SMS (SHORT MESSAGE SERVICE) FOR MEDLINE/PUBMED ACCESS AT THE POINT-OF-CARE

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Mobile phones are the most ubiquitous personal electronic devices today. Ownership of Internet capable mobile phones by healthcare personnel is high. This setting makes the mobile phone an ideal device for information search and retrieval. However, the small screen of mobile devices poses a challenge in text entry and review of information. SMS, Short Message Service, or text messaging is a major communication system worldwide; more than two billion mobile messages are sent daily. Healthcare applications are slowly being developed. Limits on the size of text messages have lead to heavy use of abbreviations, acronyms and shortcuts. We adapted the SMS model by developing a database of medical acronyms and abbreviations. A small-screen formatted Web search page on the mobile phone provides the search interface. The search term is translated to the formal MeSH term on our server then sent to MEDLINE/PubMed. Publication citations are sent back with an abbreviated abstract (TBL = the bottom line) processed by a smart algorithm on our server. Results may be sent through e-mail also. In order to extend the service further, we are developing an SMS gateway so all services (searching and sending results) may be all accomplished via text messaging.