



TELEDERMATOLOGY

THE AGE OF MOBILE TELEDERMATOLOGY IS HERE; IS IT SAFE AND ARE WE ALL DOING IT?

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There are now more mobile connections than people in the world, and two thirds of the population (over 5 billion) have a personal mobile subscription, of whom 2.5 billion are predicted to own a smartphone in 2019. Furthermore 56% of the worlds population has internet connection increasing to 81% in the developed world. Progressive generations of mobile devices have seen higher resolution cameras and larger screens, integration of functionality, better security, and a myriad of useful applications. For most of us, modern smartphones are integral to our day to day life, replacing reference books, diaries, computers, cameras, HiFi and television, thereby satisfying our demand for instant information, communication and entertainment.

As teledermatology has evolved it is only to be expected that the use of mobile devices would take a more central role. Not only can we keep up to date with our favourite journals on our phones, but we can use educational Apps to learn about or remind us of dermoscopy features, calculate melanoma staging, or PASI scores. Over the last few years we have seen increasing published research into the possibilities for mobile teledermatology from melanoma screening to leg ulcer monitoring to self monitoring tools and patient satisfaction. Formal teledermatology service provider companies/organisations have recognised the benefit of utilising mobile devices especially for the collection and transmission of patient data by developing Apps that link to a secure web-based platform rather than keeping any potentially sensitive patient information on the mobile device itself. Such formats help to minimise the risks to confidentiality inherent to use of non encrypted data processed through standard email, messaging, internal or cloud type storage.

Evidence from the UK looking at the widespread but unrecognised use of personal mobile phones by doctors to photograph patients, together with the necessity to comply with current updated legislation under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), lead to the production of a guidance document* by a multistakeholder working party with the British Association of Dermatologists and leading UK teledermatologists, which covers all relevant areas of concern including consent, imaging, safe transmission and storage of data. Subsequent audit has shown greater understanding of these issues by UK dermatology trainees. In further recognition of developments and the likely utilisation of teledermatology including with mobile devices in current and future dermatology provision, the subject matter has been added to the trainee curriculum in the UK.

In conclusion; the age of mobile teledermatology has undoubtedly arrived, it is improving





and getting safer, and if you are not using it yet...you probably will be soon.

