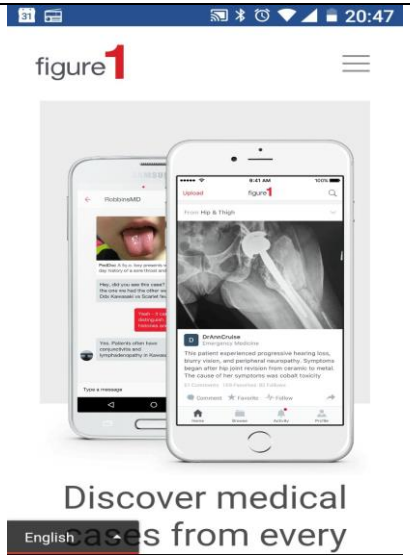
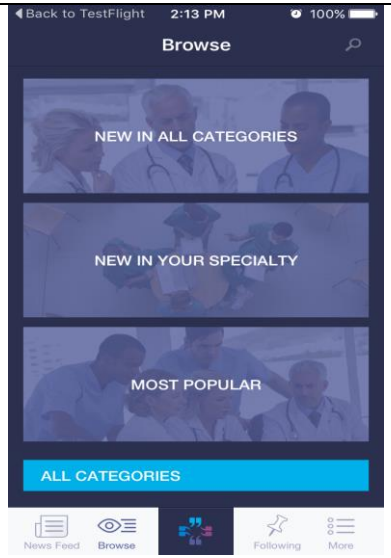
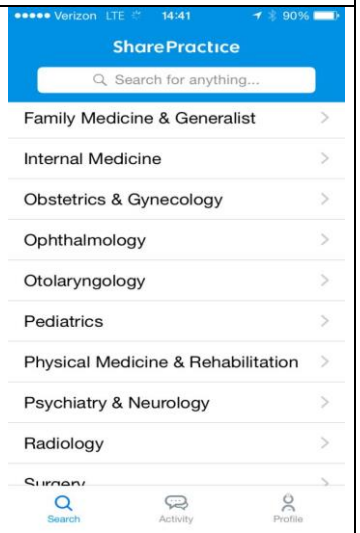
App review

Social Media Apps Reviews

App Name	**Doximity**	**Figure 1**	**SERMO**	**SharePractice**
Cost	Free	Free	Free	Free
Supported platforms	Android, iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch (iOS 8.2 or later)	Android 4.0 or later, iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch (iOS 8.0 or later)	Android, iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch (iOS 8.0 or later)	iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch (iOS 7.1 or later)
Functionality	This app provides physicians with a secure social forum where they can network, collaborate with colleagues, and keep up-to-date with the latest medical developments. Membership is open to physicians in the US. The identity of users is not hidden. Medical students and other allied healthcare professionals may also join the forum.	Figure 1 is a medical image sharing crowd-sourced resource. User images are shared worldwide using the social media platform. Membership is open to all healthcare professionals, however only medically qualified individuals (physicians) can be 'verified' in order that that the integrity and veracity of images submitted and user discussions can be maintained.	This social media app is available to verifiable doctors only. The platform offers an anonymous medical community where doctors can engage in frank discussions on many issues. User identity is kept hidden to promote open discussions. Users typically post anonymous material about cases or topics often generating broad or specific discussions on issues.	This collaborative clinical reference app of drugs, herbs and supplements is available to verifiable healthcare professionals. Members who are doctors can rank the efficacy of drugs, herbs or supplements. The app draws information on diagnosis from various external medical databases. Users can search specific conditions, see how other doctors

				have managed it, and then rank the treatments by voting more or less favourably for it.
Screen shots				
Ratings **Utility (out of 5)**	**** The app has good utility. Users can for example, locate other physicians quickly either by geographical location, medical interests, hospital affiliation etc. User can also easily engage in clinical discussions with a diverse body of experienced doctors via the iRounds. Uniquely, the	**** Newly streamed images are available when the app is opened. App functions including search, browse, messages, notifications and profile are easily accessible from the landing screen. Uploading images is simple. It may be done by taking a photo with one's phone or selecting an image from the phone's gallery/elsewhere. Users may	*** The utility of this app is good. Users may for example easily access general news via the news feed tab. Users can also easily create patient cases by using the patient case tab which is accessible without difficulty from the home page. When creating cases, users must however ensure that they follow the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)	*** This app benefits from good search functions and relatively easy methods of organisation of activity on the app. This includes viewing followers, displayed profiles, or rated treatments, all of which can be variously accessed without much difficulty. Internal communication between app users can

	app also offers secure electronic faxing using Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)-secure medical-grade encryption standards.	caption uploaded images or pose questions and arrows may be used to highlight specific aspects of images. The app's face detection algorithm will automatically block out faces or other patient identifying information thus maintaining confidentiality. Patient consent for images is uploaded digitally.	guidelines. From the home page, users can also engage in general discussions, browsing and following specific topics of discussion or specific clinical interests.	been improved to further enhance user utility.
Intuitive (out of 5)	*** This social media platform engages its users in a conducive and professionally meaningful manner. The social context within which it operates does not appear to detract from an educationally beneficial milieu for physicians.	*** Figure 1 provides a useful and dynamic interactive social platform where physicians can access an extensive database of medical images across numerous specialities with the aim of improving patient care.	** This resource will appeal to physicians who wish to engage in open discussions on a wide range of issues, whilst simultaneously maintaining anonymity.	** A peer-based clinical decision reference app which will also be beneficial to users with an added interest in natural medicine.
Visually attractive (out of 5)	*** The visuals are reasonably attractive and well laid out without much difficulty with engagement.	****As with any crowd-sourced image resource, there are some low resolution images, but overall these do not detract too much from the positive visual experience.	*** The display and design of the app is visually appealing, making the user experience pleasurable.	*** The visual displays are clear with simple colour schemes which work overall reasonably well.

Information and content (out of 5)	*** For an app whose main purpose is to encourage social networking among physicians, it also offers users other useful features beyond just social networking with contents pitched at a level which adequately engages users.	**** The educational content of this crowd-sourced image database is very good. It is important to note that contributors are responsible for ensuring the veracity of any images and comments they upload.	** The quality and content of information, most of which is aimed at improving patient care is determined by users according to questions posed and responses received amongst users.	** The reference material in the app is appropriate. Significant weight is given to expert evidence. Users may wish to weigh information carefully and apply accordingly to their practice.
Overall rating	***	****	**	**

Rating system for app reviews

***** Extremely useful (can't live without)

**** Very useful (has significant advantages)

*** Useful (has advantages)

** Has some uses (might be worth using)

* Not useful (don't bother using)

Commentary

The use of medical apps in supporting the work of clinicians has become increasingly popular. These apps are usually generic in content or specialty specific. In the last few years' however, newer trends have emerged, with the introduction of social media apps specifically tailored at clinicians, including doctors. These social media platforms are usually not accessible to the public. Their purpose is to encourage social collaboration, professional networking and sharing information on current practice issues. These platforms are common in the United States, but they are becoming more common in Europe and other parts of the world. To become registered users, app developers often require verification of medical qualifications and each app provider has its own regulations on qualification verification. This may include the submission of information such as medical diploma certificates, proof of GMC/medical licence to practice, photo IDs e.g. passport or work ID and/or a verifiable institutional email address for user authentication. In using these platforms, doctors in the United Kingdom in particular will need to be aware of the GMC's 2013 guidelines on doctors' use of social media [1]. Of importance are issues around confidentiality, professionalism, privacy and anonymity. Confidentiality could potentially be an issue where users of these sites make improper disclosures whether intentionally or unintentionally. Regarding professionalism, UK licenced doctors are expected to maintain the same professional standards when communicating on social media platforms, as they would if they were communicating through traditional media. Privacy standards are no different and UK licenced doctors should be aware of any blurring of boundaries between public and private life and indeed any limitations of privacy whilst on these platforms. Anonymity is another important area and the GMC's 2013 guidelines makes it clear that if you identify yourself as a doctor in publicly accessible social media, then you should also identify yourself by name and be cognisant that contents uploaded anonymously can, in many cases, be traced back to its point of origin. Overall however, there are benefits to these social media platforms. These include engaging the public in public health and policy issues, facilitating information to patients in simple and accessible formats and establishing national and international professional networks amongst doctors for the advancement of scientific knowledge [1].

Reference

1. General Medical Council. Doctors' Use of Social Media (2013); available at http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/21186.asp, [accessed, 7 October 2016].

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