Developing and evaluating the palliAGED apps

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Background
Smartphones apps are increasingly being used by family physicians/GPs for finding clinical evidence. The palliAGEDgp app was launched on 30 April 2015. It was designed to support GPs in providing palliative care to older Australians in residential aged care or living in the community. A companion app, palliAGEDnurse, was released in May 2016.

Aim
To examine the use and value of the two palliAGED apps.

Methods
Two studies were completed. The first study was a review of reach and usage. This analysis included details on downloads of the apps and information on those accessing app content held on the apps platform directly via the web. The second was an investigation of attitudes and views to the apps through two user surveys. The first dealt with palliAGEDgp through an online survey while the second dealt with the palliAGEDnurse app through an online survey and phone interviews.

Findings
For the palliAGEDgp app there were 941 downloads in the first month of release and the first 12 months there had been 2,866 again far exceeding an initial estimate of total downloads over its life of 1,000.

Sixty seven respondents completed at least some of the palliAGEDgp app online survey. The survey showed that most of those who had used the app found it useful.

More than 741 downloads of the palliAGEDnurse app were achieved in the first month.

A total of 116 online surveys for the palliAGEDnurse app were submitted. The survey showed that most of those who had used the app found it useful and that the framework and processes were helpful. The investigation also showed that a number of organisations had embedded palliAGEDnurse or palliAGEDgp within their resources or processes.

Ethics for the study was received from the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee of Flinders University (Project No. 7451).

Discussion and Conclusions
The download figures for the apps were greater than originally anticipated suggesting a greater interest or need than had been anticipated. Organisations had also embedded the apps in their care providing a further indicator of value.

The surveys and the direct feedback highlighted that there are many factors in play which affect the utility of apps within the workplace.

Finding out more
Visit the palliAGED website at www.palliAGED.com.au