

FIRST RECONNAISSANCE ON THE EDUCATIONAL USEFULNESS OF PDA'S IN THE CLINICAL CLERKSHIP

**Peter G.M. de Jong, Marloes Louwerens
Leiden University Medical Center, The Netherlands**

Among medical staff as well as medical students the possession of PDA's is increasing rapidly. At the same time many medical applications are available for the PDA platform or will become available in the near future. Usefulness of the PDA in clinical practice seems to be obvious regarding many publications on this subject. However, how useful is the PDA in medical education and has it really educational innovative capabilities and surplus values?

At Leiden Medical School all students in the clinical clerkship of Internal Medicine are included in a pilot study on the usefulness of this tool during daily clinical and educational activities. In this study the students are provided with a controlled software installation including some reference manuals, a medical calculator and outlook mail and calendar functionality. Students are instructed to use the PDA and the available software. The number of times and total application usage time is used is logged. At the end of the clerkship all students perform a questionnaire to determine their experiences. Teachers are included as well to determine whether the process of teaching was influenced by the introduction of the PDA among their students.

Results of the period March-May 2005 will be presented. Based on the results of the pilot study further steps will be taken in the process of a possible integration of the PDA in clinical education at Leiden Medical School.