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MEDIA RELEASE

SingHealth Polyclinics Launches Mobile Application for Asthma Care Management

Asthma sufferers will soon have a ‘buddy’ at their fingertips to help them manage the disease.

‘AsthmaCare Buddy’, developed by SingHealth Polyclinics (SHP) and Integrated Health Information Systems (IHiS), the Health Ministry’s IT arm, gives people with asthma clear instructions on what to do when they experience the various conditions of their disease. The first such asthma care management mobile app created in this region, it is co-funded by SHP and Ministry of Health.

Statistics\(^1\) show that asthma affects about 10% of the Singapore population aged between 18 to 65 years, and SingHealth Polyclinics see more than 17,000 patients with asthma yearly. The mobile app provides asthma patients with key information on the disease and easy to use tools to pro-actively manage their condition and lead a healthy lifestyle.

AsthmaCare Buddy allows users to take control of their asthma management through close monitoring and recording of their disease condition. Tools such as the peak flow meter record, asthma check assessment and action plans enable the users to review their asthma patterns and progress at home. They can then share their management progress with their doctor.

The app features three key sections:

- Action Plan: guides the patient (using colours of the traffic-lights) on what to do to control his asthma depending on the assessment done in Asthma Check. Red prompts the user on medicines and dosages to take when he is having an asthma attack. Yellow when he feels the onset of asthma; and the green when he is well.

- Asthma Check: features a health diary with simple questions for the user to input information on his asthma condition, and the readings from his peak flow meter assessment.

\(^1\) Extracted from National Health Survey 2010.
• Record: translates the data entered into graphs on the mobile phone, which the user can show the doctor at his next clinic visit.

The records and graphs provide the doctor a more complete view of the progress of the patient’s medical condition between his clinic visits, to facilitate diagnosis and effective treatment.

Ms Nurasyikin Binte Dzulkifli, 33, a childcare teacher and patient of SHP-Pasir Ris, said: “With the app, I can monitor my asthma with just a few clicks. And it gives precise information on how to manage my actual condition at any time, such as how many puffs of which inhaler to use when I feel an asthma attack coming.

“I have also shared the app with my two children, so they too know how to quickly find my asthma action plan, apart from where I keep my inhalers. It is inspiring and easy to use, and my seven year-old son offers to do the graphs and Asthma Checks for me.”

Dr Tan Ngiap Chuan, Director of Research, SingHealth Polyclinics, said: “Patients with asthma are prescribed a variety of inhalers and medicines to take, and in varying doses, depending on their condition at any point in time.

“During an asthma attack or onset of an attack, many get confused about their medication and doses, and would under or over medicate. This affects the severity of the attack and recovery time. The app tells them exactly what to do, once they choose red, yellow or green for their condition. All the information they need is at their fingertips.

“The challenge is to motivate the patient to avoid asthma triggers and take medication daily, on a long term basis, to control his disease and prevent attacks. AsthmaCare Buddy empowers the patient to better manage his disease and is highly motivating. The graphs in the health diary give him immediate and objective feedback on how well he is managing his asthma.”

IHiS Chief Information Officer for SingHealth, Mr Benedict Tan, said: “AsthmaCare Buddy is part of SingHealth and IHiS’ efforts to extend care for chronic disease patients beyond the clinic walls, to patients’ homes and ‘anytime, anywhere’.
“Since developing our first mobile health diary for rheumatoid arthritis patients two years ago, we have gone on to develop health apps for diabetes, renal disease and asthma patients. These applications have enhanced doctor-patient communications and care at SingHealth institutions, and we will continue to develop applications for more chronic diseases.”

Other Useful Resources

AsthmaCare Buddy provides video clips on how to use various inhalers. The app also features geo location information to the nearest GP clinic, so that asthma patients can quickly get medical help when necessary.


This news release is jointly issued by SingHealth Polyclinics and Integrated Health Information Systems (IHiS).

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About SingHealth Polyclinics (SHP)

SingHealth Polyclinics comprises a network of 9 polyclinics that provide primary healthcare services to the community. It plays an integral role in promoting healthy lifestyle and health care awareness to empower families to take charge of their health and wellness. As a leader in family medicine, SHP strives to provide seamless, patient-centred and preventive healthcare. SingHealth Polyclinics is a member of Singapore Health Services (SingHealth) - an academic healthcare cluster which also manages two hospitals and five specialty centres. http://polyclinic.singhealth.com.sg

About Integrated Health Information Systems (IHiS)

IHiS is a healthcare-IT leader, transforming patient care through excellence in technology. Managing highly integrated systems and IT expertise across Singapore’s public healthcare sector, its dynamic teams support more than 30,000 healthcare staff at all public hospitals, national specialty centres and polyclinics. IHiS architects and oversees the performance of the clinical, business and healthcare analytics systems of the healthcare institutions. A subsidiary of MOH, IHiS is at the forefront of innovation, driving new standards in quality care. www.ihis.com.sg