

There's an App for That: Physicians, Mobile Technology Trends, and Medtech Opportunity

Maria Shepherd • Data Decision Group

The mobile phone has become one of the most important arrows in the quiver of the physician armamentarium. Healthcare information technology is changing the landscape of how physicians are treating patients, and much of the data doctors require is being funneled through a smartphone. Connected health is a big deal in the business of medicine, and undoubtedly will change clinician practices and behaviors forever.

Why It's Important

Medical device marketing must stay relevant to physicians, and what better way than to give them access to data from our devices? An article in the *Journal of Mobile Technology in Medicine (JMTM)* that iPhone and Android platforms have applications specifically created for orthopedic surgeons.^{1,2} The journal reported that 84 percent of U.S. orthopedic health professionals currently use a smartphone,

that 53 percent use applications in clinical practice, and that 96 percent indicated they would like to see more applications.

The healthcare market for apps was estimated at \$718 million in 2011.³ The leading apps used in medical specialties was reported in a *JMTM* article titled "An Empirical Review of the Top 500 Medical Apps in a European Android Market" (see Chart 1).⁴ Many of the reasons physicians use mobile health applications are shown in Chart 2.⁵

What Do Ortho Docs Download?

This change—doctors and their smartphones—is critically important to the physician psyche and how they are changing their practices. Table 1 shows a sampling of medical apps developed for orthopedic surgeons.

Impact on the Healthcare System

What is your mobile product roadmap? How can the medical technology sector

leverage the capabilities physicians have come to expect via smartphone? Physicians pay attention to mHealth. The important question for medical device makers is: How can this communication tool become a part of your market opportunity? In the physician perceptions in the mHealth study, two-thirds of U.S. physicians reported using mobile applications, to reduce cost and use their time more efficiently.⁷ This is an evolving market and medical device marketers who address this opportunity may be ahead of the curve.

References

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3. Jahns R.G. *The market for mHealth application reached \$US 718m in 2011*

Chart 1. Top Medical Apps Downloaded by Medical Specialty (Europe)

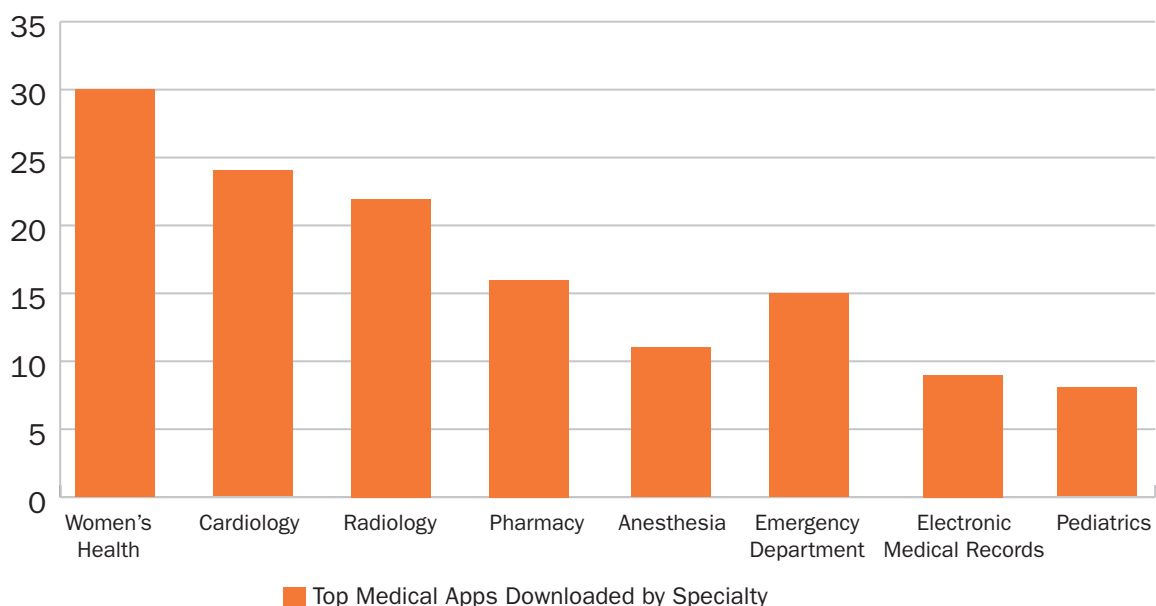


Chart 2. Top Reasons for Physician Use of Mobile Health Applications

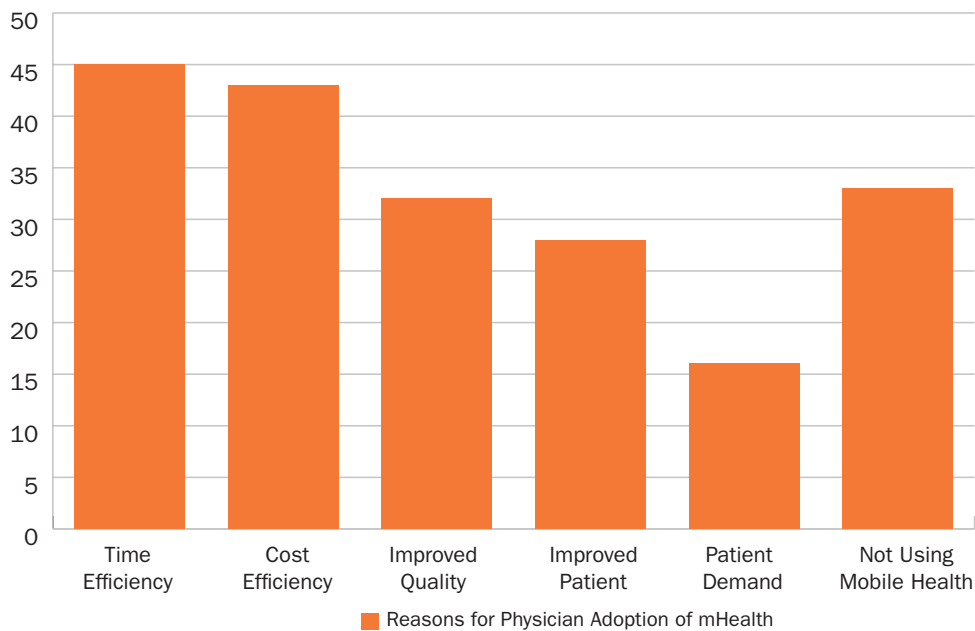


Table 1. Medical Apps for Orthopedic Surgeons⁶

App Name	App Description
AO Surgery reference	Trauma management
ShoulderDoc	Education, research and innovation
Orthoclass, Ortho Traumapedia	Fracture classification and management
Orca MD Series: ShoulderDecide, HandDecide, FootDecide, SpineDecide, KneeDecide	Patient education
drawMD Orthopedics	Individual patient specific education using image templates
CORE (Clinical Orthopedic Exam)	More than 400 clinical musculoskeletal examinations with descriptions and videos showing how to perform each test
RealWorld Orthopedics	Identify orthopedic problems on X-ray radiograph covering more than 50 types of fracture, dislocation and degenerative diseases
Tumorpedia	Range of malignant and benign bone/soft-tissue tumors

Editor's note: Readers are invited to submit market data and trend questions to Maria Shepherd. Periodically, selected questions will be presented in this column, with answers from Maria. Send your questions to her email address (below).

Maria Shepherd has 20 years of leadership experience in medical device/life-science marketing in small startups and top-tier companies. After her industry career, including her role as vice president of marketing for Oridion Medical where she boosted the company valuation prior to its acquisition by Covidien, director of marketing for Philips Medical and senior management roles at Boston Scientific Inc., she founded Data Decision Group. Data Decision Group provides whitespace research and critical data to support medical device decision making. The firm quantitatively and qualitatively sizes opportunities, evaluates new technologies, provides marketing services and assesses prospective acquisitions. Shepherd has taught marketing and product development courses, and is on the board of the MSBiV Medtech Investment Committee and can be reached at (617) 548-9892 or at mshepherd@ddecisiongroup.com.

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