

Health Website Rating (HWR) Project
HII Health Website Rating Instrument (HWRI)
Version 3.1; revised June 15, 2006; (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
- Website identity
- Advertising & sponsorships
- Ease of use & accessibility
- Currency & corrections
- Privacy
- Part II — Information & interventions
- IIA Editorial adequacy
- Coverage & contents
- Authors & interests
- References & resources
- Editorial policies & procedures
- IIB Diet self-help interventions
- Part III — Information reliability & evidence
- Part IV — Strengths & weaknesses
- Part V — Website global score & narrative
- Part VI — Compliance with HONcode

Complete once for each wave of website ratings

- Part VII — Feedback/comments
- Part VIII — Attribute weights

Limit evaluative narratives to 25 words or less

For detailed instructions, please refer to the relevant chapter of the HWRI (contained in a separate PDF, file 3); also refer to those at the beginning of individual worksheets.

- Please refer to 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

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Cover page for website ratings worksheets

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

Website (URL): _____ Rater: _____

If not pre-filled, on each worksheet, always enter URL; your name or initials as "Rater"

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.

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

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- Fax everything to 301-320-0978.
- Email word processed text of evaluative narratives, comments, etc to hii@hii.org.

Comments/Conflicts

Part I — General website criteria

Website URL: _____

Rater: _____

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, 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
 - OTHER AWARD, PRIZE, ACCREDITATION, CERTIFICATION, LOGO OR SEAL
 - NONE

Part I — General website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

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

Website URL: _____

Rater: _____

2.0 Advertising & sponsorships

2.1 [D] DOES WEBSITE ACCEPT ADVERTISING?

- 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 advertisements distinguished from contents?

Check all that apply

- 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

Part I — General website criteria

Website URL: _____

Rater: _____

2.8 How are sponsored links/content identified?

Check all that apply

- Sponsored links labeled
- Sponsored links placed in boxes
- Sponsored contents labeled
- Sponsored content placed on separate web pages
- Sponsored web pages 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

Website URL: _____

Rater: _____

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 website offer "printer-friendly" version of contents?
 Y, all contents
 Y, some contents
 N
- 3.8 [D] DOES WEBSITE REQUIRE USER REGISTRATION?
 Y, REQUIRED
 Y, OPTIONAL
 N
- 3.9 Are users alerted when they click on an external link?
 Y
 N

- 3.10 Does website avoid attempting to hinder navigation (such as disabling "back" button)?
 - Y, no hindrance
 - N, hindrance

3.11 **“Ease of use” score (0-10):** _____

3.12 *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

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

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 **"Currency" score (0-10):** _____

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

Part I — General website criteria

Website URL: _____

Rater: _____

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 IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

Notes:

- Part IIA pertains to the assessment of "health information" contained on websites to be rated.
- For websites that contain health information about multiple subjects, consider only that in the selected section pertaining to diet/weight management. In the separate PDF file that lists batches of websites to be rated in this wave, we have provided the link to that section of the website to be rated.
- Part IIB pertains specifically to diet self-help interventions (plans and programs).
- ***If the website to be rated contains no health information (ie, no advice about nutrition, diet, weight management, etc), check the box below; go to part IIB.***

Website contains no health information — go to part IIB.

1.0 Coverage & contents

1.1 [D] What is (form of) website health information contents? *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/tools (eg, to calculate calories or to record/track weight)
- 1.1.6 Essays/editorials (intended to convey point of view)
- 1.1.7 Expert exchange
 - 1.1.7.1 Gives experts' qualifications?
 - Y
 - Y/B
 - N
- 1.1.8 FAQs (Frequently Asked QuestionS, with answers)
 - Y
 - Y/B
 - N
- 1.1.9 Glossary of terms?
 - Y
 - Y/B
 - N

Part IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

- 1.1.10 Informits (ie, units of information or text on a single topic, including FAQ)
- 1.1.11 Message boards (consumers' comments posted to website)
- 1.1.12 News/events
- 1.1.13 Product sales
- 1.1.14 Resource lists/links
 - 1.1.14.1 Are they?
 - Stand-alone
 - Part of articles
 - Both
 - Website consists only of lists/links
- 1.1.15 Videos and/or audio tracks
- 1.1.16 Something else? *Specify*

1.2 Does website contain (authored) articles or informits?

- Y
- N — *If N, go to IIB.*

The remainder of this instrument pertains to "articles." If there are none, it pertains to "informits." If there are neither articles nor informits, go to Part IIB.

1.3 [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 contents
 - N, but mostly own contents
 - N, mostly or exclusively (re)publishes others' contents
- If N (re)publishes), 5.3.1 Which vendors or sources? *Specify*

1.4 [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, 1.4.1 What is it?
 - "Diet"
 - Other, *Specify*

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

- Detailed
- Adequate for average consumer
- Superficial

Part IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____

Rater: _____

1.6 For individual articles or informits, does website (do authors):

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

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

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

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

1.6.3 Explain appropriate use of information contained in article?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

1.6.4 Describe limitations on applicability of information contained in article?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

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

1.7.1 Presented in a neutral, evenhanded manner?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

1.7.2 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

Part IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

1.7.3 Supported appropriately by pertinent references to medical literature or other applicable source?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

1.7.4 Coherent; not contradictory?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

1.7.5 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

1.8 **"Coverage & contents" score (1-10):** _____

1.9 *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 IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

2.0 Authors & interests

2.1 Does website provide conflict of interest policy (relevant to authorship of contents)?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y or Y/B, Is it appropriate/adequate to ensure

2.1.1 Relevant disclosures of interests?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

2.1.2 Objectivity of articles?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

2.2 Does website describe relationship between authors of articles/contents and owner or sponsor of website?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

2.3 Are website articles/informits (or, if applicable, contents collectively), written by named authors (as opposed to website, ie, no named authors)?

- Y
- Y/B
- N (ie, anonymous)
- Mix (of authored and non-authored contents/articles)

If Y or Y/B, Does website

2.3.1 Provide authors' credentials?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

If Y or Y/B (provides credentials), 2.3.1.1 Do authors' credentials appear to be appropriate to article's contents?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

Part IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

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

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

2.4 **"Authors & interests" score (1-10):** _____

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

Part IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

3.0 References & resources

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

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y, 3.1.1 Does website describe basis or criteria for linking to other websites?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

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

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y (provides criteria for links), 3.1.3 Does website describe criteria/methods used to assess reliability/quality of linked-to website contents?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y (describes criteria/methods), 3.1.4 Are they adequate for purpose?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

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

Part IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____

Rater: _____

3.2.2 Citation to listed reference?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

Except if never: 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

Part IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

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

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

Part IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

4.0 Editorial policies & procedures

- 4.1 Does website differentiate clearly between articles/reports (intended to convey "facts") and editorials/essays (intended to convey opinions or perspectives)?
- Y
 - Y/B
 - N
 - Only articles
 - Only editorials
 - Neither articles nor editorials — *If neither, [go to Part IIB](#).*

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)?
- Y
 - Y/B
 - N
- If Y or Y/B, 4.2.1 Do policies/procedures seem to be adequate for their purpose?
- Y
 - Y/B
 - N

- 4.3 Are editorial policies and procedures described?
- Y, in a separate section of website
 - Y, in individual articles
 - Y/B
 - N — *If N, [go to item 4.8 \(score\) and 4.9 \(evaluative narrative\)](#).*
- 4.3.1 (Whether or not described in a separate section of website) are same editorial policies/procedures used to prepare all articles or informits?
- Y
 - Y/B
 - N (varies by article)
 - Can't tell — *If N or CT, [go to 4.6](#)*

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

Part IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

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 displayed on site?

- 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 Any 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

Part IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

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, 3.4.2.1 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 \(evaluative narrative\)](#)

Part IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

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 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

Part IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

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: 4.7.2.2 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

Part IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

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)

Part IIA — Health information website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

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 IIB — Diet self-help website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

Notes:

- This part focuses on diet/weight management information, tools, and self-help interventions (both plans and programs). For purpose of this subpart
 - "Plan" refers to a self-help intervention that consists of specified steps that a participant can complete in a fixed period or variable amount of time depending on progress toward achieving a stated goal.
 - "Program" refers to a self-help intervention that consists of activities that a participant must undertake continually toward achieving (and/or to maintain achievement of) a stated goal.

B.0 Diet self-help information, tools, & interventions

B.1 Does website describe (in relevant detail and acceptable accuracy):

Risks of

B.1.1 Being overweight or obese?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

B.1.2 Rapid weight loss (and/or very low calorie diet)

- Y
- Y/B
- N

Benefits of

B.1.3 Moderate weight loss

- Y
- Y/B
- N

B.1.4 Maintaining a healthy weight

- Y
- Y/B
- N

Situation when person should

B.1.5 Diet under medical supervision

- Y
- Y/B
- N

B.1.6 Seek medical advice (eg, if while dieting, experiences such symptoms as dizziness, menstrual irregularity, etc)

- Y
- Y/B
- N

Part IIB — Diet self-help website criteria

Website URL: _____

Rater: _____

Information necessary for consumer to understand

B.1.7 Proper context for dieting or managing one's weight (eg, need to exercise and to maintain other aspects of a healthy lifestyle)?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

B.1.8 His/her diet/weight management options (including, if applicable, choosing among self-help interventions presented on website)?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

B.2 Does website contain tools useful for dieting or managing one's weight?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y (contains tools), which tools?

Check all that apply

- B.2.1 BMI (body mass index) calculator/chart
- B.2.2 Buddy/coach
- B.2.3 Calorie burner (exercise/metabolism) calculator
- B.2.4 Calorie calculator/counter (for daily needs, specific foods, etc)
- B.2.5 Diet/food (knowledge) assessment/quiz/survey
- B.2.6 Diet planner/plan
- B.2.7 Diet/weight loss journal/diary
- B.2.8 Dieting/weight management advice/information
- B.2.9 Expected rate of weight loss calculator
- B.2.10 Expert advice on-line
- B.2.11 Graphic/guide (eg, food pyramid)
- B.2.12 Ideal/recommended weight calculator
- B.2.13 Menu planner/recipes
- B.2.14 Message board/chat room
- B.2.15 Periodic (motivational) email
- B.2.16 Waist to hip ratio calculator
- B.2.17 Weight (control) chart
- B.2.18 Other tool, specify

B.3 Which of the following fees must consumer pay?

Check all that apply

- Must pay to access diet information, tools, resources, etc
- Must pay to use intervention
- Must purchase product or food
- Must pay other fee, specify
- No fees

Part IIB — Diet self-help website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

- B.4 [D] Does website provider general diet information and/or self-help? Or, does it focus on specific situation or particular food group?
- Y, general diet information and/or self-help intervention
 - N, specific situation, specify
 - N, particular food group, specify
 - N, other, specify
- B.5 [D] Does website provide one or more diet/weight management self-help interventions (plans or programs that individuals can follow by themselves to lose, or to manage their, weight, including as part of a healthy life-style or change in life-style)?
- Y, single diet self-help intervention — [go to B.11, next page](#)
 - Y, multiple diet self-help interventions — [go to B.21](#)
 - N (only diet information and/or tools; no interventions) — [go to B.32 & B.33](#)

Part IIB — Diet self-help website criteria

Website URL: _____

Rater: _____

If website contains multiple self-help diet interventions, [go to B.21](#)

If Y (to item B.5) — single diet self-help intervention:

- B.11 [D] Is diet self-help intervention a plan that can be completed (eg, after 3 weeks or after a certain weight has been attained)? Or, is it a program that requires continuous participation?
- Plan that can be completed
 - Program that requires continuous participation
 - Something else, specify
 - Doesn't say or can't tell
- B.12 Is it clear at outset what it (typically) costs to complete plan? Or, if program, to participate per month (including, if applicable, cost of food that must be purchased through website)?
- Y
 - Y/B
 - N
- B.13 For self-help diet intervention presented, does website describe in relevant detail:
- B.13.1 Its goal?
- Y
 - Y/B
 - N
- B.13.2 For what types of people it is intended (eg, who should or should not participate; can be expected to benefit)?
- Y
 - Y/B
 - N
- B.13.3 Plan steps or program activities necessary to achieve goal?
- Y
 - Y/B
 - N
- B.13.4 How long (on average) it takes to complete plan? Or, if program, how long consumer must participate in program to achieve program goal?
- Y
 - Y/B
 - N
- B.13.5 Outcome (eg, weight loss) that (average) consumer can expect by completing plan or participating in program?
- Y
 - Y/B
 - N
 - N/A

Part IIB — Diet self-help website criteria

Website URL: _____

Rater: _____

B.13.6 What constitutes short-term weight maintenance success?

- Y
- Y/B
- N
- N/A

B.13.7 What constitutes long-term weight maintenance success?

- Y
- Y/B
- N
- N/A, plan or program is only for short-term
- N/A, other reason

B.13.8 Potential health risks and/or complications (including contra-indications), if any, might be associated with following plan or participating in program?

- Y, indicates risks, complications, etc; includes statement to the effect that there are none
- Y/B
- N

B.14 Does website provide:

B.14.1 Success stories (testimonials), including excerpts from past participants?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y (success stories):

B.14.1.1 Are they stated to be typical experience?

- Y, typical
- N, stated to be not typical
- Doesn't say if typical or not

B.14.2 Plan/program statistics (number starting, completing, etc)?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

If Y (statistics):

B.14.2.1 Does website state how many people have started plan or participated in program?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

B.14.2.2 If plan, have completed it? Or, if program, continue to participate at specified intervals, eg 3 months, one year?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

Part IIB — Diet self-help website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

If Y or Y/B (states number completing or continuing to participate):

B.14.2.3 Does website indicate percentage who achieved or maintained weight loss, ideal weight, etc at specified intervals after starting and/or completing plan/program?

Y

Y/B

N

If Y or Y/B (specifies intervals):

B.14.2.4 At which intervals?

Check all that apply

30 days

90 days

6 months

1 year

2 years

3 or more years

Other, specify

B.14.3 Links or citations to research reports regarding plan's or program's effectiveness?

Y, reports on website

Y, web-link to reports (on another website)

Y, but only citations (no web-link)

N, no research reports cited to support intervention's effectiveness

B.14.4 Other type of evidence of effectiveness?

Y, specify

N

[Go to B.31, issues, and then B.32, score, and B.33, evaluative narrative](#)

Part IIB — Health self-help website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

If Y (to item B.5) — multiple diet self-help interventions:

Note: If you completed items B.11 et seq (single diet self-help intervention), and there is only a single diet self-help intervention presented on the website, [go to item B.31](#).

B.21 [D] Are diet self-help interventions plans that can be completed (eg, after 3 weeks or after a certain weight has been attained)? Or, are they maintenance programs that require continuous participation?

- Plans that can be completed
- Maintenance programs that require continuous participation
- Mix of plans and programs
- Something else, specify
- Doesn't say or can't tell

B.22 Is it clear at outset what it (typically) costs to complete each plan? Or, for each program, to participate per month (including, if applicable, cost of food that must be purchased through website)?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

B.23 For each self-help diet intervention presented, does website describe in relevant detail:

B.23.1 Plan/program goal?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

B.23.2 For what types of people plan/program is intended (eg, who should or should not participate; can be expected to benefit)?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

B.23.3 Plan steps or program activities necessary to achieve goal?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

Part IIB — Diet self-help website criteria

Website URL: _____

Rater: _____

B.23.4 How long (on average) it takes to complete plan? Or, if program, how long consumer must participate in program to achieve program's goal?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

B.23.5 Outcome (eg, weight loss) that (average) consumer can expect by completing plan or participating in program?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

B.23.6 What constitutes short-term weight maintenance success?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

B.23.7 What constitutes long-term weight maintenance success?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N
- N/A, plans/programs are only for short-term
- N/A, other reason

B.23.8 Potential health risks and/or complications (including contra-indications), if any, might be associated with following plan or participating in program?

- Y, indicates risks, complications, etc; includes statement to the effect that there are none
- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

Part IIB — Diet self-help website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

B.24 For each intervention presented, does website provide:

B.24.1 Success stories (testimonials), including excerpts from past participants?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

Except if never (presents success stories):

B.24.1.1 Are they stated to be typical experience?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

Variable, sometimes gives information about experience; other times doesn't say

Never gives information about experience

B.24.2 Plan/program statistics (number starting, completing, etc)?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

Except if never (states statistics):

B.24.2.1 Does website state how many people have started plans or participated in programs?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

B.24.2.2 For plans, have complete it? Or, for program, continue to participate at specified intervals, eg 3 months, one year?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

If Y or Y/B (states number completing or continuing to participate):

B.24.2.3 Does website indicate percentage who achieved or maintained weight loss, ideal weight, etc at specified intervals after starting and/or completing plans/programs?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

Part IIB — Diet self-help website criteria

Website URL: _____

Rater: _____

Except if never (specifies intervals):

B.24.2.4 At which intervals?

Check all that apply

- 30 days
- 90 days
- 6 months
- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 or more years
- Variable, depending on plan or program
- Other, specify

B.24.3 Are there links to research reports regarding plan's or program's effectiveness on this or another website? Or, only ever citations?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N
- Only ever citations (no links to research reports)
- Variable, depending on plan or program

B.24.4 Other type of evidence of effectiveness?

- A
- F
- S
- O
- N

B.24.4 Except if never, specify other type of evidence

[Go to item B31 \(issues\), B32 \(score\), and B33 \(evaluative narrative\)](#)

Part IIB — Diet self-help website criteria

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

For all diet websites (regardless of no, single, or multiple self-help interventions)

B.31 Does any information or self-help intervention (plan or program) presented on website exhibit particular issues regarding any criterion considered in this subpart?

Y

N

If Y (issues): *In evaluative narrative, identify plan or program and briefly describe issues.*

B.32 **"Diet self-help" score (1-10):** _____

B.33 *Evaluative narrative regarding diet self-help interventions (plans/programs), encompassing, from the consumers perspective, adequacy (accuracy and completeness) of information on nutrition, dieting, and weight management (including their context as part of a healthy lifestyle), self-help interventions presented (goals, activities, outcomes, and costs) and any issues in these regards.*

Part III — Information reliability & evidence of effectiveness of interventions

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

Notes:

- This part pertains to health information (and other applicable) websites, to assess the accuracy or validity of contents (information)
- **Part III requires assessment by subject matter expert.**

Don't have expertise — [go to Part IV.](#)

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

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

A

F

S

O

N

Too many articles to assess

III.2.2 Comprehensive, ie, covers subject/topics in relevant detail; does not omit important relevant facts?

A

F

S

O

N

Too many articles to assess

III.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

Too many articles to assess

III.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
- Too many articles to assess

III.3 Are articles or informits of uniform accuracy and quality? Or, do they vary in these regards?

- 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.4 If website contains or links to research reports regarding the effectiveness of interventions (eg, diet self-help plan or program), 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 self-help interventions [Z]

III.5 **"Information reliability" score (1-10): _____**

III.6 *Evaluative narrative regarding information reliability (encompassing accuracy of contents, objectivity of writing, variability of quality, etc, and, if applicable, evidence of effectiveness of interventions)*

Part IV — Strengths/Weaknesses

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

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.

IV.A *Website's greatest strengths* (up to 3, in rank order; best first) None

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

IV.B *Website's greatest weaknesses* (up to 3, in rank order; worst first) None

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Part V — Design & global score & evaluative narrative

Website URL: _____

Rater: _____

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

"Evaluability"

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

_____ "Evaluability," ie, ease of finding information needed to apply HWRI

Design

V.2 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.3 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.4 *(Optional) evaluative narrative regarding design; it's OK to include relevant remarks in "utility to consumers" (below)*

Global score/assessment

V.5 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.6 *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)

Website URL: _____ Rater: _____

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 4 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:*

Website is compliant?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

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

Website is compliant?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

VI.3 *Principle 3 - Confidentiality:*

Website is compliant?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

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

Website is compliant?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

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

Website is compliant?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

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

Website is compliant?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

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

Website is compliant?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

VI.8 *Principle 8 - Advertising policy:*

Website is compliant?

- Y
- Y/B
- N

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

Part VII: Feedback/Comments

Wave number: _____ Rater: _____

Complete only once per wave of website ratings.

Please write below (or attached word processed 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

Wave number: _____ Rater: _____

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 diet self-help website score. Refer to the applicable part of the HWRI for a list of items that comprise the attribute.

Weights must sum to 100.

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

Comments: _____

