

## Introduction

A fundamental role of the community pharmacist involves recommending over-the-counter (OTC) medicines. As this market grows, pharmacists have greater scope to manage more conditions but also added responsibility to demonstrate they are competent healthcare professionals who deliver high quality, evidence-based care, yet doubts have been cast about such advice provided.<sup>1-3</sup>

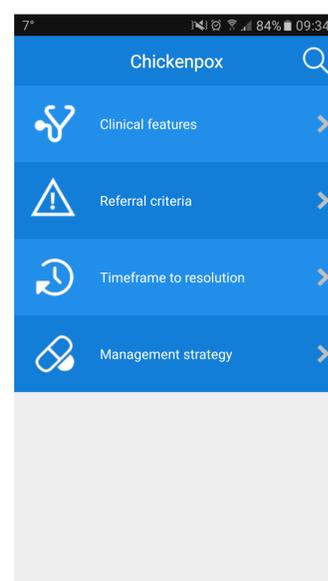
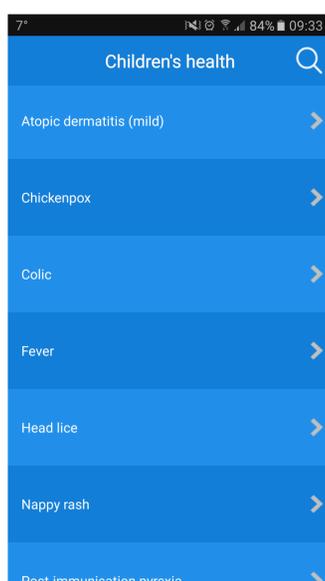
We therefore aimed to develop an app about OTC pharmacy consultations (to aid with clinical decision-making<sup>4</sup>) to advance pharmaceutical education for both professional and public benefit (there are no similar apps available<sup>5</sup>). While information is published by key organisations such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and in textbooks, it is not specifically tailored for pharmacy use or quickly goes out of date.

## Methods and Results

### Development of content

- Involved a literature search and critical analysis of material. Resources used to populate the app content included: Cochrane Systematic Reviews, Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) announcements, Electronic Medicines Compendium, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) pathways and Clinical Knowledge Summaries (CKS), NHS Choices and Travel Health Pro
- Key therapeutic areas investigated were: children's health; eye and ear; gastrointestinal conditions; musculoskeletal pain; nervous system; respiratory conditions; skin conditions; skin infections; travel health; and women's and men's health
- These are further sub-divided to encompass minor ailments/conditions within each key area (72 conditions in total). The main headings for each relate to clinical features, referral criteria, timeframe to resolution and a management strategy
- Another section relates to medicines that have been deregulated from prescription-only status and are now available to purchase OTC
- It was important to include a photo gallery to aid with visual diagnosis of various conditions

**Design** was done by us in tandem with an experienced developer at Blue Monkee Digital Limited. The content was peer reviewed by colleagues who have expertise in the area of OTC medicines. **User testing** involved registered pharmacists and postgraduate pharmacist PhD students with a mix of smartphone devices i.e. Apple and Android users.



### Top row

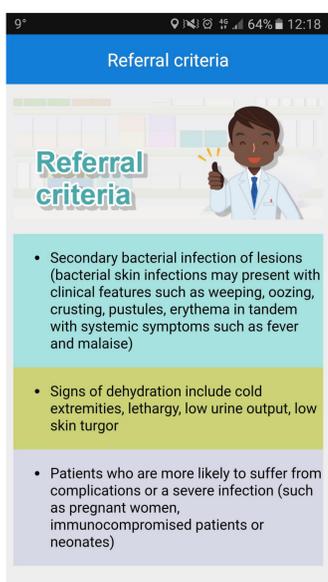
Navigation through the app, from home screen to individual conditions

### Bottom row

Screenshots of the content within one condition

### Below

The image gallery, with thumbnails of various conditions



## Conclusion

We anticipate that this app will be a valuable digital resource for community pharmacists, pre-registration trainees, pharmacy students and community pharmacy healthcare staff and have already received positive feedback about it. Skills gained from undertaking this work included familiarisation with a content management system and customisation of content for use on electronic devices. We have now approached a leading UK pharmacy publication about the app and it has subsequently been selected for 'App of the Week'. Moreover, we have been invited to present it at a leading NI healthcare event i.e. the 'Inspiring Change' Conference.

## References and Acknowledgements

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