
UpToDate donation makes research and learning easier for students and faculty in Uganda



Mobile access helps overcome tech barriers across the user community

As a faculty medical librarian at Kabale University School of Medicine (KABSOM) in Southern Uganda, Emmanuel Twinamasiko prides himself on helping medical and other allied health students. He supports their journey to becoming professional healthcare providers by connecting them to resources and literature and training them on how to use the materials. He believes the students' education while at the school and their professional development after graduation have been improved by using UpToDate® clinical decision support solution from Wolters Kluwer.

Twinamasiko, who trains both students and faculty at KABSOM in how to use UpToDate, says graduates often come to him after leaving the school for assistance registering personal UpToDate accounts once they can no longer use their school-sponsored academic accounts. "They don't want to practice without it," he says. "It is a part of them now."

Donated subscriptions support resource-limited communities

Kabale University School of Medicine is owned by Kabale University, which is a public University. KABSOM has two study centers. One is located at the main campus, at which first- through third-year healthcare students learn in a classroom setting. There is also a branch located at the regional referral hospital where students in years three through five can participate in practicals.

Twinamasiko manages a team of librarians based out of the regional hospital branch of the school. He also works at the KABSOM main campus to conduct resource training sessions for students and faculty. They largely relied on books or a free electronic resource for decision support and to help with research prior to UpToDate, Twinamasiko explains. But when a visiting lecturer recommended UpToDate and described its value



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faculty librarian, KABSOM



to the dean of medicine, the KABSOM administration began the process of applying for a subscription through the Better Evidence program at Boston-based Ariadne Labs, which provides complimentary access to UpToDate in resource-limited settings around the world. In 2019, KABSOM received a donated subscription. As part of that process, the medical school was required to nominate a “champion” to help manage the subscription on the ground and serve as liaison between the school and Better Evidence. As the medical librarian, Twinamasiko was selected, specially trained, and certified.

As an UpToDate champion, Twinamasiko is responsible for training the KABSOM community to use the solution, spreading awareness of its availability generally and of new features or content, and assisting users in registering their accounts. The user community includes:

- Students training to be doctors, nurses, and other health professionals
- Lecturers teaching the students
- Medical staff

“Generally, people appreciate what UpToDate can bring in their profession,” Twinamasiko says.

Becoming a champion has also been beneficial for Twinamasiko personally. “Before UpToDate, people were taking librarians for granted,” he says, noting that medical professionals “were finding librarians not valuable because they felt they don’t have something to offer. Then they realized UpToDate was coming, and it was being taught to them by the librarians. Then they were like, these people have something to offer, and they are valuable.”

Supporting lecturers and classroom learning

Twinamasiko knows UpToDate is valued by the school community because he can see it in the fluctuating usage statistics. Every time a lecturer teaches a course and emphasizes using UpToDate as part of the study process, he says he sees an increase in access hits on that topic and related articles within the solution. “I have seen an increase in pediatrics because, when the lecturers are teaching [that subject], they direct students to use those resources so they can [make a care plan] on their own,” he explains. “That’s when I have seen peds and internal medicine ranking high compared to the rest of the subjects.”

“They download the content of UpToDate to their phones, so they are able to use it even when they are not at campus... anytime they want.”

Emmanuel Twinamasiko

Mobile access helps students overcome Internet connectivity issues

KABSOM students primarily access UpToDate on their mobile devices, which Twinamasiko believes is one of the greatest benefits of the solution in a region that experiences frequent internet connectivity issues that can challenge the pursuit of study, business, and patient care.

“These students, when they get the chance, download the content of UpToDate to their phones, so they are able to use it even when they are not at campus. And they are able to access it any day, anytime they want,” he says. This represents a notable advantage over students’ previous free resource which needed internet connection and often couldn’t be accessed from their homes or outside the hospital or school.

Making study and care easier through quick access to the latest evidence

Students aren’t the only users who benefit, Twinamasiko notes. “Lecturers’ work is also made easier by the introduction of UpToDate. Instead of someone spending a lot of minutes explaining, they refer students where they can go to do a study for themselves. They don’t have to labor updating their notes all the time. They go through UpToDate, they see what is there, and they can refer students to UpToDate, so their work is made easier. They are also able to remain updated. Things are changing all the time, and UpToDate fits and helps to back up very well.”

Overall, the librarian says he is grateful for the efficiency, quick access to evidence, and technological advancement UpToDate has provided his user community.

“I want to appreciate and pray we continue to work together,” Twinamasiko says. “We have been benefiting a lot from UpToDate, and it is now very difficult to live without UpToDate.”



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About the organization

Kabale University School of Medicine (KABSOM) opened in 2016 in response to the huge health professionals training gap in the Kigezi region of Uganda. The Medical School’s strategy is embedded in the overall heritage of Kabale University as a community-founded and community-centered institution of higher learning. It runs both undergraduate and postgraduate programs, including: health services management, environmental health science, anesthesia, critical care, nursing, surgery, medicine, and public health. www.kab.ac.ug/university_unit/kabale-university-school-of-medicine-kabsom/

UpToDate donations program: In partnership with the Better Evidence program at Ariadne Labs, a joint center at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Wolters Kluwer provides free UpToDate access and/or distributes UpToDate content worldwide to individuals and institutions in resource-limited settings or in regions with urgent need following natural disasters, infectious disease outbreaks, and humanitarian emergencies. www.wolterskluwer.com/en/solutions/uptodate/about/donations-program

