

8th World Congress on

Chemistry and Organic Chemistry

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International Conference on

Biomedicine & Pharmacotherapy

October 22-23, 2018 | Frankfurt, Germany

Integrating mobile applications into biomedical innovations

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With global smartphone numbers predicted to exceed 6.1 billion by the year 2020, smartphones have quickly revolutionized the world we currently live in. In addition to this, the nature of modern biomedical research is also galvanizing—resulting in increasingly high costs. From expensive specialized equipment and consumables, there are other considerations involving rental, safety, and specialized infrastructure, for example: tissue culture. Alongside the actual equipment, computers are required to both control these devices and facilitate data analysis, e.g. flow cytometry. This necessary pairing of computer and equipment further constraints the researcher to a specific location within a laboratory. In this aspect, mobile applications (APPS) and peripheral devices that displace computers or other equipment can aid to mobilize research processes, contributing to significant savings not only in terms of equipment costs, but also reducing the rental space and equipment setup as well as delivery costs.

Such connectivity can be fulfilled utilizing the built-in wireless connectivity (WIFI, Bluetooth, NFC, Infrared, ect.) of the average modern smartphone. Such technological advances, if you will, have already allowed add-on peripheral devices and sensors to further expand the reach of capabilities, such as, thermostat sensors connected wirelessly, which can and has further opened up proficiencies of the smartphone. The prospect of wirelessly connected peripheral devices most certainly open up great potential in the displacement of lab equipment and improving the mobility of biomedical research. Given that smartphones are generally under-exploited in its processing power and range of available sensors for research purposes, there is great promise for the future development in this area. It is only a matter of time before everyone owns core lab equipment in their individual smartphones allowing research to take place—anytime, anywhere.

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