Is Real-World Evidence Part of Your Clinical Decisions?

Digital health is booming in the 21st century and bringing healthcare closer to patients…electronically. Clinical professionals have loads of real-world evidence (RWE) at their fingertips thanks to mounds of real-world data (RWD) available through EHRs (electronic health records), the use of AI (artificial intelligence), voice assistants (link Amazon Alexa or Google Home), third-party smartphone apps, billing and claims activity, and more. Healthcare organizations are tapping into this information in more sophisticated ways to develop clinical guidelines and decision support tools to deliver better patient care.

Are you already one of these forward-thinking healthcare providers? Or are you like the majority of providers, currently making clinical decisions based on the same observational data obtained from randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and generated during routine clinical practice?

You deserve to have the full potential of RWE and RWD close at hand. This incredible fount of digital information can help you and providers, payers and other healthcare organizations in improving clinical and operational processes as you shift from “big data” to “small data” analytics.

Getting real about real-world evidence

Randomized clinical trials have long been the gold standard for testing treatment effectiveness and safety, according to a recent article from Forbes. But clinical trials, “…might give the wrong idea about how well treatments work in everyday life. That, along with cost and efficiency concerns, is driving enthusiasm for greater use of data gathered outside of clinical trials.” That’s where real-world evidence is changing patient treatment.

However, according to Clinical Leader, people tend to overestimate or underestimate the power of real-world evidence. While it has several limitations and can’t replace random clinical trials, the data derived from RWE can work hand-in-hand with clinical trial data to
help paint a fuller picture of the patient journey and offer added potential insight and treatment options.

Keep in mind that there is good data and lower quality data. Sometimes you can answer a healthcare question with simple billings or claims data, so there’s no reason to go into fancy, complex technologies or sources. Other questions may require more clinical detail, and that’s where RWE can deliver. The question comes first, then you can refer to the right data source.

*Forbes* suggests, “Combining real-world data with clinical trials, when possible, offers the best of both worlds.”

### 8 effective ways to connect the digital dots in healthcare

When you adopt digital health innovations, your organization will need to make changes in staffing, processes and technology. These include the need to:

1. **Link RWE and RWD to clinical data.** This will provide deeper insights and understanding of patient behavior.
2. **Keep digital information secure and anonymous.** It is extremely important to ensure the data cannot be decrypted, breached or individual patients identified.
3. **Have a digital health strategy.** You need an overall strategy that lays out how you’ll meet organizational goals and draws upon the best solutions now and in the future.
4. **Inform staff at every step.** When everyone knows the goals, they can best help execute and support any new strategy. Tell them what’s being done, why it’s being done, and what your end objectives are.
5. **Become skilled in mining data.** Use data wisely. Not all of it will be good, and not all of it will be applicable. Finding the right data along with proper analytics is key to a successful digital health implementation. In mining digital health data, tap into the appropriate real-world research methods to ensure valid, reliable and unbiased results.
6. **Boost adoption of apps and devices.** Select digital-health technologies based on an objective rating of the investment made in them, development profile, strategic objectives, and performance. Then, make sure they do what they claim to do before data can be applied with any confidence.
7. **Monitor digital health market updates.** Digital health innovations are multiplying almost daily. Your organization must stay on top of the almost continuous advances and to have an open mind about trying them first-hand.
8. **Incorporate user-centered health tools.** To make RWE an integral part of your healthcare operation you must continually monitor and analyze workflow, rigorously test the tools, offer continuous employee training and support, and get ongoing feedback.

To get the maximum benefit from digital-health data, your organization must take advantage of the potential connectivity with electronic data sources. Making connections across digital data sources and integrating that information into a common data model, means you’ll get a more holistic view of your patients’ health treatment.

### What’s next?

“Connecting providers to the right information at the right time is an ongoing challenge for healthcare organizations, especially those that feel like they are drowning in data but lacking meaningful information,” according to [HealthITAnalytics.com](http://HealthITAnalytics.com). “Clinical decision support (CDS) tools that sift through huge volumes of data to recommend treatments, tests, or diagnoses can help to ease the cognitive burdens created by digital data overload.”
In just about every organization there’s going to be a need for consultants’ day-in-and-day-out to help meet critical deadlines, solve complex problems, and serve up valuable knowledge and expertise, especially when it comes to using RWE and RWD.

Blue Eagle Consulting training/consulting experts can help you analyze your current IT environment, understand your pain points and objectives, and help your organization craft solutions that integrate today’s RWE into clinical decision-making. We can help you handle everything from providing additional technology-driven training for existing staff to providing added staff to fill a temporary or ongoing need to selecting, launching and testing new IT tools.

Get in touch today to let us know how we can help you.