

Exercise: Is This a Reliable Source?

Level: Basic

Duration: 45 minutes

Setting: Canvas or classroom

This exercise is designed to help students understand and reflect on who holds authority within a subject or research area. Is it the senior clinician, the most published researcher, or does the context and mode of publication play a role?

Preparation:

Search for patient organizations or websites aimed at patients that provide advice on therapies and treatments within your field.

Divide the students into groups of 3–5.

Present a scenario in which a patient has read on a website about a treatment available for their diagnosis. The patient is insistent. Provide the link to the website suggesting the therapy.

Students should investigate the following:

- What kind of resource is the website?
- Who is behind the website, and how is it funded?
- Who wrote the text, and what is their professional background?
- Has the text been reviewed? If so, by whom, and what is their professional background?
- Does the treatment seem reasonable at first glance?
- Search PubMed for articles on the treatment and select a few. What do they say? What kind of articles are they? How old are they? What methods were used?
- Are there any Swedish guidelines or recommendations on the topic?

Finally:

How would you respond to the patient's question?

Discuss the students' findings in the different groups.