

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES REVIEWS

DynaMed (PDA access), version 13.20.0/2010.05.24. EBSCO Publishing, 10 Estes Street, Ipswich, MA, 01938; <http://www.ebscohost.com/dynamed/>; information@ebscohost.com. Technical requirements: 64 megabytes of disk space on either the handheld device or a memory card for Palm devices and 66 megabytes of disk space on Windows devices. Individuals and institutions contact EBSCO for pricing. Serial number required for download; more details at http://www.support.epnet.com/knowledge_base/detail.php?id=3929

DynaMed, a point-of-care, evidence-based reference tool acquired by EBSCO Information Services in November 2005, was originally founded by physician Brian S. Alper with "a reverence for Evidence-Based Medicine and

a practical sense for the needs of clinicians at the point of care" [1]. This review, conducted on an iPod Touch, focuses primarily on the mobile use of the product, hereafter referred to as "DynaMed PDA access." DynaMed PDA access is available to personal and institutional subscribers of DynaMed on the following devices: Palm, Pocket PC, Windows smartphone, BlackBerry, iPhone and iPod touch, and Android Smartphones.

Subscribers will find helpful how-to documentation on the DynaMed website for installing the product onto a mobile device. The process involves registering for Skyscape (the platform that hosts this application) and then obtaining a serial number for DynaMed PDA access itself. This process is not difficult, but the well-prepared library should probably train staff to assist users who may consider it problematic.

DynaMed PDA access has a number of options for starting a search, and it works quite similarly to the web-based version of DynaMed. The home screen includes a table of contents with the following options: Browse by Alphabet, Browse by Category, and Browse by Recent Update. The Browse by Alphabet search lists topics alphabetically and uses a drill-down method of getting to more specific information. At the outset of a search, the last update is clearly stated. Many topics are initially divided between pediatric and adult topics. An abbreviated menu of shortcuts to the right of the screen goes directly to more specific information like description, causes and risk factors for diseases, prevention and screening, and others. This menu appears for any topic and is very helpful for navigating back and forth through a broader topic being searched. At certain points when conducting a search, users can also tap the See Also button that provides a list of alternative, useful topics in DynaMed. References are included for all topics and are hyperlinked so the user can open

up the device's browser to search for the full text.

The Browse by category option is helpful if users are looking to browse major topics in a broader system of the body or category of diseases. Similarly, the Browse by Recent Update option allows users to choose a date (DynaMed PDA access posts topic updates daily) to examine what has been added to the application. Updating DynaMed on a mobile device is very efficient and can be done from the device itself; there is no need to sync with a computer. The Skyscape platform updates applications in a matter of seconds on a high-speed connection.

The helpfulness of the Skyscape navigation options is worth noting. At the bottom of the screen, users can go back to the table of contents with one click, link out to any other Skyscape-hosted application on the device, and look at the history of searches in other SkyScape applications. These benefits outweigh a problem with the Home button, which when clicked, leaves DynaMed completely and goes to the SkyScape home page. It takes a little practice to remember this, because the natural inclination is to think the Home button goes back to the DynaMed home page.

Administratively, DynaMed PDA access is easy. Statistics come through the EBSCOhost platform, so any library that already subscribes to an EBSCO database will see DynaMed added to its admin interface. The library can choose to pass out serial numbers or have users contact EBSCO tech support directly. In this reviewer's experience, it has been helpful for the library to hand out the numbers in order to track users. The library can ask users for more information like type of device used, email address, and department affiliation.

To obtain some insight from clinical users of this product, a satisfaction survey was distributed through email to users at this reviewer's organization (which was not difficult because the library administers the serial numbers, and

a record of contact information was kept). Ten of the eleven respondents, who had used DynaMed PDA access from anywhere between four to twelve months, had something in common: All indicated that they were actively using the application for patient care. In addition, six were very satisfied with the product, three were somewhat satisfied, one was rarely satisfied, and one indicated a lack of use because there were "many other good tools...vying for my attention." A few other comments were:

■ "Overall, I think DynaMed is superior to any other mobile medical platform that I have ever worked with."

■ "The only thing I would change is the fact that Dynamed is under the Skyscape app on my iPhone. I sometimes forget that's where it's stored, and it made it more complicated to download, especially since I had to be careful not to download a bunch of other things I wasn't interested in just to get DynaMed."

■ "I would recommend it as a fast, concise resource for other residents, physicians, and medical students."

DynaMed PDA access is recommended for organizations looking for a point-of-care tool. Daily updates, evidence-based content, and an attractive price point make it a valuable asset for libraries and information providers who are serving clinicians who need a reliable ready reference application on a mobile device.

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Reference

1. EBSCO Information Services, News releases: EBSCO Publishing acquires DynaMed [Internet]. 2005 Jul 20 [cited 24 May 2010]. <<http://www.ebsco.com/home/whatsnew/dynamed.asp>>.

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