The Challenges and Benefits of Using Mobile Devices in Practice Settings
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Mobile devices are ubiquitous and multifunctional and their use in clinical settings is gradually increasing. Doctors use them readily in clinical environments as the technology can collapse ‘time and space’ allowing access to data and resources when moving between patients (Prgoment et al., 2009). This research sought to investigate the functionality and effectiveness of mobile devices in practice settings.

**Project Objectives**
This research sought to investigate the functionality and effectiveness of mobile devices in practice settings. Specifically, the key aim was to extend the evidence based on the impact of mobile learning on linking theory and practice, accessing timely knowledge and enhancing peer support to contribute to the development of students’ employability through enhancing their clinical reasoning capabilities on placement.

The project adopted a participatory action research with the rational that students will work as co-researchers throughout the phases. The mobile devices were given to a total of 19 students. 4 physiotherapy used them for a total of four months over three different placements. The second group of physiotherapy consisted of five individuals. 3 sets of occupational therapy students used the ipads. The first group consisted of three students, the next also had three (unfortunately one student withdrew) and the last group included four students. They passed the iPad to the next group after a ten week placement setting. The placements took place throughout an academic year...In total 14 National Health Service (NHS) were involved. The students were in variety of placement settings.

**Methodology**

**Findings**

- Collection of Notes All together (Occupational Therapy Student)
- They would be great in an out-patient setting (Visiting Tutor)
- I looked on the internet to advise a patient about foot orthotics (Physiotherapy student)
- You can use them to show Patients diagrams about their conditions or resources online (Physiotherapy Student)
- Quick and Handy (Occupational Therapy Student)
- You can use them to take pictures and show patients exercises (Physiotherapy Student)
- Very useful reference - demonstrates evidence based practice (Practice Educator)

Students found the iPads most useful in community settings and specific hospital wards where Internet connectivity was available and they were allowed to use them for research, with patients and to type notes. A small number of practitioners had concerns relating to infection control, however this anxiety seemed diminished during the course of the project. Students found them most useful for taking notes and understanding quick research as many wards had ‘slow and insufficient’ computers for staff. The iPads were also to contact each other and professionals specifically doctors who also used the device. Apps and resources were used for decision making, learning, teaching, patient support, reflection and organisation. The majority of hospital settings were less amenable due to the pace and workload of the environment; it was difficult to use the device safely without risk of damage or theft.In community settings, they could easily replace the notes and files used by practitioners. They were also useful for accessing information readily, send emails to other professionals and requesting intervention as and when needed. More importantly practitioners could engage with patients using the devices, showing them websites, tools or other devices. The devices were useful when working with some mental health patients, students felt they needed more resources and Apps when using them with elderly patients with dementia.