

Product Review Reprint # 43-02

Increase Prescription Sales with Smart Tools at the Point of Care

By John Mack

The limited time that sales representatives have with a physician is barely enough to drop off samples with a small-print size package insert and an occasional glossy printed sales aid with product information. This prescribing information is rarely read, and more than likely will get “filed away” and never accessed again.

“Physicians want information and tools that improve their ability to practice good medicine,” says Stephen Kimberley, MD, Medical Director at Wellscape, a technology company that provides software solutions designed to improve patient care. “The FDA-approved package insert (PI) has all the information a physician needs to prescribe the drug,” states Kimberley. “However, it is designed more as a legal or regulatory document than as a tool. The format is very poor for physician education and use at the point of care.”

Smart-PI

Realizing the limitations of the printed PI, Wellscape has developed Smart-PI®, which distills complex prescribing information and packages it in portable, stand-alone real-time tools accessible from websites as well as deployable as a standalone application, available for desktop and Tablet PCs, and Palm OS®, Pocket PC and Smartphone PDAs.

Smart-PI utilizes a “layered” approach, which allows physicians to quickly access the information they need. The standard, non-layered approach of the official PI is difficult to scan and does not lend itself to rapid access to information. For example, the paper-based PI lumps together both “drug interactions” and “drug non-interactions” in the same section of the document. These can be confused by the busy physician attempting to quickly check his or her facts. In the Smart-PI

layered approach, the two categories of “interactions” are separate line items in a drop-down list. All other sections of the PI are similarly indexed, searchable and intuitively organized.

Prescribing Information Wizards

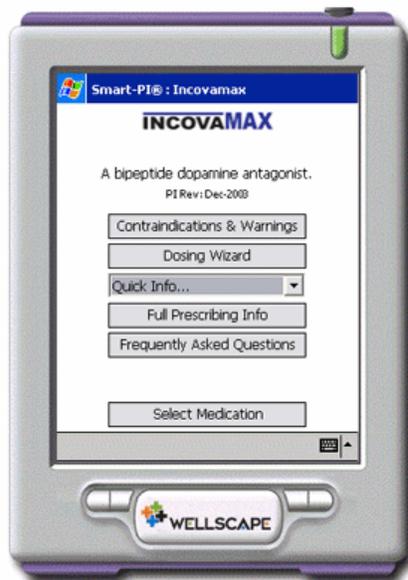
Smart-PI also uses “wizards,” which are interactive utilities that help the physician perform otherwise complex tasks. For instance, a dosing wizard leads the physician through the steps required to appropriately dose the drug, including all the relevant details such as medical status, diagnosis and drug regimen.

Smart-PI wizards follow simple, question-based paths through decision trees, covering indications and contraindications, pertinent product warnings and interactions. The contra-indications wizard, for example, is a series of questions that leads the physician to the proper information for a specific patient. If the patient is male, for example, it is not

necessary to see the pregnancy contraindication warnings. By entering “male” for patient’s sex in the wizard, the physician is taken down the appropriate pathway. Wizards help to ensure timely, correct and efficacious dosing of drugs with even complex dosing regimens.

“The Smart-PI wizards save time at the point of prescribing,” says Kimberley. Saving time is important because if it takes too long to make a prescribing decision for a particular drug, a sale could be lost and quality of patient care jeopardized.

Although printed sales aids can be designed to help physicians make decisions without doing complicated calculations—e.g., use of dosing tables or sliding cards—using an interactive wizard on a handheld PDA is more



convenient. Also, the PDA is automatically updated with the latest information about indications, dosage computation, warnings and interactions, whenever it is synchronized with an Internet-enabled PC. The delivery of comprehensive and current medication information is invaluable in reducing prescribing errors and associated liabilities for both physicians and the sponsoring pharmaceutical companies.

Pharma Value Added Options

“Pharmaceutical companies that take advantage of our technology,” says Kimberley, “can leverage it to increase prescription sales.” Sales reps can distribute Smart-PIs to their physician clients via business card CDs, or the application can be downloaded from a product web site. Sponsoring company and/or product branding are displayed on the CD label and can be embedded in software—on the main screen—to reinforce the brand while avoiding intrusive promotional messaging at the point of care (POC).

Smart-PI is PhRMA compliant and is provided on a low cost per-license purchase for pharmaceutical companies and other customers. Smart-PI can be customized to include multiple medications, clinical guidelines, FAQs, and patient information, all of which are approved by the pharmaceutical sponsor. “The most important aspect,” says Kimberley, “is that Smart-PI is based upon the complete, official package insert, which is always one click away.”

Smart-PI can also provide feedback to the pharma sponsor through back-end reporting of tool usage for contraindications, warnings, and appropriate dosage. Such information may help provide post-surveillance monitoring, which is increasingly important in the post-Vioxx world.

Physi-Calc

Another POC product offered by Wellscape is an electronic treatment guidelines tool called Physi-Calc, which uses the same “wizard” question-based approach as does Smart-PI.

“In recent years,” says Kimberley, “the number of available clinical guidelines from various sources has increased exponentially. It’s impossible for a busy physician to manually go through all the steps and decision trees of these guidelines, or to keep up on the changes as they are developed.”

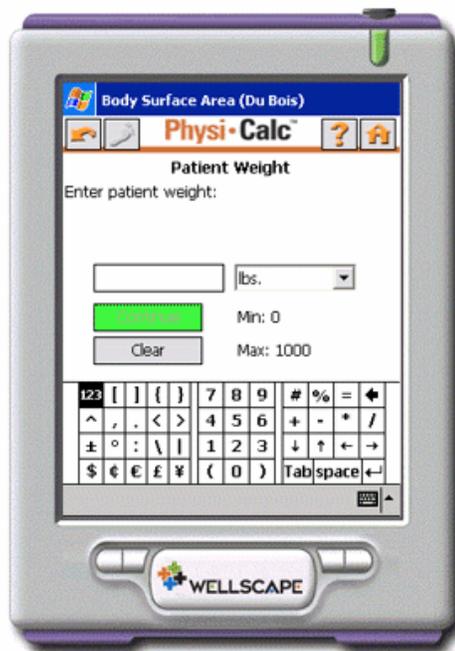
Wellscape’s experienced medical staff identifies the latest clinically-relevant calculations, diagnostic and treatment guidelines, and risk assessments from authoritative medical sources, and distills these into easily-navigated tools within Physi-Calc.

Technology and Sources of Prescribing Information

According to a survey conducted by Lathian Systems, a provider of technology-based sales and marketing solutions, and commissioned by Wellscape, 58% of the cardiologist, emergency room doctor and internist survey respondents cited the package insert as a source they usually use to learn prescribing information (see the chart on next page). Add to this the product web site, which is primarily considered labeling, the result is that 78% of physicians cite the package insert in one form or another as their usual source of Rx information.

Physicians in the survey indicated that Smart-PI would be helpful to them in prescribing medications with complex contraindications and warnings (92% of respondents), difficult to dose medications (86%), medications with new indications, labeling, or warnings (74%), and medications requiring communication of extensive patient information (72%).

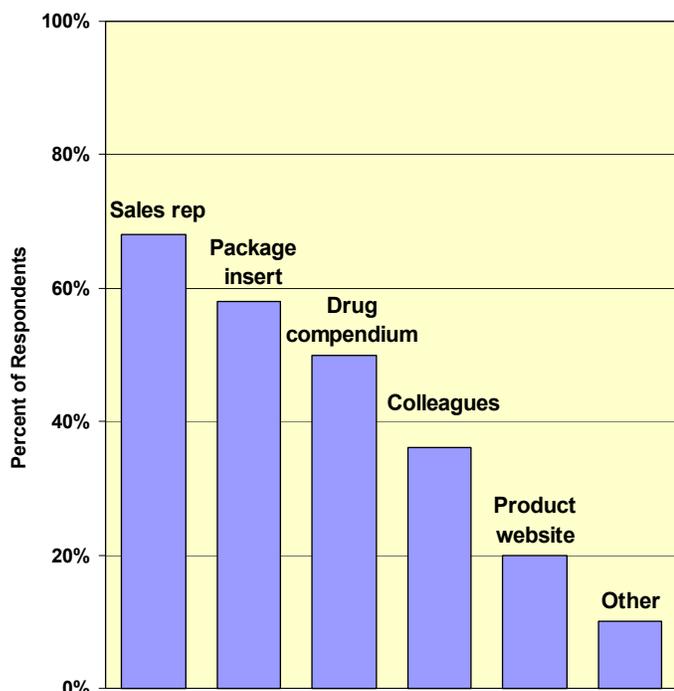
A survey by Manhattan Research, LLC, a healthcare marketing information and services firm, found that 235,000 physicians in the U.S. were using PDAs in 2004 for professional purposes. Mark Bard, president of Manhattan Research, indicated that smartphones and tablet PCs were the fastest growing segments last year (personal communication).



The results are improved patient care and better treatment decisions.

As with Smart-PI, Physi-Calc can be customized for the pharmaceutical sponsor. It can include, for example, science-based tools approved by the sponsor in a particular condition area. Sales reps can deliver the application to physicians on business card CDs with or without Smart-PI. Alternatively, the physician can download the full set of tools, or just the tools for a specific drug indication from the sponsor's web site.

Sources for Learning Prescribing Information



Source: Lathian Systems Survey: Prescribing Physicians Responses to Smart-PI®. March, 2004.

Wellscape's tools present a great opportunity for pharmaceutical companies to assist and partner with physicians in improving patient care. Smart-PI is an innovative way to disseminate complex prescribing information and helps physicians prescribe new or unfamiliar medications safely and with more confidence. Physi-Calc complements Smart-PI by ensuring that the latest clinical information is easily accessible to medical professionals.

Pharma Marketing News

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