

Ring of Healthcare



Mobile health apps bring about improvement in overall patient satisfaction by fostering a connected system of care. The overall cost of care is also reduced

By **Dr Ruchi Dass**

mHealth addresses some of the healthcare industry's biggest concerns. It has the potential to tackle issues like the billions of dollars being spent annually in inappropriate or wasteful care, or the shortage of primary care physicians in India. So it should come as no surprise that mHealth is attracting the attention of not only the healthcare community, but also the investor community. Patients and Physicians alike are increasingly turning to mobile devices to help monitor, track and manage healthcare outcomes.

There are 20,000 plus mHealth applications in the major app stores today, and by 2015, it is projected that there will be 500 million mHealth app users worldwide. The smartphone penetration in India is increasing with 40 percent consumers accessing internet daily through smartphones; 34 percent of these users log in for more than half an hour each day. Smartphone users have, on average, downloaded 13 apps with 12 currently on their phone. Of these, eight are used regularly. It is obvious that apps are fast becoming commonplace in every smartphone owner's life. However, although consumers are investigating an increasingly wide range of apps, they will only use those which offer them real benefits, which can range from functional,

social or entertainment oriented.

Compared to a decade ago, we are highly "connected" population today – from email to facebook to news on the go; information is accessible anytime, anywhere. Operators laid the "foundation" upon which businesses built millions of widgets for consumption by all of us. In a similar sense, the progression of mHealth will largely be dependent on innovations in telecom and the speed of implementation of the same. 4G /LTE (Long-term evolution) will revolutionise the way data is sent over wireless networks. In the near future, we envision a scenario where a consumer can set up a tele-health appointment and consult a physician by leveraging the high speed wireless connection and high-definition video conferencing capability available from his handset.

However, these applications need to work seamlessly with other systems with defined processes in place to achieve adoption and to be self-sustainable. There is a little value in creating apps that can't connect to clinical workflows, other providers, common man and their specific networks.

HealthFore (www.healthfore.com), with support from HealthCursor Consulting Group (www.healthcursor.com) is focused on creating the common pipes

through which data will flow. We understand the real value that is subsumed in healthcare data.

On the other side, mobile health apps provide D2C connect which empowers the end users with customised information, advice and also helps drive qualified referrals to the providers. It helps increase the overall patient satisfaction through follow ups and connected care all while reducing the overall cost of care. Unfortunately, most of today's mHealth applications are limited in their ability to both access and share information because the data is sitting in silos, typically locked away in disparate, proprietary, redundant systems that are hard to integrate. After the successful launch of our Doctor on Call service, HealthFore intends to launch continuous---> collaborative---->connected point of care mechanisms. mHealth applications will be an integral part of this novel approach for offering quality healthcare on an anywhere, anytime basis. ☺

ABOUT AUTHOR

DR RUCHI DASS
mHealth Advisor, Healthfore
(A Division of Religare
Technologies)

