Access to Mobile Resources: How Does It Affect the Clerkship Experience?

Alice Stokes, MLIS; Laura L. Haines, MLS; Jeanene Light, MLS; Fred Pond, MLS
Dana Medical Library, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont

METHODOLOGY
Dana Medical Library offered instruction on clinical mobile resources. An online subject guide provided detailed instructions for finding and installing library-licensed mobile resources.

RESULTS
Survey questions gathered data on:
- Access to mobile devices
- Relevance of instruction
- Use of library-licensed mobile resources
- Benefits and barriers to mobile device use in the clinical setting
- Impact of access to mobile resources on educational experiences across clerkship sites

Of the 58% of respondents who attended the instruction session on mobile resources, 94% found the class helpful. Half of the respondents tested at the Mobile Apps subject guide. 89% of those who did found it helpful. Approximately 25% of respondents sought out individual assistance at the library, and all who did found it helpful.

CONCLUSIONS
Nearly half of the Class of 2014 attended the optional instruction session. Requiring instruction would reach more students. According to qualitative feedback from the survey, library instruction could be improved by providing in-class assistance installing and authenticating apps. A large number of students did not seek additional assistance from the Library; many indicated they were unaware of the subject guide. This suggests a need for further promotion and marketing of mobile resources available in the clinical setting.

Researchers were surprised that the two of the most commonly used apps were not library licensed (ePocrates and Medscape). The most common barrier cited by respondents was a discrepancy between their clinical information needs and available apps. This implies a role for the library in curating a list of library and non-library apps of use in the clinical setting.

Future Implications
Students in the UVM COM Class of 2015 have been issued Android tablets for use during their clerkship year. Library instruction and support of mobile resources for clerkship will be tailored accordingly. The instruction session will be mandatory and has been expanded to a two-hour session which will include support in installing and authenticating apps. Demand remains high for mobile access to UpToDate. A license signed in October 2012 now provides clerkship students off-site access to the mobile-friendly site. Institutional access to the UpToDate app is expected to be available in the fall of 2012.

The subject guide continues to be updated to reflect current mobile resources and user needs. Recommended non-library licensed apps have been added in selecting appropriate apps useful in the clinical setting.

Finally, there is concern issues that such as patient privacy and professionalism need to be addressed as students blend personal and professional mobile computing in a single device. One particular area for study is the use of electronic health records on mobile devices.

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