirror the problems of common people in Europe, information about the sample of questioners should be given.

The opening site lists 20 different areas about psychology, mental health and relationships to be discussed. It is printed that web4health is not aimed to discuss somatic and medical problems. It seems to me, as somatic and medical problems are associated to psychological problems and therefore difficult to avoid.

By the presumption that the questions are from a representative sample of European population, those 20 items seems intuitively to be a comprehensive list of everyday problems of the non-clinical population in European countries. If you have a specific question and do not find it unambiguously related to one of the listed problem areas, you have the possibility to write the question and make a search of other similar questions. You will automatically be directed to a related question written by another person and be able to read an answer to that question and get an advice how to get along with such a problem. The design of the opening page is rather well performed and it is easy to get a quick overview of the content.

When selecting one of the categories listed you will arrive in another “category specific” site. All category specific sites are overcrowded with alternatives on which you can click to get information about the selected topic. Due to the high density of the text on those pages, they are rather difficult if you want to get a quick overview of the content. When selecting different items from the list, you will find out that the quality of each area vary. Trying the category item “workplace” you will find very little information about a large problem in Sweden; namely the problem of exhaustion and depression connected to stress. Sick leave from work has grown very fast since 1997 that motivate a discussion about this topic. The non-availability of such a topic makes me to wonder if this phenomenon is due to cultural differences making this problem specific to Sweden.

Trying another item on the list, “addiction”, give rather good description of dependence of medical drugs, problems with other drugs are not attended at all. However, the site was not ready yet at the moment for review. Selection of “child care”, “anorexia”, “healthy living” or “psychiatric drugs” all leads to rather comprehensive sites giving a lot of information.

It is easy to get overloaded with information if you are not an experienced reader especially at the intermediate site between the presentation of the 20 problem areas and the questions.

However, the main impression of the website is that it fulfil the aims stated above, but the design of the site can be made little “friendlier” to a non-experienced reader.

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