

Embracing Lenus The Irish Health Repository

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Abstract

Of relevance to healthcare professionals engaged in research and those who want to deliver evidence-based clinical care, this article describes a relatively new health repository called Lenus (www.lenus.ie). Although managed by the Health Service Executive (HSE), it is freely accessible on the World Wide Web. The benefits and functionality of the system are outlined and an appeal for content submission is made to all Irish health professionals, and in particular to psychologists, who are engaged in research and/or publishing their findings.

Introduction

At best, there is a weak health research culture in Ireland with the 0.06% spend on health research being only approximately half that of the Organisation for Economic and Cooperative Development (OECD) average (Health Research Board; HRB, 2009). Among practitioner psychologists it is also debatable whether the much vaunted scientist practitioner model has ever been enacted at the level of the profession. This model describes how professionals draw on and contribute to the research knowledge base in their routine clinical work (Milne

et al., 2008). In harvesting a myriad of health-related resources that are accessible via the user-friendly interface that is Lenus, it has the potential to provide a platform to embed such a scientist-practitioner culture.

Initiated and managed by the HSE's Regional Library and Information Service, Dr. Steevens' Hospital, Lenus is the national Irish Health Repository. It takes its name from the Celtic God Lenus of health and wellbeing. This duality sums up what Lenus is about – it is Irish and it hosts information on healthcare. It is unique in the scope of its coverage. Materials include current official Irish health publications, policy evaluations and clinical research. It also contains an archive of previously unavailable digitised content including reports and former health board minutes. In drawing on historical documents and the latest health-related publications, it is an invaluable resource for researchers and those who want to deliver evidence-based clinical care. Lenus also has a preservation function. It makes available and preserves the corporate memory of the HSE and former health boards before it. The intellectual output of the organisation is made available in the form of published output for future generations to learn from and improve upon.



Website Structure and Scope

The Lenus Home page provides a number of functions. The registration process consists of entering basic personal information on a one-off basis and thereafter accessing the site using a password. Requests to authorise submission of healthcare-related materials are sent to the Lenus Administrator (regionallibrary@hse.ie) who then posts materials. There are the standard "Search" and "Advanced Search" functions. The "Browse by" function facilitates field-specific searching; for example, by Communities & collections, Title, Author, Date published, Date submitted, Subject and Researchers.

Inputting a surname followed by a forename under the Author field accesses whatever materials an individual has submitted. The resultant list provides the issue date (or year of publication), the title of the material, and names of the author(s). As well as opening up either abstract (i.e., some publishers only allow abstracts to be posted) or full text material, details of how many times the material has been viewed and downloaded is available, complete with a colour-coded world map indicating

the geographical locations (by city and country) of those viewing and downloading the deposited material.

Registered users can also set up a researchers' page. In addition to providing personal contact details, this page profiles research interests, links to published research and details of ongoing research. A benefit to the researcher is that his/her research activity becomes more visible. In so doing, these pages can facilitate interresearcher communication.

The "Listed communities" function allows searching by: Current research projects, HSE, Hospital research, Other Irish health publications, Research articles and Special collections. Registered users can subscribe to individual collections to keep up to date with what is being published. For example, a psychologist could subscribe to the "HSE Mental Health" collection as well as the "HSE theses" and "Research articles" collection. This means that each time a publication is added to any of these collections within Lenus, the psychologist would receive an email with an updated list and links to those publications either in full text or abstract format. There is also a "Most viewed publications in month" (e.g., June 2011) that lists the 10 most popular publications viewed in the previous month. Additionally, there is a "Latest submissions" function that lists the most recently submitted materials to Lenus.

Accessibility

The current information climate is a challenging one due partially to the speed of technical developments in the information sphere (e.g., the Internet). For any database to be visible and accessible, it needs to tick some boxes such as integration with other portals, interoperability and indexing. Lenus ticks all of these. It is fully integrated with two other research portals: namely Researchscope (www.researchscope.net) run by the Waterford Institute of Technology and the World Wide Science Alliance (<http://worldwidescience.org/alliance.html>) run by the Office of Scientific and Technical Information (OSTI), an element of the Office of Science within the US Department of Energy. Better still, it is OAI (Open Archives Initiative) compliant. This is an initiative to develop and promote interoperability standards to facilitate the efficient dissemination of content and means that it is fully indexed and retrievable via big search engines such as Google. Hence, psychology-related research deposited on Lenus provides impressive exposure to the significantly large customer base of the big search engines.

Democratisation of Information

The advent of the second version of the web, known as Web 2.0 has brought significant changes to the way the Internet works and more significantly the way people use the Internet. When the Internet was launched in the 1990s websites were primarily static pages of text and information. As technology advanced, the Internet upgraded to a newer version. This second version of the web encourages social networking, collaboration and active participation. Participation ranges from authoring a blog to posting homemade videos for the world to see. The Internet has grown into a community of online users. In line with Web 2.0, Lenus includes features such as LinkedIn, Citeulike, StumbleIt, Facebook, Digg and others.

Both organisations and individuals are currently contributing to Lenus to keep the content enriched and up-to-date. This assists with the democratisation of information as multiple authors and multiple institutions are invited to submit content and to provide feedback on the repository.

Promoting Research

Lenus aims to promote open access material so that its content is free from embargos and fees. Many journal editors and publishers have given permission to host full text articles. These include the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine*, the *Irish Psychologist*, *Clinical Psychology Forum* (of the British Psychological Society), the *Irish Medical Journal*, and others. Any article published in an open access journal (see Directory of Open Access Journals; <http://www.doaj.org>) is free to be hosted in Lenus. The types of content that would be suitable to submit include: theses, published articles, conference presentations, small scale research projects, systematic reviews, book chapters, official reports, and position papers. Where permission is not forthcoming to post full text articles and/or abstracts, individuals can still submit brief article summaries that can then serve as a signpost for accessing the original articles.

The potential benefits of Lenus will only materialise if psychologists (and other health professionals) actively contribute to it. Their doing so will also increase the visibility of, and accessibility to, psychology-related research. This is important as psychologists can demonstrate added value by disseminating high quality research output that appropriately reflects their typically well advanced (though not necessarily well practiced) research competencies. An increased volume of healthcare research (e.g., population health research) may also protect against reductions in funding in this area (Department of Health & Children, 2009).

Until such time as research becomes a competency that is assessed independently in national recruitment campaigns or research activity becomes a quality metric in future evaluations of health service providers, postgraduate psychologists may receive minimal reinforcement for engaging in research. However, in profiling one's work to a global audience, Lenus may provide some means of reinforcement for the research efforts of these busy practitioners.

That research by psychologists (and other health professionals) tends to be isolated predisposes to it being weak (e.g., limited external validity). That Lenus has the potential to connect researchers provides opportunities for the development of (preferably interdisciplinary) research clusters or communities that draw on the unique strengths of both academics and clinicians. Such clusters are well placed to constructively address the research to practice gap (HRB, 2009) and to consequently attract increased research funding. Among psychologists, an international online community would ease collaboration and help to bridge the scientist-practitioner divide (Walker, 2008).

Conclusion

Lenus has the potential to benefit researchers, the HSE and the Irish population at large. It is beneficial to any researcher to have freely and openly available information via www.lenus.ie and affords them the opportunity of submitting research and setting up a researchers' page. It facilitates interdisciplinary working and facilitates the exchange of information between researchers. Lenus is beneficial to the HSE as an organisation as it provides a return on investment in its employees who have produced theses and research by capturing it in one place and preserving it for future generations. It benefits Irish society at large because it is making public domain information available in an easily accessible interface. This leads to a more informed citizenry.

Nurtured by conducting multiple types of research including effectiveness research (e.g., small-scale research projects) and more rigorous, efficacy style dissertations (Milne *et al.*, 2008), psychologists' research competencies are typically highly developed. However, it is debatable whether they are consistently engaging in research activity (Dowd, Sarma, & Byrne, in press). We would ask individual psychologists and principal psychology managers to reconsider investing in research activity and posting their findings onto Lenus. Doing so will increase the visibility of our profession and position us in leading efforts to embed a scientist-practitioner culture in our health services.

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