

Top 10 PDA programs for oncology practices

By John J. Fried

During a checkup, the young man with Kaposi's sarcoma and HIV tells you he has been depressed and has been taking St. John's wort, the popular over-the-counter antidepressant. You could research St. John's Wort later and then discuss it with your patient—if you can reach him.

But if you had **ePocrates RX Pro** on that personal digital assistant (PDA) in your shirt pocket, you could find out immediately that St. John's Wort can interfere with one or more of the protease inhibitors he is taking. Using this software would provide a way for both of you to seize the moment and find safer ways of dealing with his depression.

ePocrates RX Pro (available at www2.epocrates.com/products) is just one of the thousands of programs available for PDAs running the Palm and Pocket PC operating systems. Below is a sampling of a few of the best programs, as recommended by reliable medical Web sites and Bernard Mason, MD, a medical oncologist at Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia. Some are adaptations of programs for conventional computers, others are digital versions of important books, clinical guides, or medical journals. Some are just for fun. Some are free. Others will cost you. But all are likely to make your day go a little easier.

BreastCa

On your desktop computer you may have the National Cancer Institute's software that helps you calculate the breast cancer risk faced by a woman sitting on the other side of your desk. But in the examining room or at the bedside, that software is of no immediate help. With **BreastCa**, which incorporates

© 2006 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

both the Gail and Claus models for predicting breast cancer risk, you can do the calculations on your PDA. <http://smi-web.stanford.edu/people/pcheng/breastca/>

HighWire Viewer

Offered by Stanford University, the viewer brings to the PDA your choice of more than 1 million, free, full-text articles from <http://highwire.stanford.edu/lists/allsites.dtl>, including the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*. Other articles are accessible through institutional subscriptions, as well as on a pay-per-view basis. <http://highwire.stanford.edu>

TNM Mobile Edition

This is the PDA version of the International Union Against Cancer global cancer staging standard and the TNM classification of malignant tumors. The program also includes an interactive tumor staging utility and automatically stages the progression of the disease. www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0471268267.html

CACheMoRx

The PDA version of the *Handbook of Cancer Chemotherapy* is ideal for use in the office or at the bedside to research treatments according to both tumor type and site. <http://skyscape.com/ESTore/ProductDetail.aspx?ProductID=1009#requirements>

Adjuvant!

This handy program has been designed to help the clinician discuss with a patient who has early stage cancer the risks and benefits of getting adjuvant treatment. By entering specific information about the patient and his or her tumor, the program es-

timates the risk of mortality or relapse without systemic adjuvant therapy and reduction of these risks with the therapy. Risks of side effects of the therapy are also calculated. The estimates are presented in simple graphs and text to be used in consultations. www.adjuvantonline.com

Mobile Merck Medicus

This site includes the Merck Manual; the Pocket Guide to Diagnostic Tests, with both lab and imaging tests, and even their costs; Reuters Medical News to keep you as well informed as your patients about the latest medical discoveries; and Medline Journals to update you on what is going on in the journals you follow. www.merckmedicus.com/pp/us/hcp/hcp_mobile_medicus.jsp

TouchScript

This PDA program has been around for 7 years and is being used to digitally write about 1 million prescriptions a month, according to its publisher. The program automatically checks a prescription for adverse effects, interactions with other drugs, and correct dosages. It also keeps track of each patient's prescription history and can transmit the prescription directly to the patient's pharmacy. www.allscripts.com

Bethesda Handbook of Clinical Oncology

Compiled by experts at the National Cancer Institute and other leading medical centers, this handheld version of the book is geared to bedside consultations. It contains information on therapies, dosages, and data from current clinical trials. Information on targeted,

continued on page 230

Commun Oncol 2006;3:206, 230

Technology, continued from **page 206**

complementary, and alternative treatments is also included. www.lww.com/product/?0-7817-5178-0

AvantGo and Vindigo City Guide

Whether you're traveling to a conference or a vacation spot, your PDA can keep you connected to news, weather, and sports reports; utilities for tracking your workouts; travel itineraries; and the location of Wi-Fi hot spots. With AvantGo on your handheld, you can download all this information from any computer

connected to the Internet. www.avantgo.com/frontdoor/index.html

For its part, Vindigo City Guide introduces you to the entertainment, cultural, and dining offerings in most major American cities. Maps and directions (including to the nearest bathroom) are also available. Synchronized with a laptop on the road, Vindigo even updates current movie times wherever you are. <https://vindingo.com>

CME Watch

You are conscientious about finding Continuing Medical Education courses and enrolling in them. With CME

Watch, you can be equally conscientious about keeping track of the hours you've dedicated to keeping up with your field. www.internal-med.org

ASCO Portal

This gateway to the American Society of Clinical Oncology website can be used to download the ASCO Calendar of Events, news features, oncology news from Reuters, and meeting abstracts, among other things. Click on the "Downloads and Technology" button at www.asco.org.

John Fried is the technology columnist for the Philadelphia Inquirer.