

There's an App for That!

WENDY H. VOGEL, MSN, FNP, AOCNP®

What would we do without our smartphones? There are so many applications, or “apps,” and so little time! In a long-awaited report released in 2012, Strategy Analytics estimated that there are more than 1 billion smartphone users worldwide (Bicheno, 2012). It is even more relevant to note that an estimated 70% to 85% of health-care providers in the United States use smartphones (Ozdalga, Ozdalga, & Ahuja, 2012). With apps created specifically with the busy clinician in mind, many people feel that having quickly accessible information improves care at the bedside.

A CAUTIONARY NOTE

For advanced practitioners (APs), it is critical to keep smartphone use in perspective and never take for granted the best source of information: face-to-face contact with the patient. According to a 2011 *The New York Times* article, the “distracted doctoring” phenomenon is a true concern (Richtel, 2011). So with the ever-growing use of smartphones and apps meant for the clinician, we need to remember to ask a key question: Are we spending too much time looking at our phones and not enough time looking at our patients? Balanced use of available technology is a win-win for both the advanced practitioner and the patient.

Ms. Vogel is a nurse practitioner at Wellmont Cancer Institute in Kingsport, Tennessee.

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MEDICAL APPS FOR PATIENTS

More and more often, patients are turning to apps that can help them find reliable medical information, track details regarding their health, and even stay on a course of beneficial lifestyle changes, all with the goals of improved health and overall well-being.

In Tables 1 and 2 on the next page, you'll find a collection of some of this author's “finds” of the month. Table 1 consists of apps that may be of interest to the advanced practitioner, while Table 2 is a collection of apps intended for patient use. Take a look through this list and see which of these tools appeal to you. ●

Disclosure

The author has no potential conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Table 1. Smartphone Applications for Advanced Practitioners

Application type	iOS Apple name	Android name	Notes
Muscle trigger points	Muscle Trigger Points	Muscle Trigger Point Anatomy	Most common trigger points and referral patterns for over 70 muscles \$2.99
Journal club	Journal Club for iPhone	Journal Club for Android	Summaries of top articles in internal medicine giving bottom line and major points; links to PubMed and primary literature \$2.99
Electrocardiogram reference	Instant ECG	ECG Guide by QxMD	ECG reference giving high-resolution examples \$0.99 Apple; \$4.80 Google
ACLS	Critical Care ACLS Guide	Critical Care ACLS Guide	Quick navigation to critical information \$5.99 Apple; \$7.99 Google
Relaxation	Soothing Sounds	Fast Sleep Sounds	Soundscapes to reduce stress and provide a relaxing atmosphere for sleeping, meditation, and yoga \$2.99 Apple; \$1.32 Google
Anatomy	Visual Anatomy	Visual Anatomy	Interactive 3D rotational models; reference and educational tool \$2.99 Apple; \$2.59 Google
Rashes	VisualDx	VisualDx	Support and reference tool, medical images; search by diagnosis, build patient-specific differential, look up drug-induced reactions Free but requires a VisualDx subscription of \$199.99–299.99 per year

Note. ACLS = advanced cardiovascular life support.

Table 2. Smartphone Applications for Patients

Application type	iOS Apple name	Android name	Notes
Pain	My Pain Diary	Manage My Pain Pro	Tracking tool for details about pain and symptoms \$4.99 Apple; \$3.99 Google
Snoring	SnoreLab	Anti Snore Sleep Laboratory	Tracking tool for sleep patterns and remedies \$3.99 Apple; \$1.99 Google
Medications	Pillboxie	MediSafe Medication Reminder	Tracking and reminder tool for taking medications \$0.99 Apple; Free Google
Blood pressure	iBP Blood Pressure	Blood Pressure (My Heart)	Tracking and analysis tool for blood pressure \$0.99 Apple; Free Google
Diabetes	Diabetes Tracker With Blood Glucose	Glucool Diabetes Premium	Tracking tool for blood sugar, medication, carbohydrates, and exercise \$9.99 Apple; \$4.99 Google
Medical data keeping	My Medical	My Medical	Medical record keeping for immunizations, health insurance, personal health data, health-care contact information; integrates with calendar \$3.99
Weight loss and exercise	MyFitnessPal	MyFitnessPal	World's largest nutrition and calorie database; tracks weight, food intake, and exercise Free