

The medical world and the future of apps

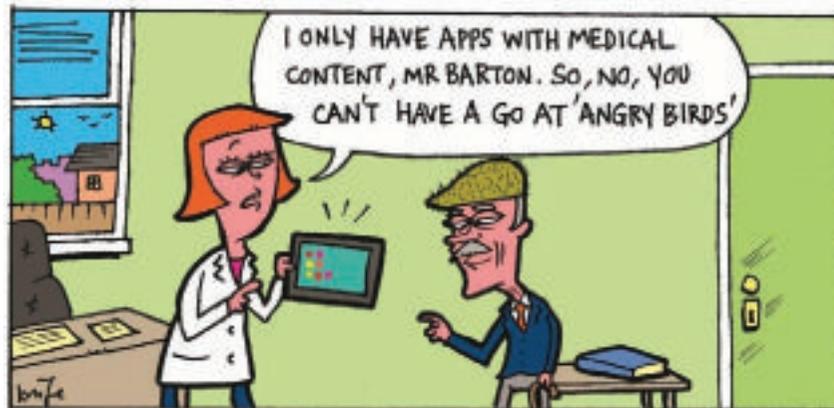
Alison Bloomer Managing editor, GM
Email alison.bloomer@oceanmedia.co.uk

Mobile medical technology and medical apps are nothing new. Technology savvy healthcare professionals and students have been downloading and using apps for years. They currently range from the Dr Companion app to the free app version of Medscape.

Even the Department of Health has got in on the action with Health Secretary Andrew Lansley saying earlier this year that “innovation and technology can revolutionise the health service, and we are looking at how the NHS can use these apps for the benefit of patients, including how GPs could offer them for free.” Could this mean that doctors in the UK could soon “prescribe” smartphone apps for their patients?

A new global study conducted for PwC Global Healthcare by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) found that widespread adoption of mobile technology in healthcare, is now viewed as inevitable in both developed and emerging markets around the world. The consumer survey found roughly one-half of consumers predict that within the next three years, mobile technology will improve the convenience (46%), cost (52%) and quality (48%) of their healthcare.

The study found that physicians and payers are more cautious than consumers in their outlook for mobile technology. Specifically, nearly two-thirds (64%) of doctors and payers said that mobile



technology offers exciting possibilities but there are too few proven business models. In addition, the effectiveness of mobile technology changing patient behaviour is evolving. For example, more than two-thirds of consumer respondents who have used mobile technology wellness or fitness applications with manual data entry discontinued it after the first six months. Only 27% of physicians encourage patients to use mobile technology applications to become more active in managing their health, and 13% of physicians actually discourage it.¹

After Andrew Lansley's endorsement of medical apps, senior doctors and campaigners said it would be a “big mistake” to force patients to use this technology. They point out that certain groups such as the elderly would be far better off making an appointment than downloading an app.

Older patients often have comorbidities and some come with complex medical issues

and drug contraindications. It is therefore important that healthcare professionals dealing with the older age group stay up to date with the latest clinical guidelines and new drug advances. This is why medical journal apps, such as the one recently launched by *GM Journal*, become essential. As the number of doctors using tablets increases, so will the demand for medical journals on this platform. Not only do they allow doctors to download and store favourite articles to share with colleagues but also to keep a store of back issues.

1. www.pwc.com/gx/en/healthcare/mhealth/index.jhtml?WT.ac=vt-mhealth#&panel1-1

The GM Journal free app is available at <https://abannan.com/Subscribers/Accounts/NewSubscriber/Register>.

Recently launched, it has already had nearly a thousand downloads and has now been modified to be also PC and Mac download compatible enlarging our capability and reach of GM and the GM2 portfolio.