How a global company that develops treatments for rare diseases maximizes its research productivity with Ovid®
How a global company that develops treatments for rare diseases maximizes its research productivity with Ovid®

Ultragenyx Pharmaceutical Inc. specializes in discovering the undiscovered; that is, treatments for serious rare and ultrarare diseases. In its quest to provide solutions where none currently exist, the company relies on its 1,300 employees across 10 countries on three continents for innovative, time- and cost-efficient drug development.

The challenge

In pharma and biotech industries, many teams rely on obtaining the latest, most comprehensive clinical information for doing their jobs. Those teams include the Regulatory, Clinical Writing, Medical Affairs, Pharmacovigilance, Health Economics & Outcomes Research, and Publications teams. In the rare disease space, low patient numbers, lack of traditional clinical trial data, incomplete information on disease progression, and limited biomarkers pose additional challenges to finding and utilizing the best information sources to support their work.

Whether it’s utilizing hard-to-find data to generate study designs or substantiating their findings for regulatory agencies, leveraging the latest information regarding rare diseases — and doing it with speed and accuracy — is crucial to the success of Ultragenyx’s research and development. Amanda Thompson, MLIB, Associate Director of Health Sciences at Ultragenyx, explains that the company interfaces with many regulatory agencies globally. Each has different requirements and strict timelines for responding to questions, often including requests for additional justification or support for their findings. Ultragenyx’s Regulatory and Clinical Writing departments may only have ten days to provide answers to keep their programs moving through the next steps toward regulatory approval.

Ultragenyx has two approved medicines and seven in their pipeline, each targeting a different rare disease. As Ultragenyx’s sole medical librarian, Thompson must ensure everyone gets the documentation to satisfy all regulatory requirements and other inquiries.
The solution

Before Thompson’s arrival, Ultragenyx was still performing manual, time-consuming medical database searches but wanted a comprehensive database solution that could meet cross-departmental requests quickly.

After exploring the benefits, Ultragenyx selected Ovid® as their medical research platform. Thompson soon learned how well Ovid’s precision and speed could maximize her search productivity and enhance the company’s workflow. Ovid’s customizable search and alert tools enable Ultragenyx’s teams to automate searches that improve team efficiency so they can focus on utilizing the high-quality, credible information obtained. The Ovid search platform also helps reduce administrative overhead, enabling team members to spend more time on stakeholder engagement and regulatory requirements.

Ultragenyx accesses MEDLINE®, Embase®, and Evidence-Based Medicine Reviews (EBMR) on Ovid. Thompson notes the three databases enable her to find conference abstracts, regulatory filings, pharmacovigilance data, and a variety of European data that can’t be found through free, publicly available sources. This offers many advantages in the rare-disease space, often relying on real-world data sources and model-based data analyses.

Ultragenyx utilizes Ovid’s search, content, result management, and alert tools to:

• Perform precision searches across multiple databases simultaneously
• Customize, save, and automate searches
• Store, organize, and manage searches, research documents, and findings
• Monitor and report access and company-wide use of resources
• Create AutoAlerts via email or RSS to ensure widespread access to the latest clinical information that actually understands their needs.

Underpinning its research and reporting capabilities is Ovid’s commitment to Ultragenyx’s success. Thompson states, “I want to underscore how important it is to me to have a company that actually understands our needs. That is absolutely huge.” Ovid’s expert training teams, 24/7 customer service, and online tools provide wraparound support for Ultragenyx.
The results

Ultragenyx utilizes Ovid® across multiple departments. While clinical writing has its own workflows and search strategies, Thompson assists other departments with their search requests to varying degrees. Diverse teams, from Medical Affairs to Business and Finance, tap Thompson's Ovid expertise for their needs. In addition, Thompson provides Ultragenyx staff with a monthly newsletter that summarizes the current research available across all its programs. To create the newsletter, Thompson developed and saved an Ovid search strategy to simultaneously search Embase® and MEDLINE® once a week, automatically de-duplicate entries, and alert her of the results. This efficiency ensures everyone is informed of the latest information and increases collaboration across departments.

With much of the company utilizing Ovid, Thompson monitors usage statistics in Ovid's result management tools. She notes that, in 2023, each licensed employee created approximately 20 searches, resulting in a cost-effective cost per use while achieving professional results and alleviating administrative burdens and manual processes. Thompson says the investment in Ovid is well worth the price. She notes their $15 cost per use is low — but “if a $15 search helps lead to an approval, that's priceless.”

About Ovid®

Ovid offers access to over 23 million bibliographic citations and author abstracts from more than 5,600 biomedicine and life sciences journals in nearly 40 languages. As the world’s most trusted medical research platform, Ovid has provided worldwide clinical, medical, pharmaceutical, and medical device research and support for over 30 years.

About Ultragenyx

Ultragenyx was founded to advance innovative medicines for rare and ultra-rare diseases that have not been treated. With over 1,300 employees across 10 countries, their team of passionate leaders combines deep drug development expertise and commercialization, culminating in the largest and most diverse rare disease pipeline.