

TOP 10 HEALTH APPS OF 2014



Epocrates Bugs & Drugs

More than two million people in the United States contract infections that are resistant to antibiotics, and at least 23,000 people die as a result, according to CDC data. Unfortunately, what wipes out bacteria in one part of the country doesn't wipe it out in another. So how does a doctor know whether to prescribe the usual antibiotic for a UTI? One solution: Tapping into "Epocrates Bugs & Drugs" — a new iPhone and iPad app for iOS 7 recently unveiled by athenahealth and its subsidiary Epocrates. The free app uses GPS to alert physicians to geographic locations at the center of new infections and potential drug-resistance patterns.



Care4Life

Trying to help your diabetic patients engage in their own healthcare when they're not in your office? Consider recommending Care4Life, a new app from Voxiva for Apple iOS and Android-based smartphones. The app, developed in collaboration with the American Diabetes Association, provides users with a broad range of tools to help them take better control of their disease; for example, tools that allow users to record and monitor blood-glucose levels, and remember to take their medications. Care4life also stores data on actions taken in an online personal health record.



iBlueButton 5.0

iBlueButton, an app for iTunes and Google Play that allows users to download or automatically receive updates in their health records on their computer or mobile device with participating providers, unveiled a few new features at this year's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. The app's latest version 5.0 is now enhanced with "caregiver" features that allow anyone to view, download, and share with doctors their own medical records, as well as those of loved ones, all via their smartphone or tablet. The service is free for the first month, and \$2.99 per month after (or \$19.99 per year).



UpToDate

Medicine is always changing — and that's why up-to-date information is a must for physicians. The latest version of UpToDate Mobile, literally, provides just that. What makes it different from other reference apps is that it synthesizes research from more than 450 journals into accessible topics clinicians can use. Another differentiator is that most of those topics include recommendations from UpToDate's full-time staff physicians who are recognized experts in their specialties. The result: Physicians can not only research a topic, they can get expert insight on diagnosis and treatment. The free app is available for download on iOS, Android, or Windows8, and requires a \$499 subscription (\$449 annual renewal).



MyAllergyPal

Getting patients to comply with complex treatment protocols can be difficult. Especially those who must take self-administered injections for immunotherapy. United Allergy Services has released a new app, myAllergyPal, for mobile devices that will help patients keep better track of their allergy treatments. The app which is available to patients whose physicians use the company's protocols for allergy testing and treatment, includes an injection log that tracks injection numbers and doses, a list of the patient's allergens, and a symptom tracker. Patients can also use the app to receive appointment reminders and get directions to their physician's office. The app is compatible with iPhone, iPad, and Android devices.



Omnio

The popular medical reference application Omnio is now available for smartphones. Physicians Interactive Inc. offers free versions of the app for iPhone devices running iOS7 or greater through iTunes, and Android devices running Android 2.2 or greater through Google Play. Both versions offer a free three-month trial of *The Merck Manual for Healthcare Professions*. Features include 500 medical calculators, medical news feeds, links to clinical journals, and an extensive drug guide. The app is highly customizable, using tabbed navigation to allow users to arrange the home screen to favor their preferences and work flows.



Medibabble

If you are looking for an effective medical translation app, then consider NiteFloat's MediBabble: designed for both iPhone and iPad, it is available for free through iTunes. The application's extensive database contains thousands of clinical phrases that were reviewed by a panel of physicians. In its second version, the app allows users to select clinical questions from five different languages that enable them to take a medical history; from history of present illness to past medical history to a review of systems. It also provides language specific instructions for exam maneuvers, and "culturally sensitive" explanations of more invasive exam elements.



Wolfram Sun Exposure Reference App

Plenty of data reinforces the danger of too much sun. Rather than lecture patients, it is so much easier to recommend an app for their smartphones. The Wolfram Sun Exposure Reference App by the Wolfram Group, LLC, is available on iTunes for \$0.99. The software requires iOS 5.0 or later, and is compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. Users can calculate "Time to Sunburn," by entering their current location, time of day, the date, their skin type, and the SPF they are wearing. The app will then create a personalized report including how long the user can stay in the sun before he burns; a UV forecast for the current location; and a recommended SPF level.



L'Allegro

L'Allegro version 1.1, "the antidepressant chooser for primary-care physicians," was designed by Stanford University family-medicine clinical instructor Steven Lin. Lin based his app on evidence-based guidelines for choosing antidepressant drugs. The app uses point-of-care decision support to help physicians make treatment choices in the management of unipolar major depressive disorder. The app is available for free on iTunes.



Weight Loss for Kids and Teens

This weight loss app for children ages 8 to 18 is based on years of research at Stanford University. The free app, developed by Kurbo Health, is available for iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch, and requires iOS7 or later. It uses the “traffic light diet,” which assigns foods into three groups: green for fruits and veggies; yellow for proteins and whole grains; and red for the bad guys — sugar, white bread, and fried foods. Key features are virtual coaching via SMS text messages; food and exercise trackers; instructional videos and games; and weekly challenges. Co-founder Joanna Strober developed the app in response to her own children’s struggles with obesity.