# Current knowledge and adoption of mHealth apps among Australian general practitioners: a survey study

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**Background**

It is challenging for doctors to navigate 320 000 mHealth apps without any guidance on evidence of effectiveness and safe use in practice.

**Aims**

To: (1) evaluate current knowledge and use of mHealth apps of GPs in Australia; (2) determine the barriers and facilitators to their use of mHealth apps in consultations; and (3) explore potential solutions to the barriers.

**Method**

We helped develop the mHealth section (9 questions) for the 2017 RACGP Technology survey, which was distributed between 26 October - 3 December.

**Results**

A total of 1014 RACGP members responded. The median years practiced was 20.7 years. Two thirds of the GPs use apps professionally in forms of medical calculators and point-of-care references. Twenty six percent of the GPs are recommending apps to patients weekly. They recommend mental health apps most often (n=337, 33%), but few evidence-based apps. The prevailing barriers to app prescription were lack of knowledge of effective apps (n=372, 60%) and lack of trustworthy source to access them (n=96, 15%). GPs expressed their need for a list of safe and effective apps from a trustworthy source like the RACGP and online video training material or webinar on health apps to overcome these barriers.

**Conclusion**

Most GPs are using apps professionally but recommending apps to patients sparingly. The main barriers to app prescription were lack of knowledge of effective apps and lack of trustworthy source to access them. A respected organization such as the RACGP could take the initiative to help overcome these barriers.