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Real World Data Critical For Healthcare



A session at the European Health Forum 2014 put forward examples of best practices from projects and live implementation that are improving the way real world data can be used to improve healthcare.

Clinical trial protocols often exclude relevant groups when evaluating medicines. They sometimes also fail to consider how a particular drug would perform in the real world as opposed to a controlled clinical environment. Today, there are several technologies that can capture and analyse real world data that have the ability to reflect real world responses and experiences of patients. These technologies can bridge the gap and can help harness real world data to boost health and increase the sustainability of healthcare systems.

Martin Seychell, Deputy Director General in the Health and Consumers' Directorate General (DG Sanco), and other professionals highlighted the need to create an environment where real world and big data can come into mainstream use.

"The next five years are absolutely crucial. The key challenge is to optimise healthcare systems," Seychell said. Currently there is a time-lag between when the evidence is gathered and when a decision is taken. "We can't afford to keep doing it like this," Seychell told delegates. "We need to capture data and make the best use of it."

There are multiple sources of gathering data relating to health, but the most potent data can be gathered by individuals on mobile phones and other internet-linked mobile devices. mHealth apps are a major source of data but at the same time there are concerns associated with them such as the need for data protection, patient safety, liability and international standards.

There are also other challenges associated with the data that are collected through health apps and systems. These include dealing with the extensive data volume, spurious correlations, knowing how to interpret data and developing a supportive ecosystem. Currently, the European Commission is assessing responses on mHealth

and the findings are expected to be published in November 2014.

Nathalie Kayadjania, Senior Scientific Officer, Science Europe is of the opinion that mHealth could be a key component in improving healthcare as whole. That is because it is possible to capture information on other dimensions of a patient's experience that cannot generally be gathered in clinical trials. "Complex diseases cannot be explained with one dimension. You need to integrate biology with the environment in which a human being is living," Kayadjanian said.

Mary Baker, the Former President of the European Brain Council, highlights the fact that real data are not only essential for research into new medicines but also have immense potential in making the best possible use of existing drugs and assist in issues such as compliance and managing co-morbidities.

According to Richard Torbett, Chief Economist of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations, "For the pharmaceutical industry, real world data are a source of scientific and cultural change." He believes that real world data can help make healthcare systems more efficient and can also help in the development of better-targeted therapies.

At Vanderbilt University Medical Center, a system has been put in place that captures real time data. A computer desktop application for monitoring patients in the operating room has been ported to a smartphone and tablet platform. The system delivers real life data on vital signs of patients under anaesthesia and streams a live video of the operating room. The primary goal is to improve outcomes by the proactive identification of any emerging problems and by giving the opportunity to mitigate or eliminate an emerging deleterious event.

Source: Vital Transformation

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