

# Internet a boost for answers to mental-health

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University of Melbourne researchers have found Wikipedia is the most highly rated website for accessing information on mental-health related topics.

The researchers assessed a range of on-line and print material on mental health-related topics and found that in the majority of cases, Wikipedia was the most highly rated in most domains.

Content about mental health was extracted from 14 frequently accessed websites, including Wikipedia, Encyclopaedia Britannica and a psychiatry textbook. Text providing [information](#) about depression and schizophrenia was assessed.

The content was rated by experts according to: accuracy, how current the information is, breadth of coverage, referencing and readability. Ratings varied significantly between resources according to topic.

Researcher, Dr Nicola Reavley and her colleagues discovered that the quality of information on depression and schizophrenia on Wikipedia was generally as good as, or better than that provided by centrally controlled websites or psychiatry textbooks.

“We know that people seeking information about mental disorders want real-time answers and assistance with accessing help. The Internet is instant and Wikipedia is often the first stop for people looking for definitions, explanations and information about suggested treatments,” said Dr Reavley.

“The Internet provides extensive information about mental disorders that is accessed by consumers and carers. For some people in need, it is the first stop to the next stage of enquiring about services.”

While there have been controversies about the accuracy of [Wikipedia](#) in the past and people are not always sure about trusting it – this study suggests that people can trust it to a reasonable extent.”

Dr Reavley, a Research Fellow from Orygen Youth Health, at the University of Melbourne and her colleagues have constructed a website for young people interested in discussing and sharing their experiences of [mental health](#) conditions and treatments.

Provided by University of Melbourne

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