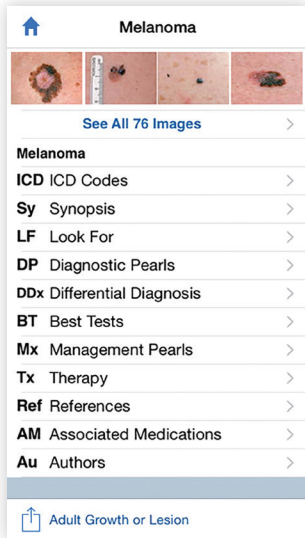# SPPACES: MEDICAL APP REVIEWS

David Rebedew, MD

VISUALDX

VisualDx is a decision support and clinical reference tool focused on skin diseases. It allows health care professionals to make dermatological differential diagnoses based on patient-specific findings, review medication-induced adverse effects, and search for specific diagnoses to determine the best management strategy at the point of care.

Source: Logical Images

Platforms available: Android smartphone or tablet using Android OS 2.1 or higher; iPhone 3GS or newer (optimized for iPhone 5), iPod Touch (3rd generation or newer), or iPad using iOS 7.0 or higher.

Pertinence to primary care practice: Patients presenting with skin diseases are common in primary care, yet diagnosing skin diseases can be a challenge for many clinicians, regardless of specialty. VisualDx improves patient care, confirms diagnoses, influences therapy decisions, and prevents unneeded referrals to dermatologists as shown by KLAS,[1] an independent research firm specializing in clinical decision support tools, and two independent studies.[2,3]

Authoritativeness/accuracy/currency of information: A team of physicians, educators, and computer scientists created the app. It has nearly 30,000 peer-reviewed images that cover more than 1,300 different diagnoses. Images span patients of all ages and skin types and include both common and rare disease variants. The editor-in-chief of VisualDx also serves as an editor of the textbook *Fitzpatrick's Dermatology in General Medicine* and the *New England Journal of Medicine's Journal Watch Dermatology.* VisualDx is also integrated into the evidence-based clinical decision support resource UpToDate.

Cost: The app requires a subscription, which includes a 30-day free trial. Thereafter, individual subscriptions cost $19.99 per month to access approximately two-thirds of the content, $29.99 per month to access all of the content, and $38.99 per month to also earn CME for using VisualDx. Institutional subscriptions are also available.

Ease of use: Upon opening the app, the user may choose to build a differential diagnosis, take an image quiz, or search for a specific diagnosis or medication. Within the differential diagnosis builder, you can input any relevant findings, such as the age of the patient, location and distribution of the lesion(s), appearance of the lesion(s), and patient-specific factors such as travel, medical history, medications, or social history. The differential builder then displays a list of possible diagnoses in descending order of likelihood based on the number of matched criteria.

Using the app is seamless and intuitive, but it does require a 3G/4G or Wi-Fi connection. The app content is continually being updated and is available in English, Danish, French, Spanish, and Chinese.

Sponsors: Not applicable.

Rating: ★★★★★

The ongoing subscription can be expensive for individual clinicians, but the app is a great tool for diagnosing and reviewing skin diseases quickly and conveniently. **FPM**

1. *Clinical Decision Support 2011: Understanding the Impact.* Orem, Utah: KLAS; November 2011.

2. Papier A, Allen E, McDermott M. Visual informatics: real-time visual decision support. Poster presented at: American Medical Informatics Association 2001 Annual Symposium; Nov. 3-7, 2001; Washington, DC.

3. David CV, Chira S, Eells SJ, et al. Diagnostic accuracy in patients admitted to hospitals with cellulitis. *Dermatol Online J.* 2011;17(3):1.

SURVEY: WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE APP?

Help us select which app to review in the next issue of *Family Practice Management* by voting for your favorite app in our three-question survey: **http://www.aafp.org/fpm/appsurvey**.

About the Author

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