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mHealth apps market to reach $20.7 bn by 2018: Report

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Singapore: A recent report by Research and Markets estimates that global mHealth apps market will reach $6.6 billion in 2013 and will grow to $20.7 billion by 2018 at a CAGR of 25.50 percent. The report also estimates that diabetes management devices market will witness the maximum growth during the forecast period, primarily due to rising global burden of diabetics.

The mHealth apps market is classified into health apps and medical apps. Health apps are segmented into exercise, weight loss, women's health, sleep and meditation, medication reminder and other apps. Medical apps market is segmented into medical reference, and other applications like apps for mental health, dermatological treatment, and emergency response.

Despite the higher download volume of healthcare applications, revenue contribution of apps is not significant since the majority of applications are free and paid apps cost between $1 and $2 each. The healthcare apps market is dominated by exercise apps with just less than one-fifth of the share. Sleep and meditation, and weight loss apps are expected to grow at the highest CAGR during the forecast period.

Analysis of market dynamics reveals that the major drivers of this market include increasing awareness of chronic diseases, growing adoption of smartphones, high penetration of 3G and 4G network, advanced mobile connectivity, and a promise of better healthcare cost-efficiency. On the other hand, stringent regulations by the FDA and the EU, and data insecurity hinder market growth. Low patient-doctor ratio in underdeveloped countries such as Africa and other potential mHealth platforms such as smart TV increase the scope of mHealth penetration globally.

The trend of venture capital investment presents a significant development in the mobile platform for healthcare solutions and data security. In 2012, monitoring segment, healthcare IT, and consumer apps fetched the maximum venture capitals. Benchmarking strategy analysis reveals market preference towards providing comprehensive solutions with an integrated platform. The connected device market is also expected to amalgamate with companion apps to offer better healthcare solutions.

North America holds the largest share of the global mHealth apps market in 2013. It is estimated to be valued at $2.9 billion in 2013, while Europe and Asia will witness potential growth due to significant adoption of mobile health technology and government initiatives. UK, India, China, Japan, Africa, and Australia are the major contributors amongst all emerging

countries in 2013.