Active clinical decision support – empowering primary care clinicians to deliver preventative care, proven to reduce costs and save lives

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Introduction
Active clinical decision support (CDS) is helping to enhance the quality of care and reduce costs by enabling GPs in New Zealand to cut hospital admissions, improve referral processes, and provide a service associated with life-threatening risk prevention.

This paper presents the results of a partnership between The Best Practice Advocacy Centre (BPAC) – an independent organisation based in New Zealand that advocates the use of best practice in healthcare – and Elsevier for use of its Arezzo technology.

With Arezzo, BPAC has produced a web-based system that is designed specifically to support general practice in the management of a patient’s health through screening, risk assessment, management and referral. This is providing evidence-based recommendations personalised to each patient.

Aims and objectives
Elsevier Clinical Solutions is working with GPs to deliver its Arezzo active CDS technology that, through electronic decision support, aims to improve the application of clinical standards and best practice to deliver enhanced clinical outcomes, and drive out variations in care.

By combining medical record data with clinical content through Computer-Interpretable Guidelines (CIGs), active CDS aims to enhance clinical efficiency and treatment outcomes in primary care, and help reduce pressure on acute care settings.

Impact on childhood asthma – Study 2
A cohort of 378 children aged under 15 were assessed with the Arezzo application following transient ischaemic attacks (TIAs) (see Study 1), as well as safely reduce treatment cost.

Neurologists noted that this successful trial of a novel decision support tool was an important contribution in a world of finite resources. It said: “The study was well-conducted and the results are convincing. The tool appears to be useful in helping GPs in their clinical practice, with reassuring outcome results. GP feedback on the usefulness and acceptability of the tool was high.” (2).

Conclusions
Providing GPs with active CDS will help them improve clinical outcomes and apply clinical standards at scale, which are essential to achieve the NHS’s vision of high quality care. This can help drive unwarranted variation that Lord Carter and Sir David Dalton have said must be addressed for a sustainable NHS.

Elsevier Clinical Solutions is working with CCGs in England to realise similar benefits, with an initial focus on early cancer diagnosis and subsequently long term conditions. The enhanced application of standards such as the NICE cancer urgent referral pathway (3) could save lives (see pathway diagram opposite). Active CDS technology is also being implemented for a national advice and triage service covering out of hours’ provision.

References

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