

NUI Galway launch Bug Run School Days: an ‘Antibiotic Awareness’ iPad App

Bug Run is a fun and interactive iPad app to educate children and adults on the issue of Antibiotic Resistance.

The Discipline of General Practice at NUI Galway have launched Bug Run, a free iPad app that combines a game and an educational video to educate children and adults on the issue of antibiotic resistance. Funded by the Health Research Board (HRB), the app has two parts; a game and an educational video. The game teaches children (4 – 10 years) about the importance of staying healthy and that taking antibiotics comes at a price. The accompanying short video developed for adults highlights the issue of antibiotic resistance and provides suggestions on how to discuss this with their General Practitioner.

Bug Run received the 2014 Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Award, which recognises and rewards excellence in health literacy in the healthcare sector. Bug Run received the award in the category ‘Best Project in General Practice’ for improving a patient’s understanding and help them take more responsibility in managing their health.

Antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest threats to patients' safety in Europe because it can result in treatment failure of serious infections. To address the issue of antibiotic resistance it is important that antibiotics are used in the right way to secure their use in the future.

In the Bug Run game ‘Bob’, the character, runs through a school as fast as possible while avoiding bugs and staying healthy by picking up fruit and water. If he picks up too many bugs, he may need an antibiotic, but this comes at a price as Bob slows down. The key messages are that fruit and water will keep you healthy but if you do get a serious infection that can be treated with an antibiotic, taking an antibiotic can have side effects.

The video ‘Antibiotic Awareness’ is an educational animation for adults to learn about antibiotics and their side effects. In addition, the video encourages patients to talk to their GP about antibiotic and antibiotic resistance and discuss with their GP if they really need an antibiotic.

Speaking about Bug Run, Dr Akke Vellinga (NUI Galway) said, “the opportunity provided by the HRB to translate the complex message of antibiotic resistance in a fun way was a great challenge taken up by our team. We hope this app will encourage a conversation about antibiotics between GP and patients”.

Bug Run School days has been piloted in 20 General Practices’ in Galway and Roscommon since last November as part of a larger research project the SIMPLE study (www.nuigalway.ie/simple). The SIMPLE project is a collaborative project in which General Practice, Epidemiology, Marketing, Microbiology and Health Economics work together with GPs to improve their prescribing. The iPads with BugRun were installed in participating GP practices to support communication between GP and patient about the role of antibiotics.

Bug Run is free and can be downloaded from the App store to any iPad. Bug Run is for use in General Practices, schools, home and other learning environments

<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/bug-run-school-days/id860440510?mt=8>

The research and concept of 'Bug Run School Days' iPad app were led by Dr Akke Vellinga from the Discipline of General Practice, School of Medicine at NUI Galway, along with Professor Andrew Murphy and Post Doctorate Fellows, Sinead Duane, Sandra Galvin and Aoife Callan. The funding for the BugRun School Days project was obtained from a new initiative of the Health Research Board which promotes new approaches to knowledge exchange and education.

About the study

The development of BugRun is part of a bigger research project: the SIMPLE study: Supporting the Improvement and Management of Prescribing for urinary tract infection. In this study, Dr Vellinga and her team have integrated prescribing guidelines with the generic software package a GP uses on a daily basis when diagnosing patients and prescribing medicines.

General Practices involved in the SIMPLE study, receive feedback on how they are prescribing, antibiotic resistance patterns, how their own practice is performing compared to practices, and they can also track the results and changes in prescribing patterns. The success of the SIMPLE study is evaluated over the next months with a view to making all the materials available to all General Practices' nationwide.

The research, development and implementation of the Apps and software projects were funded by the Health Research Board (HRB).

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Notes for Editors

The Discipline of General Practice, NUI Galway

The Discipline of General Practice at NUI Galway began as an academic department in 1997 with the appointment of a Foundation Chair of General Practice (Professor Andrew W Murphy). From small beginnings, we are now the largest single discipline of general practice on the island of Ireland. We aim to become, with the support of our University colleagues and our partners in the HSE West, the leading national and a recognised international academic centre of excellence in general practice and primary care.

The Discipline of General Practice at NUI Galway is the largest single discipline of general practice in Ireland. This pilot project is part of General Practice's interdisciplinary approach to pursue high quality collaborative research centred on patients and patient care that advances knowledge and impacts on national and international policy and practice.

About NUI Galway

NUI Galway* is one of Ireland's foremost centres of academic excellence. Over 17,000 students undertake an extensive range of studies at the University, which is renowned for the quality of its graduates.

NUI Galway is a research-led University with internationally recognised expertise in areas including Biomedical Science and Engineering, Web Science, Human Rights, Marine Science, Energy and Environmental Science, Applied Social Sciences and Public Policy, and Humanities, in particular literature, theatre and Irish Studies.

For more information visit www.nuigalway.ie or view all NUI Galway news here.

*The University's official title is National University of Ireland Galway. Please note that the only official abbreviation is NUI Galway