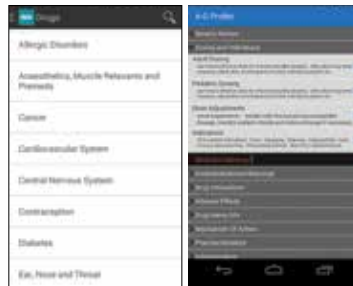


Apps for Docs

By Dr Jipson Quah, Editorial Board Member

NOMATTER your operating platform preference, whether iOS or Android, there is a dazzling array of mobile apps to assist, enlighten and enthrall. Mainstay apps such as Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp have become ingrained in our social fabric as indispensable tools for communication. Mobile gaming apps like Candy Crush and Clash of Clans are huge hits among adults and children alike and generate billions in annual revenues.

With more than 20,000 medical apps available on the market, there is virtually one for every specialty and function. Here I share what I consider to be the best medical apps in the market (according to my personal experience and research), be they for recreation, revision or reference. All the apps are available from both iTunes and Google Play. (Disclaimer: my previous experiences with Windows Phone were not ideal and therefore apps for this platform were not reviewed.)



1. MIMS Singapore (free, far left) and Micromedex (annual fee of US\$2.99 [S\$3.70])

Both apps are among the finest pharmaceutical references, providing physicians with detailed prescription guides on the go. Key information such as adult/paediatric dosages, contraindications and drug interactions are readily available. Granted, there is always Google, but these apps present updated pharmaceutical information in an organised and easily accessible manner. The dangers of prescription errors in clinical Medicine cannot be overstated, and so I recommend these two apps which have impressive knowledge bases.



2. UpToDate (free subscriptions can be obtained via medical institutions, individual subscription also available)

UpToDate is the preferred online medical reference for various institutions in Singapore and requires little introduction. Essentially, UpToDate is a comprehensive, physician-developed, evidence-based resource and has been shown to improve patient outcomes. Armed with illustrations, tables, management algorithms and research citations, this app is unbeatable in the field of relevant medical references. But alas, that wealth of knowledge comes with a hefty price. For the best medical resource in the market, an individual subscription starts from US\$199 annually. Time to put that hospital subscription or personal training fund to good use!

3. MedCalc (US\$1.99) and Calculate by QxMD (free, far right)

These two apps help physicians to compute complex equations instantly and to affect clinical outcomes positively. They contain algorithms for the Wells criteria for DVT clinical probability, TPA dosing in acute stroke, and R-IPI for diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, serving as excellent decision support tools. Many of us have committed the scoring criteria to memory, but calculating them accurately under duress is an entirely different matter. I personally prefer Calculate by QxMD as it is fairly easy to use and free!



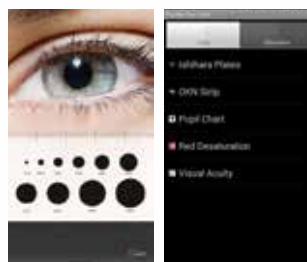
4. Prognosis: Your Diagnosis (free)

This remarkable app is incredibly fun for doctors. It adopts a problem-based learning approach and poses Objective Structured Short Examination-style questions to users. It follows the case through presentation, history and physical examination before quizzing users on necessary investigations and management. Finally, a grade is given for the quality and suitability of management plans before proceeding on to in-depth discussions of possible differentials and reasons for clinical decision making. Truly a realistic simulation of unique cases! Prognosis: Your Diagnosis is also available for several other specialties like Neurology and Emergency Medicine. If you are yearning to challenge your knowledge outside your field of interest, this is an excellent app.



5. EyeMD (free) and Pocket Eye Exam (US\$1.99, far right)

Both apps are fantastic eye examination tools. They include Snellen charts for quick assessments of visual acuity, and can also provide an accurate scale of measurement for pupil sizes. There are even Ishihara charts for colour blindness assessment. Some subtle differences between the two apps: Pocket Eye incorporates more ophthalmic education articles and an optokinetic nystagmus strip function, while EyeMD possesses the useful ability to activate the in-built camera flashlight. With these two apps, less ophthalmically inclined colleagues will no longer have to scramble for eye charts and torches! ■



Dr Jipson Quah is currently a Singapore Armed Forces medical officer serving his National Service. He enjoys music making and fitness-related activities in his spare time.