

**Health Website Rating (HWR) Project**  
**HII Health Website Rating Instrument (HWRI)**  
Version 4.1; revised April 20, 2007; (HII proprietary document)

**Contents of file containing ratings worksheets**

This PDF file includes a complete set of rating worksheets for rating health websites.

*Please print/make as many copies of worksheets as necessary to rate all of the websites in your assigned batches. This file contains the following worksheets in the order they are listed below:*

*Complete one worksheet per website to be rated*

Website rating cover sheet

- Part I — Transparency & accountability... 2
  - 1.0 Website identity...2
  - 2.0 Advertising & sponsorships ...4
  - 3.0 Ease of use & accessibility 6
  - 4.0 Currency & corrections ...8
  - 5.0 Privacy ...9
- Part II — Editorial adequacy ...11
  - 1.0 Coverage & contents ...11
  - 2.0 Authors & interests ...15
  - 3.0 References & resources ...17
  - 4.0 Editorial policies & procedures ...20
- Part III — Information objectivity & reliability...27
- Part IV — Strengths & weaknesses ...34
- Part V — Website global score & narrative...35
- Part VI — Compliance with HONcode ...36

*Complete once for each wave of website ratings*

- Part VII — Feedback/comments ...38
- Part VIII — Attribute weights ...39

**Limit evaluative narratives to 25 words or less**

*For detailed instructions, please refer to “HWRI instructions” (contained in a separate PDF, File 3); also refer to those at the beginning of individual worksheets.*

Please refer to the message transmitting this file for:

- Batches of health websites you have been assigned to rate
- List of other files sent to you.

To obtain files in MS-WORD format or hardcopy, please contact Weijie Ma; see opposite ➤

Abbreviations used in ratings worksheets:

- For categorical answer check boxes
  - Y Yes
  - Y/B Yes, but (requires an explanation or comment, separately and/or in the evaluative narrative for the attribute)
  - N No
- For scalar answer check boxes
  - A Always
  - F Frequently
  - S Sometimes
  - O Occasionally
  - N Never
- For all items
  - when applicable, write-in & circle letter*
  - C Can't tell (website does not seem to contain necessary information)
  - L Lack expertise (to make the assessment or to determine whether or not the website contains necessary information)
  - T Too many articles to make meaningful assessment (of particular aspect of website quality) in time available
  - Z Not applicable (assessment item does not apply to website contents).

**Scores**

Scale of 1-10:

1 =extremely poor;

10 =as excellent as it could possibly be.

**Important**

- Fax completed ratings worksheets as soon as you have completed them; fax sets 1-by-1; *do not wait until you have rated all of the websites in a batch.*
- Fax everything to 301-320-0978
- Email wordprocessed text of evaluative narratives, comments, etc to hii@hii.org

**Questions?** Call Weijie Ma at 301-320-0971 or send email to wma@hii.org

**Health Website Rating (HWR) Project**  
**HII Health Website Rating Instrument (HWRI)**  
*Version 4.1; revised April 20, 2007 (HII proprietary document)*

**Cover page for website ratings worksheets**

*Please complete for each website to be rated; fax back as first completed worksheet*

**Do you have a conflict of interest in rating this health website?**  Yes  No

*If yes, explain below; do not rate the website. Immediately inform Health Improvement Institute of the conflict by faxing this page to 301-320-0978.*

**Note:** If you have not yet completed and returned the 2006 "Policy on Conflict of Interests" (PCI) form, please do so and fax it with this form. Raters only need to complete this PCI form once per year. It is contained in a separate PDF file.

**Questions?** Call Weijie Ma at 301-320-0971 or send email to [wma@hii.org](mailto:wma@hii.org)

**Date finished completing website rating worksheets:**

*Record time started and ended; calculate duration, in minutes (total time taken to rate website, complete worksheets, record scores, draft evaluative narratives, etc).*

Session (date)	_____	_____	_____	_____	Total
Time session ended	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Time session started	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Duration of session	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**Important**

- Fax completed ratings worksheets as soon as you have completed them; fax sets 1-by-1; *do not wait until you have rated all of the websites in a batch.*
- Fax everything to 301-320-0978
- Email word processed text of evaluative narratives, comments, etc to [hii@hii.org](mailto:hii@hii.org)

**Comments/Conflicts**

## Part I — General website criteria

### Notes:

- Items in this part are CRW general website ("pledge") criteria.
- ITEMS IN SMALL CAPITALS ARE DESCRIPTIVE.

### 1.0 Identity

- 1.1 Does website state its purpose and/or mission?
- Y, clearly
  - Y, but unclear and/or complicated
  - N
- 1.2 Does website state its intended audience?
- Y, includes consumers
  - Y, but does not include consumers
  - N, but clearly implies consumer
  - N, doesn't say
- 1.3 Does website provide contact information?
- Check all that apply*
- Postal address
  - Telephone number
  - Email address
  - Contact information provided on parent site
  - No contact information provided
- 1.4 Does website disclose ownership?
- Check only one*
- Y, on health website being assessed
  - N, ownership disclosed on parent website
  - N, ownership not disclosed
- 1.5 [D] IF Y (DISCLOSES OWNERSHIP): *CHECK ONE, AND, IF APPLICABLE, ALSO ONE SUB-ITEM*
- COMMERCIAL:  PUBLICLY HELD  PRIVATELY HELD  NOT SURE
  - GOVERNMENT:  FEDERAL  STATE  LOCAL  NOT SURE
  - NON-PROFIT
  - CAN'T TELL TYPE OF OWNERSHIP
- 1.6 If non-profit, does website disclose sources of funds?
- Check one*
- Y, principal sources & amounts
  - Y, principal sources only
  - N

- 1.7 [D] DOES WEBSITE DISPLAY ANY OF THE FOLLOWING? *CHECK ALL THAT APPLY*
- BOBBY LOGO
  - HI-ETHICS LOGO
  - HII/AESCUAPIUS AWARD LOGO
  - HON LOGO
  - TRUSTE LOGO
  - URAC (ACCREDITATION) LOGO
  - VIPPS SEAL (DRUG STORE/SITE)
  - OTHER AWARD, PRIZE, ACCREDITATION, CERTIFICATION, ETC. LOGO OR SEAL
  - NONE

1.8 **"Identity" score (0-10):** \_\_\_\_\_

1.9 *Evaluative narrative regarding ownership, purpose/scope & intended audience of website*

---

---

---

---

---

1.10 [D] WHAT IS PURPOSE (MISSION) OF WEBSITE (WHETHER OR NOT STATED ON WEBSITE)?

---

---

---

---

---

## Part I — General website criteria

### 2.0 Advertising & sponsorships

- 2.1 [D] DOES WEBSITE ACCEPT ADVERTISING (OR SPONSORED LINKS)?
- Y, THIRD-PARTY AND IN-HOUSE
  - Y, BUT ONLY IN-HOUSE
  - N – *If N, go to 3.0*
- 2.2 If Y (accepts advertising), does the website disclose its advertising policies?
- Y, clearly
  - Y, but unclear and/or complicated
  - No
- 2.3 Is this disclosure easily accessible from each webpage?
- Y
  - N
- 2.4 How are advertisement distinguished from contents?  
*Check all that apply; count only answer with highest number of points*
- Ads labeled as such
  - Ads placed in boxes
  - Ads placed in banners across top or bottom of webpage
  - Ads appear in pop-ups
  - Ads appear in pop-ups that spawn new windows
  - Other (mouse-over labels, etc)
  - Ads not clearly distinguished from contents
- 2.5 [D] DOES WEBSITE CONTAIN SPONSORED LINKS OR CONTENTS?
- Y
  - N
- 2.6 If Y (contains sponsored links or contents), does website disclose its sponsorship policies?
- Y, clearly
  - Y, but unclear and/or complicated
  - N
- 2.7 Is this disclosure easily accessible from every webpage?
- Y
  - N

2.8 How are sponsored links/content identified?

*Check all that apply; count only answer with highest number of points*

- Sponsored links labeled
- Sponsored links placed in boxes
- Sponsored contents labeled
- Sponsored content placed on separate webpages
- Sponsored webpages labeled in browser window
- Other (mouse-over labels, etc)
- Sponsored content not clearly distinguished from content

2.9 **"Advertising" score (0-10):** \_\_\_\_\_

2.10 *Evaluative narrative regarding advertising and sponsorship*

Note: If advertising on website is intrusive or excessive, mention this fact in your evaluative narrative for "ease of use" and/or as a "weakness;" not here.

---

---

---

---

---

## Part I — General website criteria

### 3.0 *Ease of use*

- 3.1 Is there a site map or index?  
 Y, accessible from every webpage  
 Y, but not accessible from every webpage  
 N
- 3.2 Are there navigational menus?  
 Y, on every webpage  
 Y, but not on every webpage  
 N
- 3.3 Do you always know where you are in website?  
 Y, always  
 Y, sometimes  
 N, never
- 3.4 [D] DOES THE WEBSITE CONTAIN A SEARCH ENGINE?  
 Y  
 N
- 3.5 [D] ARE SOFTWARE PLUG-INS REQUIRED TO USE WEBSITE?  
 Y  
 N
- 3.6 Is the website available in "text-only" mode?  
 Y  
 N
- 3.7 DOES THE WEBSITE INDICATE IT IS BOBBY-APPROVED AND/OR COMPLIANT WITH SECTION 508 AND/OR OTHER ACCESSABILITY STANDARDS?  
 Y  
 N
- 3.8 Does website offer "printer-friendly" version of contents?  
 Y, all contents  
 Y, some contents  
 N
- 3.9 IS WEBSITE CONTENT AVAILABLE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES?  
 Y, MENTION AVAILABLE LANGUAGES IN EVALUATIVE NARRATIVE  
 N
- 3.10 [D] DOES WEBSITE REQUIRE USER REGISTRATION?  
 Y, REQUIRED  
 Y, OPTIONAL  
 N

3.11 Are users alerted when they click on an external link?

- Y
- N

3.12 Does website avoid attempting to hinder navigation (such as disabling "back" button)?

- Y, no hindrance
- N, hindrance

3.13 **"Ease of use" score (0-10):** \_\_\_\_\_

3.14 *Evaluative narrative regarding ease of use and accessibility of contents to consumers, encompassing navigability/indexing/menuing (ease of finding information on website on given health subject/topic), clarity and reading level of text (ability of average consumer to comprehend contents) and any aids to comprehension, and ease of use by disabled (accessibility/ease of use by disabled; conformance with requirements of section 508), etc*

---

---

---

---

---



Part I — General website criteria

4.0 Corrections & currency

4.1 Does website maintain a webpage where it corrects or clarifies its content?

- Y
- N

4.2 Is this webpage easily accessible from every webpage?

- Y
- N

4.3 Can users easily provide feedback (complain) to website?

- Y, website invites feedback & provides easy way
- Y, invites but no easy way
- Y, doesn't invite feedback but provides easy way to contact website
- N, doesn't invite & no easy way to contact

4.4 Does website indicate how it uses feedback?

- Y
- N

4.5 Does website indicate when it was last updated?

- Y
- N

4.6 If Y (indicates when last updated), how frequently is website updated?

*Check only one*

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Can't tell

4.7 **"Corrections & currency" score (0-10): \_\_\_\_\_**

4.8 *Evaluative narrative regarding corrections and currency (including feedback and its use)*

---

---

---

---

---

## Part I — General website criteria

### 5.0 Privacy

- 5.1 Does the website disclose its privacy policy?
- Y, clearly
  - Y, but unclear and/or complicated
  - N
- 5.2 If Y (discloses privacy policy), is privacy policy easily accessible from every webpage?
- Y
  - N
- 5.3 [D] DOES WEBSITE DISCLOSE HOW IT USES ANY PERSONAL INFORMATION IT COLLECTS?
- Y
  - N
- 5.4 If Y (discloses how uses collected personal information), does website disclose whether or not it shares personal information (names, address, etc.) with third parties?
- Y, never shared
  - Y, only shared if user "opts-in"
  - Y, shared unless user "opts-out"
  - Y, always shared (user can't "opt-out")
  - N, can't tell clearly how or when information is disclosed
- 5.5 [D] DOES WEBSITE DISCLOSE WHETHER OR NOT IT USES COOKIES OR OTHER BROWSER-TRACKING TECHNOLOGIES SUCH AS WEB BEACONS, BUGS OR ROBOTS TO COLLECT WEBSITE TRAFFIC DATA?
- Y, USES COOKIES, ETC
  - Y, DOESN'T USE COOKIES, ETC
  - N, DOESN'T DISCLOSE/CAN'T TELL
- 5.6 If Y, uses cookies, etc, does website explain how this non-personal data will be used?
- Y, clearly
  - Y, but unclear and/or complicated
  - N
- 5.7 Does website disclose how it uses collected email addresses for newsletters, promotions or other purposes?
- Y, email address never collected
  - Y, only collected if user "opts-in"
  - Y, collected unless user "opts-out"
  - Y, always collected (user can't "opt-out")
  - N, doesn't disclose/can't tell

5.8 [D] IS WEBSITE'S PRIVACY POLICY REASONABLE? OR, FOR EXAMPLE, DOES IT REQUIRE DISCLOSURE OF AN UNREASONABLE AMOUNT OF PERSONAL INFORMATION GIVEN ITS OSTENSIBLE PURPOSE?  
 Y, REASONABLE  
 N, UNREASONABLE

5.9 Does website promise to publish changes to privacy policy?  
 Y  
 N

5.10 [D] HOW DOES WEBSITE ASSURE INTERNET SECURITY?  
*CHECK ALL THAT APPLY*  
 SECURE SOCKET LAYER (SSL)  
 FIREWALL  
 PADLOCK ICON  
 HTTP:  
 OTHER  
 NO STATEMENT OR INDICATION OF SECURE CONNECTION  
 SAYS THERE IS NO SECURE CONNECTION

5.11 **"Privacy score" (0-10):** \_\_\_\_\_

5.12 *Evaluative narrative regarding privacy*

---

---

---

---

---

## Part II — Health information website criteria

### Notes:

- Part II pertains to the assessment of "health information" contained on websites to be rated.
- For websites that contain health information about multiple subjects, examine all of them, or, if the website is very extensive, a reasonable sampling, concentrating on what you think are the most popular or common subjects sought by consumers. Answer assessment questions based on your general impression gained by examination of subjects. Always read the "terms of use" (or equivalent section), if any is provided, to understand better the website's composition and content.

### 1.0 Coverage & contents

- 1.1 [D] What is (form of) website health information content? *Check all that apply*
- 1.1.1 Archives (of articles, news, etc)
  - 1.1.2 Articles/reports (intended primarily to convey "facts")
  - 1.1.3 Bibliographies
    - 1.1.3.1 Are they?
      - Stand-alone
      - Part of articles
      - Both
  - 1.1.4 Chat room(s)
    - 1.1.4.1 Are they moderated?
      - Y
      - Y/B
      - N
      - Both (some Y or Y/B, some N)
  - 1.1.5 DSTs/self-help tools (eg, to calculate calories or to record/track weight)
    - 1.1.5.1  BMI (body mass index) calculator/chart
    - 1.1.5.2  Desirable body weight calculator
    - 1.1.5.3  Energy balance (personalized food vs. activity calorie)/nutritional needs calculator/tracker; includes separate input (energy needs) and output (calorie burner) calculators/counters
    - 1.1.5.4  Health risk calculator (based on height, weight, birth, etc.)
    - 1.1.5.5  Target heart rate calculator
    - 1.1.5.7  Waist-to-hip ratio calculator
    - 1.1.5.8  Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
  - 1.1.6 Drug information (in the manner of Physicians Desk Reference [PDR], giving descriptions, indications, etc.)
  - 1.1.7 Essays/editorials (intended to convey point of view)

- 1.1.8 Expert exchange
  - 1.5.8.1 Gives experts' qualifications?
    - Y
    - Y/B
    - N
- 1.1.9 FAQs (Frequently Asked QuestionS, with answers)
  - Y
  - Y/B
  - N
- 1.1.10 Glossary of terms?
  - Y
  - Y/B
  - N
- 1.1.11 Informits (ie, units of information or text on a single topic, including FAQ)
- 1.1.12 Message boards (consumers' comments posted to website)
- 1.1.13 News/events
- 1.1.14 Newsletter
- 1.1.15 Product sales
- 1.1.16 Resource lists/links
  - 1.1.17.1 Are they?
    - Stand-alone
    - Part of articles
    - Both
    - Website consists only of lists/links
- 1.1.17 Videos and/or audio tracks
- 1.1.18 Something else? *Specify*

***If the website to be rated contains neither health information nor links to other health websites, check the box below and go to part IV; else continue to 1.2.***

- Website contains no health information & no links to health websites — *go to part IV.*

1.2 [D] How comprehensive are (what is breadth of) website contents (in terms of health subjects)?

- Encyclopedic
- Multiple subjects
- Single focus, (such as diet or diabetes)
  - If single focus, 1.2.1 What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

1.3 [D] How detailed are contents (depth of coverage of subjects covered by website)?

- Detailed
- Adequate for average consumer
- Superficial

***The remainder of Part II focus on "articles" (including "editorials"), or, if there are none, on "informits" (including "FAQS"). If there are neither articles nor informits, complete 1.6 & 1.7, and go to Part IV; else continue to 1.4.***

1.4 [D] Does website generate all of its own articles or informits? Or, does it (re)publish material supplied by one or more "content vendors" or other sources?

Y, entirely own content

N, but mostly own content

N, mostly or exclusively licenses or (re)publishes others' content

If N (licenses/republishes), 1.4.1 From which vendors or sources? *Specify*

---

---

---

1.4.2 Does website link to these vendors'/sources' website?

A

F

S

O

N

1.5 For individual articles or informits (whether its own or republished), does website (do authors):

1.5.1 State when article was written and/or last updated?

A

F

S

O

N

1.5.2 Indicate how frequently article is updated (or when next update will appear)?

A

F

S

O

N

1.5.3 Explain appropriate use of information contained in article?

A

F

S

O

N

1.5.4 Describe limitations on applicability of information contained in article?

A

F

S

O

N

1.6 **"Coverage & contents" score (1-10): \_\_\_\_\_**

1.7 *Evaluative narrative regarding coverage (breadth/depth of information on health subjects/topics that are covered by website) and contents (including currency, any statements regarding limitations of use of contents, etc).*

---

---

---

---

---

## Part II — Health information website criteria

### 2.0 Authors & interests

- 2.1 Are website articles/informits (including any content from vendor or other sources) authored or written by
- Subject matter experts
  - Writers or reporters (who are not “experts”)
  - Mix
  - Can’t tell, they have no authors
  - Can’t tell, credentials are unclear
  - Can’t tell, other reason, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.2 Does website provide conflict of interest policy (relevant to authorship of contents)?
- Y
  - Y/B
  - N
- If Y or Y/B, 2.2.1 Does this conflict of interest policy apply to both website-generated content and (any) content from vendors or other sources?
- Y, both
  - N, only website-generated
  - N, only content from vendors
  - C (can’t tell)
- 2.2.2 Is the policy a separate, clearly-identified statement?
- Y
  - Y/B
  - N
- Is the policy appropriate/adequate to ensure
- 2.2.3 Relevant disclosures of interests?
- Y
  - Y/B
  - N
- 2.2.4 Objectivity of articles?
- Y
  - Y/B
  - N
- 2.3 Does website describe relationship between authors of articles/contents and owner or sponsor of website?
- Y
  - Y/B
  - N
- 2.4 Are website articles/informits (or, if applicable, contents collectively), written by named authors (as opposed to website or content vendor, ie, no named authors)?
- Y (named authors)
  - Y/B
  - N (ie, anonymous)
  - Mix (of authored and non-authored contents/articles)



If Y or Y/B, Does website

2.4.1 Provide authors' credentials?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

If Y or Y/B (provides credentials), 2.4.1.1 Do authors' credentials appear to be appropriate to article's contents?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

2.4.2 State explicitly authors' relevant (financial) interests, or absence of (conflicts) of interests?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

2.5 **"Authors & interests" score (1-10): \_\_\_\_\_**

2.6 *Evaluative narrative regarding authors and interests (including information on and appropriateness of authors' credentials).*

---

---

---

---

---

## Part II — Health information website criteria

### 3.0 References & resources

3.1 Does website provide links to other websites, eg, as "resource?"

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y or Y/B (provides links), 3.1.1 Does website describe the basis or criteria for linking to other websites (including whether or not the link represents an endorsement)?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y or Y/B (describes basis for links), 3.1.2 Do criteria include reliability/quality of content of (health information on) linked-to websites?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y or Y/B (linking criteria include reliability/quality), 3.1.2.1 Does website describe criteria/methods used to assess reliability/quality of linked-to website contents?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y or Y/B (describes criteria/methods for assessing reliability/quality of linked-to websites), 3.1.2.2 Are they adequate for the purpose?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y or Y/B in 3.1 (provides links)

3.1.3 Does website periodically (at least annually) check appropriateness of links to other websites (eg, to ensure they continue to meet its linking criteria)?

- Y
- Y/B
- N/C (Can't tell)

3.1.4 Does website periodically (at least annually) check that links are still live (and, if not, removes or corrects link)?

- Y
- Y/B
- N/C (Can't tell)

3.1.5 Is there a way for user to report non-functioning links?

- Y
- Y/B
- N/C (Can't tell)

***If the website contains only links (and no articles), complete 3.4 & 3.5, and then go to Part IV; else continue to 3.2.***

3.2 Do authors (or does website) provide specific sources of information for individual "facts?"  
(eg, in manner of citations to sources used in research reports published in journals)

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

When specific source is provided is it:

3.2.1 Link to such source?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

3.2.2 Citation to listed reference?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

*Except if never:* 3.2.3 For citations/references, is full bibliographic information provided (author, title, year of publication, etc)

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

3.3 Do articles have:

3.3.1 Bibliography, in addition to any (list of) citations to sources?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

3.3.2 Lists of and/or links to other resources?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

3.3.3 Easy way to

3.3.3.1 Download or print contents in user-friendly format?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

3.3.3.2 Request additional information?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

3.3.3.3 Contact authors (eg, their email address)?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

3.4 **"References & resources" score (1-10): \_\_\_\_\_**

3.5 *Evaluative narrative regarding references and resources (including number, criteria for, and quality of links to other websites).*

---

---

---

---

---

## Part II — Health information website criteria

### 4.0 Editorial policies & procedures

Important: If the website licenses content from vendors (and/or obtains it from other sources), and links to these vendors/sources, examine the vendors'/sources' editorial policies and procedures (P&P) including authors' interests and conflicts, especially if the website has no editorial P&P or if its P&P do not include assessing and ensuring the integrity and quality of content licensed from vendors or obtained from other sources.

- 4.1 Does website differentiate clearly between articles/FAQS/reports (intended to convey "facts") and editorials/essays (intended to convey opinions or perspectives)?
- Y
  - Y/B
  - N
  - Only articles (including informits and FAQs)
  - Only editorials
  - Neither articles nor editorials — *If neither, go to III.B.*

### Editorial quality assurance

- 4.2 Does website describe any editorial review policies/procedures used to check facts, assure quality of text, etc before posting contents on website (either in a separate section of the website or within individual articles)?
- Y, in a separate section of website labeled "Editorial policies & procedures" or something equivalent
  - Y, separate section but not clearly labeled
  - Y, in individual articles; no separate section
  - Y/B
  - N (no documented editorial P&P) — *If N, go to 4.8 & 4.9*
    - If Y or Y/B, 4.2.1 Do policies & procedures seem to be adequate for their purpose?
      - Y
      - Y/B
      - N
- 4.3 Whether or not described in a separate section of website are the same editorial policies & procedures used to prepare all articles or informits?
- Y
  - Y/B
  - N (varies by article) — *If N, go to 4.6*
  - C (can't tell) — *If C, go to 4.6*

**If Y or Y/B (in item 4.3), same editorial policies and procedures are stated (or seem) to be used for all website articles or informits, continue below (4.4); else go to 4.6.**

*Search for relevant information to write/produce website contents*

4.4 Does website describe how website (authors of contents) searched for and/or selected information contained in article/informit, and displayed on website?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y or Y/B, Does website define/describe:

4.4.1 Purpose/scope of search?

4.4.2 How search for relevant information or sources was conducted?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y or Y/B, 4.4.2.1 Does search seem to have been adequate for the purpose/scope and/or to ensure objectivity (eg, surfacing all relevant points of view)?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

4.4.3 Are there any quality assurance (QA) procedures regarding search for relevant information/sources?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y or Y/B, 4.4.3.1 Are QA procedures adequate for their purpose?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

*Grading/assessment of collected evidence/information (search results)*

4.5 Does website (authors of contents) describe how collected sources or information items were assessed and/or graded for selection purposes (including their relevance/validity)?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

4.5.1 If Y or Y/B, Do policies/procedures used to assess/select collected sources/information seem to have been adequate for purpose/scope and/or to ensure objectivity?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

4.5.2 Do procedures include grading "facts" (eg, in research reports) and/or assessing quality/validity of information (evidence)?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y or Y/B, 4.5.2.1 Are methods used to grade/assess quality/validity of

evidence described appropriately?

Y

Y/B

N

If Y or Y/B, 4.5.2.2 Are methods adequate to their purpose?

Y

Y/B

N

4.5.3 On website, are contents graded explicitly (including organization of information by evidence grade and/or according to its reliability/quality)?

Y

Y/B

N

4.5.4 Does website describe any QA procedures regarding grading/assessment of collected/selected evidence/information?

Y

Y/B

N

If Y or Y/B, 4.5.4.1 Are QA procedures adequate for their purpose?

Y

Y/B

N

**Go to items 4.8 (score) and 4.9 (evaluative narrative)**

**If N in item 4.3, no general editorial policies/procedures**

Complete 4.6/4.7 only if website does not describe general editorial policies and procedures that apply to all website articles/informits; else go to 4.8

Search for relevant information to produce/write website contents

4.6 Do articles describe how website/authors' searched for and/or selected information displayed on site?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

*Except if never:* Do articles define/describe:

4.6.1 Purpose/scope of search?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

4.6.2 How search for relevant information or sources was conducted?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

*Except if never:* 4.6.2.1 Does search seem to have been adequate for purpose/scope and/or to ensure objectivity (eg, surfacing all relevant points of view)?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

4.6.3 Any quality assurance (QA) procedures regarding search for relevant information?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

*Except if never:* 4.6.3.1 Are QA procedures adequate for their purpose?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N



*Grading/assessment of collected evidence/information (search results)*

4.7 Do articles describe how collected sources or information items were assessed for selection purposes (including relevance/validity)?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

4.7.1 *Except if never:* Do procedures used to assess/select collected sources or information seem to be adequate for purpose/scope and/or to ensure objectivity?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

4.7.2 *Except if never:* Do procedures include grading quality/validity of "facts" in research reports and/or assessing quality/validity of information (evidence)?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

*Except if never: 4.7.2.1* Are methods used to grade/assess quality/validity of evidence/information described appropriately?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

*Except if never: 4.8.2.2* Are methods adequate to their purpose?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

4.7.3 In articles, is evidence/information graded explicitly (including organization of information by evidence grade and/or according to its quality/validity)?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

4.7.4 Do articles describe any QA procedures regarding grading/assessment of collected/selected evidence/information?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

*Except if never:* 4.7.4.1 Are QA procedures adequate for their purpose?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

***Continue to item 4.8 (score) and 4.9 (evaluative narrative)***

4.8 **"Editorial policies & procedures" score (1-10): \_\_\_\_\_**

4.9 *Evaluative narrative regarding editorial policies and procedures (encompassing search for and grading and selection of contents, ie, health information contained on website; editorial review; QA of all of the foregoing).*

---

---

---

---

---

### Part III — Information objectivity & reliability (& evidence of effectiveness of interventions)

Note: This part pertains to health information (and other applicable) websites, to assess the objectivity and accuracy or validity of content (information)

- **Part III.A – the health information presented**
- **Part III.B – drug information presented**
- **Part III.C – DST/self-help tools presented**
- **Part III.D – scientific adequacy (requires assessment by subject matter expert)**
- **Part III.E – health information score & evaluation narrative.**

#### Part III.A. Information content

Does information in individual articles (or informits) appear to be:

III.A.1 Presented in a neutral, evenhanded manner?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

III.A.2 If (some) information pertains to controversial topic (where science is silent, evidence conflicts, and/or opinions of qualified experts disagree), is controversy surfaced and discussed appropriately?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

III.A.3 Supported appropriately by pertinent references to medical literature or other applicable source of “facts”?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

III.A.4 Coherent; not contradictory?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

III.A.5 Organized/presented clearly; not muddled — including no superfluous or extraneous material (which may cause consumer to become confused and draw wrong conclusion from contents)?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

III.A.6 Are articles or informits of uniform “quality”? Or, do they vary in this regard?

- Very uniform
- Reasonably uniform
- Half and half
- Somewhat uneven
- Very uneven
- Too many articles to assessment in time available (T)
- Lack expertise (L)
- Few articles/informits, so not applicable (Z).

Part III.B Drug information

**Only if the website contains drug information (in the manner of the PDR); else go to III.C**

III.B.1 Does website indicate source of the drug information presented?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N
- No drug info – go to III.C

III.B.1.1 Except if never, is its source (check all that apply)

- Manufacturer
- Website (staff and/or consultants)
- Other source, specify \_\_\_\_\_

III.B.1.2 If from source other than website, does website review the accuracy & completeness of each drug's information?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N
- C (can't tell)

III.B.1.3 Except if never, is website's review adequate?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

III.B.2 When the information was last evaluated (or reviewed or updated)?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N
- Only for drug info section; not each drug separately

### III.C DST/self-help tools

**Only if the website provides self-help or decision support tools (DST), such as “calculators”; else go to III.D.**

Does the website indicate (generally, eg, in editorial P&P, or specifically in relation to each tool):

III.C.1 The source of each tool?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N
- No DST/self-help tools – *go to III.D*

III.C.2 How tools were (or their validity was) evaluated prior to placement on the website?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

Except if never: III.C.2.1 Are evaluation methods adequate for their purpose?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

III.C.3 When tools were last evaluated (or reviewed or updated)?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

III.C.4 Is this information (on DSTs’ source, evaluation methods, etc) in one place on the website or associated with each DST/tool?

- One place, specify below
  - Associated with each tool
  - Mix, some info in one place; other info with each tool (specify one place below)
- One place: \_\_\_\_\_

Part III.D. Scientific adequacy (requires subject matter expertise)

Don't have expertise – go to Part III.E

III.D.1 Do contents of website reflect "mainstream medicine or science" or "widely-accepted ideas or views?" Or, do they include scientifically unsupportable statements or ideas?

Y, contents are mainstream (scientifically supportable)

Y/B

N, some contents are questionable

N, all contents are questionable

T, too many articles to assess

Z, N/A, Contents consist solely of consumers' comments, links, etc

*If applicable, in evaluative narrative, characterize and/or provide salient examples of questionable statements or ideas*

III.D.2 Are contents of individual articles (or informits):

III.D.2.1 Complete (for given or assumed purpose/scope)?

A

F

S

O

N

T, too many articles to assess

III.D.2.2 Comprehensive, ie, cover subject/topics in relevant detail; do not omit important relevant facts?

A

F

S

O

N

T, too many articles to assess

III.D.2.3 Accurate, ie, statements intended to be factual accord with generally accepted notions of the state of medicine or science

A

F

S

O

N

T, too many articles to assess

III.D.2.4 Objective & unbiased? Or, are facts presented and/or interpreted in a misleading way (including facts omitted, distorted or misinterpreted, and/or alternative interpretations, points of view, etc omitted or dismissed inappropriately, and/or assumptions hidden, etc)?

A

F

S

O

N

T, too many articles to assess



III.D.3 Are articles or informits of uniform accuracy or reliability? Or, do they vary in this regard?

- Very uniform
- Reasonably uniform
- Half and half
- Somewhat uneven
- Very uneven
- Too many articles to assessment in time available (T)
- Lack expertise (L)
- Few articles/informits so not applicable (Z).

III.D.4 If website contains or links to research reports regarding the effectiveness of interventions (diagnostic test, therapeutic intervention, diet self-help plan or program, etc), are these research studies as reported scientifically adequate (in such terms as clarity of objectives, appropriateness of methods, internal and external validity of results, reasonableness of conclusions, etc)?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N
- Can't tell, eg, too little information in reports to assess (C)
- Can't easily access reports to judge (C)
- Too many reports to assess in time available (T)
- Lack expertise (L)
- N/A, no links to research reports [Z]
- N/A no references to self-help or other interventions [Z]

Part III.E Health information score & evaluative narrative

III.E.1 **“Information objectivity & reliability” score (1-10): \_\_\_\_\_**

III.E.2 *Evaluative narrative regarding information objectivity & reliability (encompassing objectivity of writing, variability of quality, scientific soundness, accuracy of contents, etc, and, if applicable, evidence of effectiveness of interventions)*

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Part IV — Strengths/Weaknesses

Please identify below, from the perspective of the consumer using the website, the website's:

- Greatest strengths (if any)
- Greatest weaknesses (if any).

Be complete yet concise. If prefer, word-process & attach.

IV.A *Website's greatest strengths* (up to 5, in rank order; best first)  None

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

IV.B *Website's greatest weaknesses* (up to 5, in rank order; worst first)  None

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Part V — Design & global score & evaluative narrative

Scale points: 1 =extremely poor; 10 =as excellent as it could possibly be.

### V.A "Evaluability"

V.A Overall, on a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate?

\_\_\_\_\_ "Evaluability," ie, ease of finding information needed to complete HWRI

### V.B Design

V.B.1 Does the website use graphics appropriately? Or, is it "heavy" with graphics, thereby adversely affecting loading time and/or aesthetic appeal?

- Yes, appropriate use of graphics
- N, heavy with graphics; long loading times but aesthetics OK
- N, heavy; poor aesthetics but loading times OK
- N, heavy, long loading times and poor aesthetics.

V.B.2 Overall, on a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate?

\_\_\_\_\_ "Design," ie, website's visual appeal, including creativity and aesthetics (text/font styles, layout, use of color, etc)

V.B.3 *Evaluative narrative regarding design (including layout, graphics, use of color, etc.)*

---

---

---

---

---

### V.C. Global score/assessment

V.C.1 From the perspective of a consumer seeking reliable health information, self-help, etc, how would you rate the website overall?

\_\_\_\_\_ "Global score," ie, all things considered, utility of website to consumers seeking reliable health information and/or self-help on subjects/topics that are covered by website

V.C.2 *Utility to consumers (global evaluative assessment of the website), as source of reliable health information, self-help, etc*

---

---

---

---

---

## Part VI — Assessment of compliance with HON principles (HONcode)

The HON (Health On the Net foundation) logo appears ubiquitously on "health websites." Concerns have been expressed about the extent to which websites that display the HON logo comply with HON principles (stated on the HON website), and, the possibility that displaying the HON logo when the website does not comply with HON principles may mislead consumers. As part of the HWR project, HII is asking health website raters, based on their criteria ratings, attribute scores, and evaluative narratives (contained in previous parts of the HWRI) to assess whether or not rated websites (considered as a whole) comply with HON principles.

This subpart of the rating instrument pertains to the 8 HON principles. We have included it for evaluation and research purposes. For each principle, please determine whether or not the website complies with the principle. Please refer to Appendix 2 of the HWRI (File 3) for a complete description of each principle (as stated on the HON website).

VI.1 *Principle 1 - Information must be authoritative:*

Is website compliant?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

VI.2 *Principle 2 - Purpose of the website:*

Is website compliant?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

VI.3 *Principle 3 - Confidentiality:*

Is website compliant?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

VI.4 *Principle 4 - Information must be documented (referenced and dated):*

Is website compliant?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

VI.5 *Principle 5 - Justification of claims:*

Is website compliant?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

VI.6 *Principle 6 - Website contact details:*

Is website compliant?

Y

Y/B

N

VI.7 *Principle 7 - Disclosure of funding sources:*

Is website compliant?

Y

Y/B

N

VI.8 *Principle 8 - Advertising policy:*

Is website compliant?

Y

Y/B

N

VI.9 *Evaluative narrative regarding compliance with HON principles*

---

---

---

---

---

**Part VII: Feedback/Comments**

*Complete only once per wave of website ratings.*

Please write below (or attached wordprocessed sheet) any comments pertaining to or suggestions for improving the HWRI, the HWR project, or related matter.

Rating process:

---

---

---

Rating criteria/instruments:

---

---

---

Rater's application materials/information:

---

---

---

Selection of websites to be rated:

---

---

---

Design of project ratings website (<http://www.healthratings.org>):

---

---

---

Other feedback/suggestions for improving the health website rating project:

---

---

---

### Part VIII.: Attribute weights

*Complete only once per wave of website ratings.*

Please enter the weight you think should be given to each part, and, if applicable, each attribute in a part, to produce a global website score. Refer to the applicable part of the HWRI for a list of items that comprise the attribute.

*Weights must sum to 100.*

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Weight Part</b>	<b>Attribute (division of "part" weight)</b>
<i>Part I Transparency &amp; accountability</i>	_____	
1.0 Website identity		_____
2.0 Advertising & sponsorships		_____
3.0 Ease of use & accessibility		_____
4.0 Currency & corrections		_____
5.0 Privacy		_____
<i>Part II Editorial adequacy</i>	_____	
1.0 Coverage & contents		_____
2.0 Authors & interests		_____
3.0 References & resources		_____
4.0 Editorial policies & procedures		_____
<i>Part III Information reliability &amp; evidence of effectiveness</i>	_____	
<i>Part V Design (visual appeal; creativity &amp; aesthetics)</i>	_____	
<b>Total must sum to</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_