Personal digital assistant usage among undergraduate medical students: exploring trends, barriers, and the advent of smartphones

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APPENDIX A

Survey questions

1. What year of your undergraduate medical education are you in?
   o 1st
   o 2nd
   o 3rd
   o 4th

2. What device(s) do you currently own?
   o I don’t own a handheld electronic information device/personal digital assistant (PDA).
   o Palm OS
   o Palm Z 22
   o Palm T/X
   o Palm Tungsten E2
   o Palm LifeDrive
   o Other: please name ________________________
   o Microsoft Pocket PC
   o Dell Axim X51v
   o HP iPAQ hx1955
   o HP iPAQ hx2495
   o Asus MyPal A632
   o Other: please name ________________________
   o BlackBerry
   o BlackBerry Pearl
   o BlackBerry Curve
   o BlackBerry 8800 series
   o BlackBerry 8700 series
   o Other: please name ________________________
   o Integrated PDA/phone
   o O2 Xda Mini Pro
   o Samsung SCH1730
   o PalmTreo 650
   o PalmTreo 700w
   o Other: please name ________________________
   o Other type of device: please name ________________________
3. If you could have any device you wanted, which would you choose?
   - Palm OS
   - Palm Z 22
   - Palm T/X
   - Palm Tungsten E2
   - Palm LifeDrive
   - Other: please name ________________________
   - Microsoft Pocket PC
   - Dell Axim X51v
   - HP iPAQ hx1955
   - HP iPAQ hx2495
   - Asus MyPal A632
   - Other: please name ________________________
   - BlackBerry
   - BlackBerry Pearl
   - BlackBerry Curve
   - BlackBerry 8800 series
   - BlackBerry 8700 series
   - Other: please name ________________________
   - Integrated PDA/phone
   - O2 Xda Mini Pro
   - Samsung SCH1730
   - Palm Treo 650
   - Palm Treo 700w
   - Other: please name ________________________
   - Other type of device: please name ________________________

4. How did you learn to use your PDA? (check all that apply)
   - Peers
   - PDA manual
   - Internet guide
   - Departmental training
   - Library training
   - Taught myself
   - I am still trying to figure my PDA out
   - Other: please name ________________________

5. What programs/applications have you downloaded to your PDA? (check all that apply)
   - PEPID
   - Access Medicine
   - Harrison’s Manual of Medicine
   - Merck Manual
   - Epocrates Rx
   - ACP Pier
   - Archimedes
   - EBM calculator
   - MedCalc
6. How much money have you spent on programs/applications for your PDA?
   - Nothing. I use only free applications.
   - $1–50
   - $50–100
   - $100 or more

7. Which of the programs/applications that you have do you find most useful?
   Please name your top three: _____________________________

8. How often do you use your PDA?
   - Once a day or more?
   - 2–3 times a week?
   - Once a week?
   - Once a month?
   - Rarely (less than once a month)

9. Please indicate the ways in which you use your PDA (check all that apply)
   - Access email, Internet, or text messages
   - Calendar, addresses, or task management
   - Access rotation/course information (handouts, evaluations, schedules)
   - Take notes, do homework, perform other academic tasks
   - Access a drug reference (e.g., Pepid)
   - Perform clinical calculations
   - Access a clinical reference or e-textbook
   - Access dictionaries
   - Access medical literature, abstracts, or guidelines. If you do please answer the questions below.

9.a. Have you searched Ovid MEDLINE or PubMed via PDA?
   - Yes
   - No

9.b. How often are your searches successful? (i.e., Do you find the answer you are looking for:)
   - Always
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely
   - Never
   - Translate a foreign language (e.g., medical French)
   - Record audio, video, or still pictures
   - Access a different diagnosis or treatment plan
   - Enter SOAP notes
   - Patient data or patient orders
   - Track patients, access lab results or patient information
10. What type of training would be beneficial to you with regard to PDAs? (check all that apply)
   o Initial training in the basic functions of PDAs (choosing the right model, downloading resources, beaming, hot synching, etc.)
   o Use of general resources for PDAs (word processing, spreadsheets, address book, calendar)
   o Use of health sciences resources for PDAs (Harrison’s, PDR, Patient Tracker, drug resources)
   o Other: please name ________________________

11. In what format would you prefer instruction?
   o Group lecture-style sessions led by an instructor
   o Online tutorials
   o Hands-on, interactive small group sessions
   o Other: _____________________________

12. What library-provided programs and services for your PDA would you find useful?
   o Accessing the library catalogue
   o Accessing online databases
   o Asking the librarian questions via your PDA
   o Name other resources or services you would like to have: _____________________________

13. Are you satisfied with library support for PDAs?
   o Yes
   o No

14. Do you believe all medical students should be required to own a PDA?
   o Yes
   o No

15. Do you believe use of a PDA in the 1st and 2nd years of the MD program is important preparation for clinical years?
   o Yes
   o No

16. Have any of your instructors encouraged you to purchase/use a PDA?
   o Yes
   o No

17. Have you seen any of your instructors using PDAs or other handheld devices?
   o Yes
   o No

18. Please share any other comments you may have about handheld devices or resources.

19. If you would be willing to participate in a focus group discussion with other medical students on this topic, please leave your contact information below so that we may get in touch with you to make the appropriate arrangements.