

**The California Community Colleges
CCL-EAR Committee
Preview
Salem Health
April, 2008**

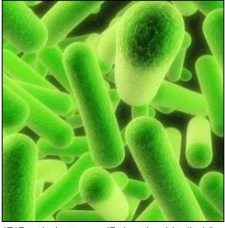
DATABASE OVERVIEW & Contents

Salem Health is an online database interface for Salem Health titles, which so far only includes *Magill's Medical Guide*. This is one of two online databases Salem is currently offering. The other database is Salem History, which includes at present all titles that are from three Salem Press series: *Milestone Documents*, *The Decades*, and *Great Lives from History*. In 2008, if an institution purchases one of the print titles from the series above, Salem Press provides free access to that title online through one of its databases, for three years. Salem Press also provides consortia and state-wide subscription database offers, according to its website. This preview focuses on the Salem Health product.

Salem Health currently contains all the content of *Magill's Medical Guide*, which consists of over 3,500 pages. The encyclopedia is written for high school students, and definitely fits well to a lay audience learning about diseases or health issues for the first time. Like *Salem History*, the database has unlimited simultaneous user access, and contains lots of user-friendly searching features.

The database has an easy, user-friendly window, always listed on the left side, that allows users to enter search terms, and then search either in Full Text of the encyclopedia entry, its abstract, its title, or "Front Matter/Keywords". Search results can be narrowed down by a population group: all, children, elderly, men, or women (see below).

All articles contain links to other entries—the left side begins with a table of contents for the entire entry (so the user can quickly link to a particular section), a Key Terms & Definitions section, an Information section about a disease (when relevant), a See Also section, and a For Further Information that leads to citations to print resources. The right side contains the main essay about the disease, condition, or treatment. All entries are signed by a health professional.

 <p>Magill's Medical Guide Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) DISEASE/DISORDER</p> <p>ANATOMY OR SYSTEM AFFECTED: Brain, nervous system</p> <p>SPECIALTIES AND RELATED FIELDS: Environmental health, epidemiology, microbiology, neurology, public health, virology</p> <p>DEFINITION: Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) is a human central nervous system disorder that is characterized by distinctive lesions in the brain, progressive dementia, lack of coordination, and eventual death. Although uncommon, it is the most prevalent of the human spongiform encephalopathies, inherited or transmissible illnesses of uncertain etiology associated with proteinaceous molecules called prions. Mad cow disease is a spongiform encephalopathy that affects cattle but may be transmissible to humans, leading to a new variant of CJD.</p> <p>CAUSES AND SYMPTOMS</p> <p>Spongiform encephalopathies are inherited or transmissible neurological diseases that are associated with abnormalities in proteinaceous molecules called prions, which can aggregate, leading to spongiform lesions in the brain causing disruptions in brain function. Prions are found in all species from yeast to humans, but their normal role is not known. Their evolutionary persistence in so many species implies an important purpose, although knockout mice lacking prions do not appear to be deleteriously affected.</p> <p>Inherited spongiform encephalopathies are primarily attributed to mutations in the prion gene, producing abnormal prions that adopt an unusual conformation</p> <p>©Stockphoto.com/Sebastian Kaulitzki</p> <p>Article Citation Save This Article</p> <p>Table of Contents Key Terms & Definitions Information on Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) Causes and Symptoms Treatment and Therapy Perspective and Prospects See Also in Magill's Medical Guide For Further Information</p>		
Encyclopedia Article in Salem Health. Table of Contents is on the left.	Key Terms and Info. on Disease	See Also entries and bibliography (with annotations)

The Salem Health interface also includes a top navigation bar that takes the student to screens where they can search, browse, and look at a complete index of terms which are actually links (labeled as indexes), and a glossary of terms. Tabs also include looking up one's own profile (if the user created one), Help, and About the product. The browsing section leads a student to eight general categories that students can then browse to find their desired information: Anatomy & Physiology, Diagnosis & Testing, Diseases, Disorders, & Symptoms, Mental Health, Prevention & Lifestyle, Social Issues, Specialties & Health Care Providers and Treatment & Therapy. When students click on one of these, they are then led, subcategory by subcategory, until they get to a particular entry. This process may be rather useful for students who are not sure about or need to narrow down their topics.

Users can set up individual profiles so they can save articles, searches, and citations. An institution can also set up its own administrative profile to get search statistics.

While the search interface looks promising, there are a few flaws at this moment that, if the consortium chooses to subscribe, should be corrected. There are browser compatibility issues with FireFox. Sometimes the interface appears odd, whereas it looks fine in Internet Explorer 6. There are no options to Email or Print articles inside the database, meaning there is no option to Email full text. The Help screens appear not to be available at present. When a user clicks on the Help screen, it says "This help topic is currently unavailable." Unlike other sections, the glossary is flat and linear with no links from that section.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION:

In general, the level of content is excellent for students, especially those who are seeking general consumer health information. The content may be a bit too basic for students getting a degree in nursing or an allied health profession, but the ability to limit to a specific population may still be quite useful to them. The organizational structure and searching features seem rather intuitive and seem well suited to students who are new to research.

While many institutions may just want to purchase the print copies and get the free three year subscription to the online content, the consortium may want to investigate a database offer since there are institutions that may have book budget challenges. This database would also be beneficial for virtual campuses.