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DÜSSELDORF, GERMANY
12-15 NOVEMBER 2018

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Press release

“FibriCheck” wins the MEDICA App COMPETITION 2018: Heart check via smartphone and finger scan

Is it possible to discover cardiac arrhythmias via a smartphone's camera? It is! Using the “FibriCheck” app. This innovation by the start-up of the same name jumped into first place at this year’s MEDICA App COMPETITION, the competition that honours the best health app solutions as part of the world’s largest medical trade fair MEDICA in Düsseldorf (run time 2018: 12 to 15 November). Embedded in a session at the MEDICA CONNECTED HEALTHCARE FORUM, the presentation by “FibriCheck’s” Belgian development team was voted the best among the 10 finalists at the thrilling live pitch on the stage in Hall 15 on November 14. The 10-person international jury also elected the “Tonic App” (from Portugal) in second place and the “Veta Health App” (from the USA) in third place. Impressively, this showed: Digital health is not a man’s business. All three winning apps were presented by women. They had already won through against eighty submissions from around the world, as had the other finalists. Applications came from Europe and North America as well as from Australia, Barbados, Ghana, India, Singapore and Thailand. Among the final top 10, who were given the opportunity to present their innovations to the international professional audience at MEDICA 2018, there were even applications from Taiwan and the United Arab Emirates.

In fact, the Belgian winning app “FibriCheck” has already been recognised by the FDA, the regulatory authority in the USA. The app recognises various cardiac arrhythmias with a smartphone camera and creates a report for both doctor and patient. The app is based on photoplethysmography. This is an optical measuring method that utilizes the fact that scattered light changes in accordance with the amount of blood contained in the skin’s blood vessels. In this procedure, the



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smartphone's LED flash is used to sufficiently illuminate the user's finger. The skin scatters the light. The intensity of the scattered light vibrates with the amount of blood that the heart pumps into the illuminated fingers. As a result, the camera passes information on the oscillations of the scattered light to the app. With the aid of artificial intelligence, the app then recognises whether there are cardiac arrhythmias.

Prescriptions for matters of the heart

In Belgium, "FibriCheck" is already available on prescription. The app is available as a free download. Doctors simply hand their patients a piece of paper with a QR code. Patients then use this code to activate the app on their smartphone. During her live pitch presentation, Stephanie Vinckenbosch, who is with "FibriCheck" drily commented on the app's function and hit the nail on the head: "Users put their finger on the camera with the LED lamp and we take care of the rest." Meanwhile, doctor's orders are just one way to make good use of the app. "FibriCheck" plans to raise awareness for this innovative version of digital screening with previously symptomless users and offer them the chance to use it. A rather uncomplicated method to do this has also already been tested: A QR code was printed in a newspaper and readers were invited to download and activate the app and to contact their doctor if any abnormalities should be diagnosed. As a result, over 12,000 users created 120,000 reports within 48 hours, says Vinckenbosch. The app diagnosed atrial fibrillation in 136 users (1.1 percent). 2,111 users (17 percent) showed other arrhythmias. Measurements taken by 191 users (2 percent) had insufficient quality for an analysis. "FibriCheck" has already received the CE symbol as a Class IIa medical screening and monitoring device for identifying irregular cardiac rhythms.

And what is the competition up to? Apple Watch may have a similar feature, however, using it requires owning a smartwatch. All "FibriCheck" needs is a smartphone.





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Medical “ecosystem” for optimal support

The Portuguese makers of the “Tonic App”, on the other hand, address doctors directly and exclusively. “Our app offers everything doctors need,” explains Daniela Seixas, CEO of Tonic App, in her presentation. She emphasises the challenge: “Doctors are burned out.” Cost and time pressure are responsible for this. “They have to handle a knowledge base that is steadily growing as well as a variety of interest groups.” This has created demand for a mobile all-in-one solution that enables doctors to find everything and everyone they need, and vice versa, allowing relevant interest groups to also find the right doctor. The app is therefore a platform for doctors that is similar to LinkedIn and gives them access to recommendations, case discussions, guidelines, coding recommendations, news, jobs and networks. “We are building a medical ecosystem using mobile phones, the internet and our partners,” as Seixas explained their intention at the MEDICA App COMPETITION. In short: The app aims to help patients with their diagnoses and treatment by more intelligently providing doctors with the often scattered resources they need for their daily work. This has proved a big hit in the app’s country of origin, Portugal, says Seixas. “Within only 17 months, we have achieved a market share of 17 percent.” The app’s market share is even estimated to lie at 58 percent for general practitioners under 41. These numbers are begging for expansion. And in fact, “TonicApp” is already available in Great Britain, France and Spain.



On the other hand, the “Veta Health App”, which took third place and originates from the USA, explicitly addresses and accompanies patients: “Veta Health offers a front end platform that supports patients on their journey through treatment,” says co-founder Dr. Nora Zetsche. The app enables over 400 wearables to be integrated and offers information in real-time on the patient’s level of health. Adaptable supply paths enable patients to manage their level of health and to easily understand care



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protocols, says Zetsche. “We give patients all the information they need during treatment.” This aims to optimise therapy loyalty when taking medication and to better observe undesired effects of the medication, for example.

The app complies with the US Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which provides strict rules in order to protect the confidentiality and integrity of patients’ data. Now, the makers of the “Veta Health App” have their eye on Europe. Speaking of which: The internationality of the MEDICA App COMPETITION participants as well as the alignment of the apps across countries once more emphasised how strongly Germany is called upon to remain competitive when it comes to digital health offers for health systems. The creators of the digital translation aid “Medicospeaker” faced this challenge, at least, and were the only German health app among the finalists at MEDICA 2018.

For more information about all finalists, please visit: <http://www.medica-tradefair.com/mac2>.

Date of the next MEDICA in Düsseldorf: 18 – 21/11/2019

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