Spotlight on Innovation

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MedShr for ENT and audiology: clinical case discussion on the go

BY SAMANTHA GOH

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed all aspects of our lives – not least medical education. With isolation being the buzzword at the moment, the internet and social media are popular sources for official and crowd-sourced content. In this article, **Samantha Goh** discusses MedShr, a digital platform which complements the multidisciplinary nature of teaching and practice in ENT and audiology.

How does MedShr work?

MedShr was developed for digital clinical case discussion, enabling doctors and medical students to share and discuss cases within a secure professional network whilst protecting patient privacy and confidentiality. This supports education, training and even clinical utility by moving discussions, which may contain sensitive information, away from public social media channels to a secure app and web platform. Founded by Dr Asif Qasim, Interventional Cardiologist from King's College Hospital, London, and launched in 2015, MedShr has grown rapidly, with currently over one million members in 190 countries.

Designed with a social media-style interface, MedShr will be familiar and accessible to smartphone and internet users, where users post cases or polls privately to their connections or within the global community of healthcare professionals (see Image 1). Moreover, there are additional features in the app for the capture, consent and anonymisation of clinical images and digital uploads. Through streamlining case-sharing and discussions on the platform,

MedShr adapts to the different schedules of healthcare professionals, allowing on-the-go access via your own smartphone.

In the UK, MedShr is working with NHS teams, Royal Colleges and specialist societies to develop its use in formal training and accreditation. Education fellows jointly appointed by MedShr and Health Education England (HEE) are currently working on 35 live programmes in the UK.

My experience: supporting education in ENT and audiology

The MedShr-HEE fellows support a broad range of private clinical groups with NHS trusts, deaneries and training programmes, ranging from hospital-based MDT to undergraduate educational groups. For example, the London and Kent, Surrey and Sussex Foundation Dentists currently use their private MedShr group for mandatory case-based discussions in training. In ENT, the triannual West Midlands Introduction to ENT Emergencies Course has been hosting their pre-course material and educational cases on MedShr, from December 2019, while other trusts have used their private groups for junior

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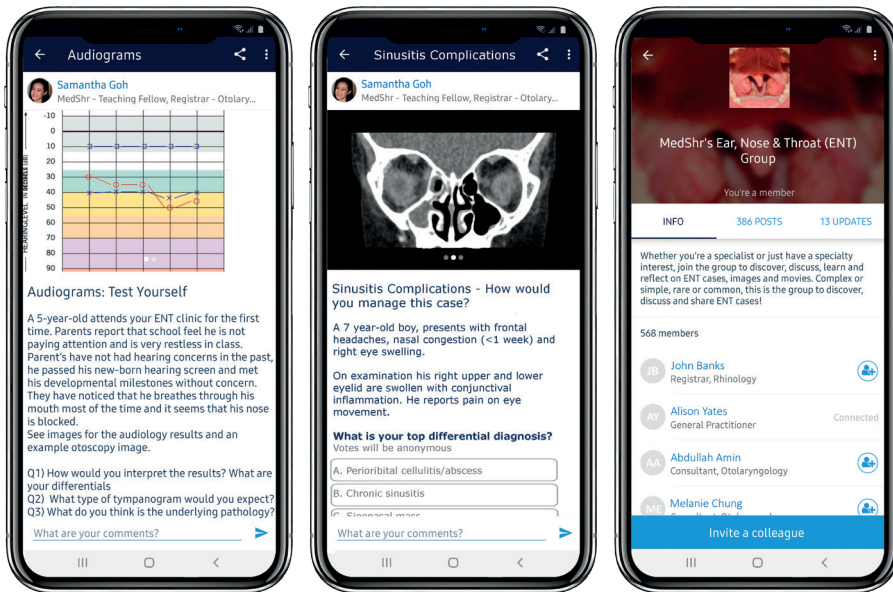
Image 1. Example of MedShr cases and groups as seen in the app. (L-R) example of a clinical case discussion; example of a case with a poll; example of a group.

> "MedShr's dedicated COVID-19 case discussion group reached over 80,000 members within a week of launching, and continues to be a place where users post and discuss COVID-19 cases"

doctor and multi-site teaching. For example, the Paediatric Digital Grand Round connects hospitals across North East London to learn about subspeciality cases.

Education projects also include platform campaigns such as '#DxDilemma' and '#SpotDiganosis' which have international and interdisciplinary reach, allowing users to tag interesting clinical cases. Global engagement on such MedShr campaigns showed that digital case discussions were popular across geographical boundaries and allowed users to learn from their experiences with other users of all grades and specialties.

In addition to supporting these health education projects, I have also been involved in curating content and writing posts in my specialty interest areas, ENT and audiology. The digital community of ENT and audiology has been growing daily on MedShr, which reveals that there is an appetite for digital innovations in healthcare education, and that it is not limited to the millennial generation. This is reflected in the overall MedShr membership; over half of the doctors are consultants and senior clinicians.

User feedback

I interviewed UK-based users who recently posted cases on MedShr and asked them how they found their experience of the platform. Most found the platform straightforward as they had previously used social media platforms, and found both browsing case discussions and creating their own posts useful for their own professional development.

"I enjoyed writing cases on MedShr, mainly because you get to choose what you want to write cases on, so you tailor it to your interests... Writing the cases was helpful for educational purposes as the cases I wrote were based on my previous assignments so this helped to consolidate my knowledge."
Yasmin Dhuga, undergraduate medical student, Brighton and Sussex Medical School.

"The app is great to quickly draft content as and when an opportunity is available. That way the information is fresh in your mind...Great resource for all. From University to retirement, for health care professionals."
Dr Shadé Tongo, Senior House Officer, South West England.

"I enjoyed collecting and writing my cases for MedShr. It made me think how to present my cases succinctly to pose the clinical challenge to colleagues around the world."
Ms Sara Timms, ENT Specialist Registrar, North West England.

Supporting digital education in a pandemic

The global COVID-19 pandemic has brought digital technology and remote access to the forefront of healthcare and education. Though conferences and meetings have been cancelled during this period, MedShr continues to connect users through digital case discussion. MedShr's dedicated COVID-19 case discussion group, with the hashtag '#COVID19', reached over 80,000 members within a week of launching, and continues to be a place where users post and discuss COVID-19 cases. Further content on COVID-19 was also released on MedShr Open, public-facing pages developed to provide trusted information, analysis and daily updates on the global pandemic, curated by the MedShr editorial team and education fellows. The MedShr Open content not only supplements healthcare education by making resources on COVID-19 accessible to the general public, but also aims to help healthcare professionals in low- and middle-income countries. The MedShr editorial team are currently working on an educational programme to support healthcare professionals in Africa and the Middle East in dealing with the pandemic.

MedShr it!

The realm of digital healthcare education is constantly evolving, no longer limited by international boundaries and time zones. MedShr provides a unique repository and channel for medical knowledge that is growing daily, and I invite you to join the network and connect with ENT and audiology colleagues around the world.