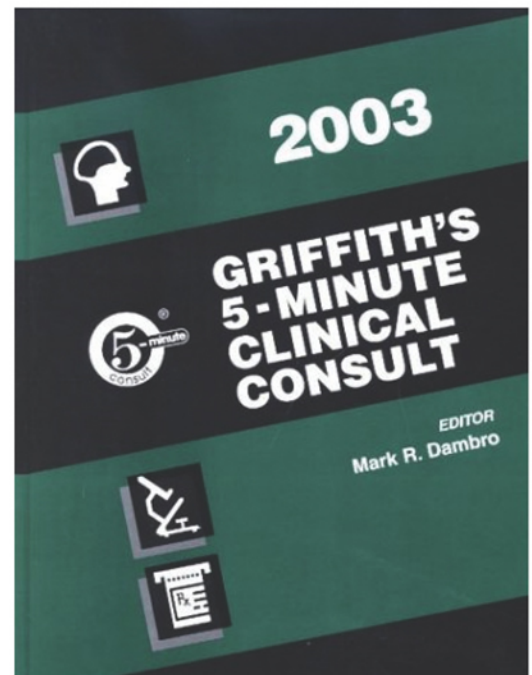


## Background

- Interest and pressure from students and faculty for Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) resources in the library
- Administration reluctant to spend library funds purchasing resources in multiple formats; no specific funds were earmarked for PDA resources
- Library administration expressed a need to determine which products assisted students in decision making during their clinical years
- Library actively sought and received grant funding directed towards PDA use in medical education allowing Himmelfarb to develop a pilot project to evaluate PDA medical reference software

## Pilot Project Objectives

- To compare PDA use among the following groups:
  - Third and Fourth year medical students
  - Second year Physician Assistant students
  - Residents
- To evaluate how groups used *Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult*® by Skyscape® in the clinical setting
- To use the questionnaire data to plan further PDA initiatives



# PDA Power at the Bedside: A Comparison of the Use of *Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult*<sup>®</sup> by Medical and Physician Assistant Students and Residents

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## Methods

- PDA Committee established to review PDA medical reference software and to plan the pilot project
- Established selection criteria for PDA medical reference software:
  - Compatible with either Palm<sup>®</sup> or personal PC operating systems
  - Ease of use and readability
  - Depth and quality of information
  - Product cost and license agreements
  - Applicability to target audience
- Applied criteria to a variety of PDA medical reference software
- After review, *Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult*<sup>®</sup> by Skyscape<sup>®</sup> was selected and 350 copies were purchased by Himmelfarb Library using the grant monies
- Some grant money was used to purchase PDAs and the software for librarians so that they would be familiar with the product and able to assist students
- An evaluation questionnaire was developed by the PDA Committee
- Distribution of *Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult*<sup>®</sup>:
  - Students had to have their own PDA with an expansion card
  - Library registration was required; students provided their name, program affiliation and email address in order to receive the software
  - Students were given a product code and directions on downloading the software from the Skyscape<sup>®</sup> website
  - Students agreed to evaluate the software via a web-based questionnaire
  - Students had five to seven months to use and evaluate *Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult*<sup>®</sup>
  - The link to the questionnaire was provided via email and feedback was received during a 2 week period in March, 2004

Himmelfarb Health Sciences Library

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Himmelfarb Library PDA Usage Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in this project. As a reminder, the information contained in this edition of Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult may become outdated as new editions are released. Himmelfarb Library will not provide updated editions and cannot guarantee that the information contained in this edition will remain unchanged.

Part I: Current Use of Your PDA

1. Please identify yourself:

Medical student

2. What medical software is currently installed on your PDA?

List software here.

3. In general, I use my PDA:

Rarely.

4. I use the following clinical applications on my PDA:  
(Please rank each type of information according to the scale 0=never; 5=all the time.)

Drug information

Medical calculators

Patient tracking

Disease/condition etiology or epidemiology

Disease/condition diagnosis

Disease/condition treatment

Other:  
List additional clinical applications here.

Part II: Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult

5. I use Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult:

Rarely.

6. I find Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult:

Very easy to use.

Comments:

Comments on Griffith's user interface.

7. I have used Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult to:  
(Please rank each statement according to the scale 0=never; 5=all the time.)

Suggest a new diagnostic or treatment plan

Verify an existing diagnostic or treatment plan

Change an existing diagnostic or treatment plan

Obtain background information on a specific condition

Other:  
Additional uses for Griffith's.

8. I have used Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult to:  
(Please rank each type of information according to the scale 0=never; 5=all the time.)

Enhance my own knowledge

Provide information to attending

Provide information to resident

Provide information to another student

Provide information to another health professional

Provide information to patient

Other:  
Additional uses for Griffith's.

9. Has Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult improved your work in clinical/patient care situations?

Yes

No

Comments:  
Please type your comments here.

10. Would you recommend Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult to others?

Yes

No

Comments:  
Please type your comments here.

## Results



- Of 720 potential registrants, 320 students or 44% picked up their free personal copy of *Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult*<sup>®</sup> and used the product for at least five months
- In March 2004, the questionnaire was emailed to each person and we have received 74 questionnaire responses:
  - 42 medical students
  - 17 physician assistant students
  - 15 residents
- 41 registrants had other medical software on their PDAs:
  - 8 medical students chose basic resources like dictionaries and other basic resources
  - 12 physician assistants reported having drug resources and dictionaries
  - 11 residents chose drug guides and medical calculators
  - 10 respondents did not report having other medical software on their PDAs
- 77% of those responding reported using their PDAs “all the time” regardless of group affiliation:
  - 74% used their PDA for drug information
  - 16% used their PDA for medical calculation
  - 3% used their PDA for disease etiology or epidemiology information
  - 47% used their PDA for treatment information
- Overall, 28% used *Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult*<sup>®</sup> on a regular basis, of these:
  - 64% found background information on a specific condition
  - 58% enhanced their own knowledge
  - 85% felt that the software improved their work in clinical or patient situations
- 97% of all users would recommend *Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult*<sup>®</sup> to others

## Conclusions



- Data suggests that those already familiar with PDAs relied more heavily on them for clinical information
- Medical and physician assistant students with limited clinical experience reported using *Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult*<sup>®</sup> as a primary source; whereas, residents with greater clinical knowledge relied more heavily on other medical reference software
- It is difficult to coax responses from students unless there is a “reward” for completing a questionnaire
- Usage data suggests that *Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult*<sup>®</sup> is a good choice as a basic clinical information tool for students
- When funds become available PDA software should be seriously considered for regular purchase for this user group