

## EDITORIALS



## The BMJ's new Android app

One of your requests answered, but our latest survey shows there is still more to do

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When we last “blocked” *The BMJ* website with a reader survey in 2012 more than 50 of you asked why our app offering was confined to iOS. Since then we have received many requests for *The BMJ* to be available as an Android app on the Google Play store.

This email from one doctor was typical: “I do not use Apple products out of choice and feel that this is an area that urgently needs updating to include Android, especially since Google recently announced that 1 billion people actively use an Android device.

“I was hoping to hear from you if there are any plans to widen the coverage of apps to include Android. The mobile browser is not an adequate replacement for an actual downloadable app.”

We had hoped to get an Android app for the journal live within months of launching our iPad app in January 2011, but our focus, again as a result of reader feedback about online “clutter,” was to redesign *The BMJ* website and make it fully responsive on desktop, tablet, and smartphone screen sizes. This change happened in June 2014.

The good news is that the Android app is now live on devices measuring from 7 inches (180 mm) and, like our iOS app, is free to BMA members. App users can read the journal offline with added interactivity that the print journal cannot deliver such as bookmarking, adding notes, social sharing, responding to articles, interactive graphics, audio, and video.

A four week autorenewing subscription costs £10.49. You can also buy past issues at the single issue price of £3.99. The North America price is \$9.99/\$C12.55 for a monthly autorenewing subscription (the single issue price is \$2.99/\$C3.75). Because the launch took longer than originally envisaged, we have made all 2014 issues free.

The frequently asked questions section on The BMJ website explains more ([www.bmj.com/about-bmj/bmj-app/bmj-android-app](http://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/bmj-app/bmj-android-app)). If you want to subscribe, access The BMJ page on the Google Play store (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/developer?id=BMJ>).

Both the iOS and Android apps are based on the weekly print issue (whose audience is predominantly UK BMA members), but we often add online only content, particularly if an article

has international appeal. Currently 40% of app traffic comes from outside the UK. For *The BMJ* website, that figure is 76%.

### What you think of *The BMJ*

We run online reader surveys most years. These surveys routinely attract around 1000 responses in a few days. As well as convincing us to make changes such as decluttering *The BMJ* website and launching the journal as an Android app, they help us decide what technical improvements we need to make and what topics we should cover in the journal. Our latest survey, which ran from 20 July to 2 August 2015, attracted 1115 responses, and 932 respondents were asked a range of follow-up questions because they told us they had visited the site in the past three months.

We asked readers how much they agreed or disagreed with a set of statements such as: “*The BMJ* is a good source of the latest developments in UK medicine.” Just over half (52%) agreed that it was, and just over a third (34%) strongly agreed. A similar proportion of respondents (51%) agreed that *The BMJ* was a good source of the latest developments in international medicine, and 21% strongly agreed.

Has the journal influenced them to change their practice as a result of something they read, saw, or listened to? Half of all respondents agreed that it had. One in five strongly agreed.

The journal, which this year celebrates its 20th year online, now routinely includes audio, video, infographics, and continuing medical education/continuing professional development (CME/CPD) questions alongside articles. How popular are they? 54% of respondents said they had undertaken one of our CME/CPD modules in the past three months, 31% had looked at an infographic, 24% had watched a video, and 23% listened to audio.

Educational content remains popular. More than half (58%) of surveyed readers wanted us to publish more clinical reviews, for example, and 65% wanted more Practice articles such as guideline summaries; 39% asked for more “state of the art” reviews, which we launched in February 2014 and mostly appear online only.

The survey offered readers the opportunity to submit free text comments. This more detailed feedback is particularly valuable

because it allows us to read about particular problems readers are experiencing.

One reader, for instance, asked us to explain more clearly the difference between the site's simple and advanced searches. Also, why can't the link to search rapid responses be more prominent? And why isn't content on the blogs website searchable from thebmj.com?

Others asked why an article's title can be different in print and online and why we don't notify readers when these differences occur. Finally, we have had complaints that our login is "cranky" and tells readers they are logged out when they are still logged in.

Some of this feedback was new to us, but all of it is high on our list of priorities for attention. Three years was too long to wait for an Android app to launch. We plan to fix these issues much sooner.

Competing interests: I have read and understood BMJ policy on declaration of interests and have no relevant interests to declare.

Provenance and peer review: Commissioned; not externally peer reviewed.

Cite this as: [BMJ 2015;351:h4711](#)

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