

Digital Revolution: Dermatology Is on the Edge

Vincent A. DeLeo, MD

The Digital Revolution has invaded the House of Medicine, which is not really news since the invasion has been long-standing, but it seems to be generating more interest and concern in recent months. The American Medical Association recently created the *Digital Health Implementation Playbook* to lend guidance in developing technologies that are fundamentally altering the manner in which patients interact with health care providers.¹ The playbook lays out specific steps for developing and implementing digital health technologies such as remote patient monitoring devices. The goal of the playbook is to make certain that such devices are accurate, reliable, and validated as valuable additions to high-quality patient care.¹

In the February 2018 issue of *Cutis*, Masud et al² evaluated 44 patient-directed mobile applications (apps) for dermatologic conditions and developed a schematic for evaluating their value in providing valid usable information for patients. They found that most of the apps failed to live up to their purported usefulness in patient education.² I am certain we have all seen numerous examples on the Internet, many times brought to us by patients, of fallacious and inaccurate information about the diagnosis and treatment of dermatologic conditions that are actually harmful to the care of our patients.

A more upsetting trend in recent years is the proliferation of open-access journals. Although such digital journals can result in more rapid dissemination of valid scientific information, many of them do not follow a true peer-review process. So-called predatory journals from for-profit unethical publishers are increasing at an alarming rate.³

Furthermore, there is a need to present data more accurately and in formats that provide more meaningful interpretation, according to a recent Letter From the Editor in the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*.⁴ Elston⁴ wrote: "Be honest about your data and the limitations of the study design." He cautioned further about the proper use of statistical analysis.

As dermatologists, how do we make certain that the Digital Revolution results in better care of our patients?

The answer, of course, is in education of the practitioner and our young colleagues in training. Although most *Cutis* readers still access the print version of our journal, more and more readers are accessing our digital format. Online we are able to offer readers the peer-reviewed content you have known to trust and rely on to improve your care of patients as well as other educational tools. Furthermore, we can provide readers access to additional charts and tables pertaining to research published in the print journal.

In January 2019 the *Cutis* website will merge with *Dermatology News*, our sister news publication, to become MDedge Dermatology (www.mdedge.com/dermatology). This site will be your new one-stop destination for timely news and clinical content you can trust from both publications. This interactive site is designed to help clinicians quickly find the information they need to improve the treatment and care of patients with conditions affecting the hair, skin, and nails. You will have free access to digital resources such as procedural videos, podcasts, image quizzes, board review, and resident resources, as well as an archive of *Cutis* content dating back to 2000.

As we at *Cutis* broaden our digital footprint, we look forward to providing our readers with a larger volume of clinically relevant content in more easily accessed formats while maintaining our commitment to valid trustworthy information. In the coming months we look forward to joining with you in this new digital endeavor, and as always, we appreciate the input of our readers during this process.

REFERENCES

1. AMA announces playbook to successfully adopt digital health [press release]. Boston, MA: American Medical Association; October 16, 2018. <https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-announces-playbook-successfully-adopt-digital-health>. Accessed December 14, 2018.
2. Masud A, Shafi S, Rao BK. Mobile medical apps for patient education: a graded review of available dermatology apps. *Cutis*. 2018;101:141-144.
3. Shahrivar N, Grant-Kels JM, Payette MJ. Predatory journals: how to recognize and avoid the threat of involvement with these unethical "publishers." *J Am Acad Dermatol*. 2016;75:658-659.
4. Elston DM. Presentation of data. *J Am Acad Dermatol*. 2019;80:55.

From the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, New York, and the University of Southern California, Los Angeles.
Dr. DeLeo receives honoraria as Editor-in-Chief of *Cutis* and also is a consultant for Estée Lauder Inc.