

## Resource review

InfoRetriever. [www.infopoems.com](http://www.infopoems.com)

*InfoRetriever can be purchased online at [www.infopoems.com](http://www.infopoems.com) for US \$249.*

InfoRetriever is designed to provide access to literature at the point of care for primary care physicians. The database operates on 3 platforms: PocketPC, PalmOS, and Windows. This review is based on my experience with the PalmOS version.

The core of the product is the POEMs (Patient-Oriented Evidence that Matters) database and the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews abstracts. The POEMs database was developed by 5 family physicians and includes succinct summaries and practical recommendations based on the latest evidence. These are supplemented by summaries of practice guidelines and an electronic version of the popular textbook, *5-Minute Clinical Consult*.<sup>1</sup> Also included are clinical decision rules, diagnostic test calculators, history and physical examination calculators, an evaluation and management coding tool, and an *International Classification of Diseases, 9<sup>th</sup> revision* (ICD-9) coding tool.

Currently, the database has access to 2253 POEMs, 1646 Cochrane Database abstracts, 736 evidence-based guideline summaries, 144 clinical decision rules, 897 diagnostic test calculators, 953 history and physical examination calculators, the complete *5-Minute Clinical Consult* with 542 photographs, >1000 of the most common ICD-9 codes, a drug reference organised by name and class, and an evaluation and management coding wizard.

The product website ([www.infopoems.com](http://www.infopoems.com)) describes the development of InfoRetriever, and it is apparent that the quality of information varies with each database. The POEMs cite evidence and describe criteria for the selection and evaluation of content, but it is not always clear that these criteria are adhered to. Guideline summaries from the National Guideline Clearinghouse and supplements of the journal *Chest* are included, but the methods used to assemble these guidelines are not described in InfoRetriever. Furthermore, no details are provided on how information included in *5-Minute Clinical Consult* is retrieved and selected. InfoRetriever is updated 3 times per year.

InfoRetriever can be searched in several different ways. Using the drop down menu, you can search multiple databases using "any word" or "keyword" or "diagnosis." You can also search the databases individually. After selecting the type of search, you are prompted to type your word or to use a drop down menu to select the system of the body you are inquiring about. The program will then give you a list of diseases or symptoms to choose from. After selecting your specific topic, the program gives you an outline of information and the database in which it is found.

I think InfoRetriever provides useful answers for clinical practice. I found it to be particularly helpful and thought provoking when precepting with medical students and residents in an outpatient family practice health centre. The speed of finding evidence is its major advantage. Like all handheld applications, however, it has its limitations. InfoRetriever is a very large program that will require 600 Kb of internal memory and 30 Mb of external memory. It occasionally crashed on my Palm m515 but it could be reset without much trouble. I plan to continue using this resource mostly for the POEMs and the Cochrane Database abstracts. It is also nice to have *5-Minute Clinical Consult* integrated into the resource to refresh your memory on a topic you don't see everyday. Providing relevant and valid evidence quickly is challenging. InfoRetriever meets this challenge very well.

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### Ratings:

Methods: ★★★★☆

Clinical usefulness: ★★★★★

<sup>1</sup> Dambro MR. *Griffith's 5 Minute Clinical Consult*. Twelfth edition. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2003.