

Diana Schmitt & Associates
Certified Legal Nurse Consultants

3689 CR 131, Ste. C
Hesperus, CO 81326
(970) 588-3460

Cell: (970) 759-4524

Fax: (970) 588-3821

gschmitt@animas.net

<http://DianaSchmitt.com>

THEORY TO FACT:
MEDICAL RECORD ANALYSIS

Plaintiff or defense, let our experience with and knowledge about the health care system work for you.

Volume 2 2009

Getting Information That Relates to Your Case Avoids Hassles and Saves Time

Have you asked someone to do research on a medical topic or a specific issue related to a personal injury case only to have this person hand over a pile of information with no explanation as to how it relates to your case? Have you asked someone to locate standards of care in a medical malpractice case only to have them come up with the wrong accreditation guidelines? Certified Legal Nurse Consultant®'s (CLNC®) are able to perform research projects by using cost-effective and efficient strategies that are appropriate and render the information that you need.

This information can be found in many forms:

- journal articles
- Internet topics
- anthologies and authoritative texts
- reference sources and books
- healthcare and scientific research

There is a variety of information sources that may need to be accessed:

- specialty journals
- scientific literature
- government agencies and accrediting bodies
- Internet databases and web-sites
- medical libraries
- book distributors
- individuals with specialized expertise



Where to Begin Researching

Knowing or not knowing where to begin research projects can mean the difference between thorough productive investigations or wasting time. The purpose for the research will determine where to begin and then how in-depth the project will need to be. Other determining factors could be your time frame or deadline, relevance to the issue, or a set budget.

- ❖ **Understanding information sources, the scope and purpose for the research project, and other determining factors saves time and gives the best results.**



To obtain factual or well established information, textbooks are a good source of information that is usually noncontroversial and can provide good overviews of subject areas. This information is usually slow to change and can provide foundational facts such as standard values, etiologies of diseases, or basic anatomy and physiology when forming a theory in a medical case.

For newly discovered knowledge or controversial issues, journal articles and websites provide reports from medical or clinical research, clinical procedures or protocols, alternative treatments, and rare or evolving information. Potential expert witnesses who have authored or co-authored articles can be contacted.

For breaches in standards of

care, reference sources such as the *ECRI Healthcare Standards Official Directory* contains information regarding healthcare standards and guidelines. It is also valuable for making a list of reliable reference sources when investigating injuries from accidents.

For a complete and balanced understanding of a topic, it may require a more global research strategy. There may be a need to research the general public's knowledge base about a topic. Consumer groups found at the following web-sites are good places to start:

- ConsumerReports.com
- WrongDiagnosis.com
- fda.gov (US Food and Drug)

Various search engines categorize topics differently to reveal more information:

- Google
- Ask Jeeves
- Teoma

- ❖ **A Pub Med search is more effective after an individual has a handle on the subject content.**



Medline Plus is a good medical web-site written in layman's terms and has links that will lead to other web-sites. To get the best research results, have a CLNC® do it for you and avoid the hassle.



Diana Schmitt, RN, BSN, CLNC