

# TAPPING ON TECHNOLOGY:

Review by Dr Yau Teng Yan

Dr Yau Teng Yan is a digital health advocate and self-professed techie. He believes that one day, technology will finally fulfil its promise of making our lives as medical practitioners easier, so that we can spend more of our time on what matters most – our patients.



There's something I must confess.

I am a mobile phone addict. There, I've said it out loud. I am usually stuck to my mobile phone like glue and I daresay many of you have the same symptoms. Today, our smartphones are more than just a phone used to call or text others – they add so much utility to our daily lives. With mobile apps, we can keep up to date with the latest medical knowledge, find more information on a medication we're about to prescribe, connect with other health professionals, do our online banking and even hire cabs. It is hard to imagine a day without using our phones.

However, given that there are so many health and medical apps out there these days (more than 100,000 at last count!), how do you tell which are worth using or recommending to your patients? Below, I would like to share with you some interesting apps that I've actually used myself. These include apps that allow you to discuss interesting clinical cases with doctors around the world, keep up to date on your continuing medical education (CME), and track your health in an easier way. Even better – all of these apps are free to use (at this time).

## For doctors



**Figure 1 (iOS, Android)**

Figure 1 is just like an Instagram for medical cases. Healthcare professionals from around the world use the app to share interesting cases and images with the community, and other doctors can comment and discuss. Some doctors use this as a tool to get a second opinion on their cases from peers around the world, while others regularly share teaching cases for others to learn from. This is particularly useful for GPs in

private practice, where there are fewer opportunities to have stimulating case discussions with other colleagues. The app includes cases from all specialties, but especially in dermatology and radiology which are particularly visual disciplines. I find it a great app to stimulate the brain cells during my free time, and it gives me the opportunity to interact with doctors outside of Singapore.



**MedScape CME & Education (iOS, Android)**

We're all quite familiar with MedScape, which is a very useful and fairly reliable resource when searching for information on specific medical conditions. However, did you know that there's a MedScape CME app? *Quite handy since we're coming close to the time of the year where many of us are due to renew our medical registration.* On the app, you can add and search for CME topics of interest to you.

Most of the sessions comprise a pre-quiz, reading materials, recorded videos or lectures, and a post-quiz, of which you need to achieve a minimum score to pass. Particularly, I advise looking for ones that provide at least 1 CME credit. Upon completion, these certificates can be submitted to Singapore Medical Council for Category 3B CME credit claims.



# MOBILE APPS FOR DOCTORS AND PATIENTS IN 2017



## SERMO (iOS, Android)

SERMO is a private community for doctors and a leading site for medical crowdsourcing. Through the app, you can ask real-life medical questions and leverage on the intellect and experience of doctors worldwide to solve difficult patient cases. SERMO aims to provide a safe and open environment where doctors can connect with each other and talk openly about anything that's relevant to them. Thus, you can participate in discussions in the app with trust and anonymity, knowing that

you're interacting with real health professionals. I like that there is a verification process when creating an account, so as to ensure that only qualified professionals are on the platform. They actually requested for my medical registration certificate in order to create an account for me. However, it being a global community, several of the cases in my news feed were published in other languages (eg, Spanish), which can be difficult to understand despite the translation.

## For your patients



## HealthHub Track (iOS, Android)

HealthHub Track is a companion app to HealthHub by the Ministry of Health and Health Promotion Board (HPB). It is a useful app to recommend to your patients who are looking to stay healthy or to take prevention against diabetes. The app provides a personalised plan to get the user on the right track to a healthy lifestyle. For example, I was reminded in the first week to have three servings of whole grains, practise deep breathing for five minutes and also play some sports on a daily basis. You can connect a fitness tracker and the

app will automatically track your steps. You can also participate in various challenges – I'm currently on the "Be a Super Stepper" challenge which pushes me to hit more than 10,000 steps a day. The challenge provides a leader board that lists the scores of the top participants, which is quite interesting. You can also view a library of health articles and guides – which include lots of tips relevant to diabetes prevention and pregnancy. These articles have been curated by HPB for the local context and are thus quite credible.



## SuperLeap (iOS, Android)

SuperLeap is a new digital programme targeted to help children and their families stay healthy, and was launched in collaboration with HPB. As of now, the programme is available for overweight and obese preschoolers and youths. Through the app, parents and children can track weight, eating habits and physical activity. More importantly, each parent/child is linked to a personal human health coach. He/she will motivate, support and coach the child to better health, as well as answer health

questions over a period of three to six months. Special focus is placed on improving eating habits through portion control and replacing unhealthy snacks with better options. The coach interacts with the user via a text messaging interface, similar to WhatsApp. It has a cartoony design that appeals to children, with a sugar glider as its mascot. Children will also be able to earn rewards like movie and zoo tickets by using the app regularly and completing relevant actions. ♦