Media and Book Reviews

NERVE WHIZ

Many neurology trainees have traded pocket references for smartphones, resulting in increased demand for easy-to-use and clinically relevant apps. A recent review of smartphone use in training programs found that 85% of responders owned smartphones and more than half utilized apps in a medical setting.¹

Nerve Whiz, designed by neuromuscular specialist Zach London, is an example of a user-friendly medical app of particular interest to neurologists. Nerve Whiz is targeted at medical professionals with an interest in the peripheral nervous system, and it serves as an anatomic review of nerve roots, plexuses, and peripheral nerves. It is free to all users and is compatible with iPhone, iPod touch, iPad, and Android devices.

Nerve Whiz is divided into 4 sections: nerve and muscle charts, a muscle localizer, nerve diagrams, and a sensory localizer. Nerve and muscle charts provide the user with a comprehensive database of muscles that can be sorted anatomically—for example, by root, trunk, or cord—or by action. The muscle localizer allows the user to select the muscles of interest, and it then provides relevant localizations. This feature links to the diagram section, which can also be accessed independently. Here, the user can review nerve and muscle diagrams of the brachial or lumbosacral plexuses. The final section of the interface, the sensory localizer, allows the user to touch a region of interest; Nerve Whiz then shows relevant reflexes, the muscles supplied by that nerve, and a visual representation of the nerve's sensory distribution.

The app's strength lies in its dual role as a teach-

ing and diagnostic tool. On the way to a consult, residents can review relevant anatomy and potential localizations in the nerve and muscle charts. After performing an examination, they can input which muscles were strong or weak into the muscle localizer, and Nerve Whiz aids in localization and the development of a thoughtful differential diagnosis. In the common scenario that multiple localizations are possible, Nerve Whiz reminds the user which additional muscle groups or nerve distributions to test for clarification.

There are a few areas, however, in which Nerve Whiz could improve. While the user interface of Nerve Whiz is largely straightforward, the diagram section is cumbersome to navigate on a smaller device. The muscle localizer and muscle charts would benefit from supporting pictures of relevant muscle groups. As advertised on its Web site, Nerve Whiz is not intended to be used in isolation to make clinical decisions and is no substitute for a thorough understanding of peripheral nervous system anatomy.

Nonetheless, Nerve Whiz is the first resource of its kind, and medical professionals of all levels of training will find that the app provides clinically relevant content through an intuitive interface. Nerve Whiz is an indispensable addition to any trainee's toolkit.

Reviewed by Monica Lemmon, MD

The author reports no disclosures. Go to Neurology.org for full disclosures.

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REFERENCE

1. Franko OI, Tirrell TF. Smartphone app use among medical providers in ACGME training programs. *J Med Syst Epub* 2011 Nov 4.

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