

Leicester consultant champions UpToDate as gold standard for clinical decision-making

A leading consultant at the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust has acclaimed UpToDate®, an evidence-based clinical decision support (CDS) tool, as the most reliable and comprehensive resource available to healthcare professionals. Dr. Steve Jackson, a Consultant Physician in Diabetes, Endocrinology, and General Internal Medicine, and Associate Chief Medical Information Officer, shared his extensive experience with the platform, highlighting its crucial role in improving patient outcomes, enhancing efficiency, and even providing medicolegal protection.

Embedding UpToDate into daily clinical workflows

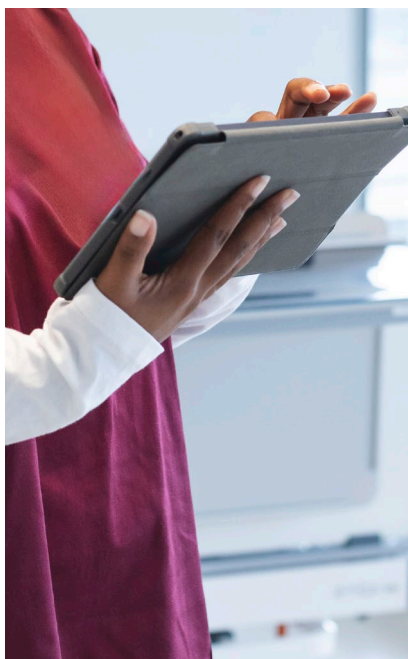
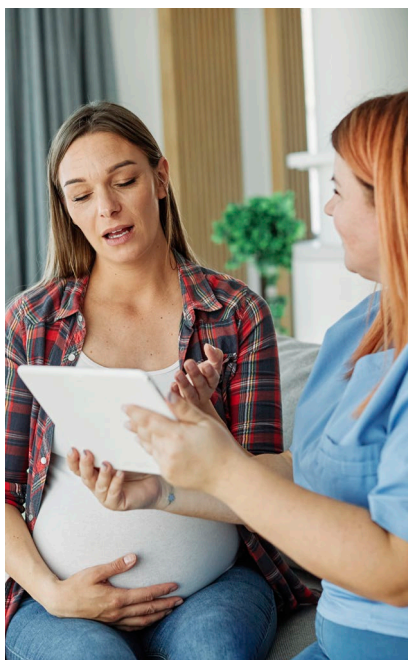
Dr. Jackson has been instrumental in embedding UpToDate into the daily workflows at his hospital, making it easily accessible for clinicians both on desktop and via a mobile app. He noted that while the Trust has access to two other CDS tools, UpToDate remains the most widely used and trusted among the three. It is highly valued by both specialists and generalists for its depth and accuracy, particularly when dealing with complex or nuanced patient cases.

“UpToDate stands out due to its rigorous evidence-based editorial process and the sheer volume of clinical expertise behind it,” Dr. Jackson stated. The platform draws on a global network of over **7,600 expert clinicians** who continuously update and validate its content. This robust oversight is a key differentiator for Dr. Jackson, who emphasised that not all clinical research is of equal value. “Unlike some tools that simply aggregate information, the content in UpToDate is critically appraised, considering the hierarchy of evidence as it applies to specific patients, ensuring that recommendations are based on the most reliable and clinically relevant evidence available.”



“As a busy clinician, I don’t have to go searching for source information and I can base my decisions on high-quality, validated evidence rather than outdated or lower-tier data.”

**Dr. Steve Jackson, Consultant physician,
Associate Chief Medical Officer,
University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust**



Dr. Jackson highlighted instances where UpToDate's comprehensiveness proved invaluable. For example, in managing thyroid disease during pregnancy, UpToDate provides detailed insights into how pregnancy alters physiology and impacts test results. He pointed out that CDS tools often lack depth when addressing nuanced clinical cases. Dr. Jackson noted a significant difference in the recency of references, giving him greater confidence in UpToDate's guidance.

"Just because a patient's situation is slightly nuanced doesn't mean they shouldn't be managed correctly," he states, emphasising the need for a tool that accounts for real-world complexities.

In his experience, UpToDate consistently provides comprehensive answers that guide better decision-making. Another area where UpToDate excels, according to Dr. Jackson, is in the management of complex cases like diabetes in elderly and frail patients. The tool offers step-by-step guidance on medication, target setting, and complication avoidance, contrasting with more general advice found in other resources. "UpToDate's expert oversight ensures clinicians feel well-informed, not just given a brief overview," he explained.

Practical applications and broader benefits of UpToDate

With the increasing prevalence of AI in healthcare, Dr. Jackson stressed the importance of a trustworthy knowledge base like UpToDate. He believes its validated, expert-reviewed content acts as a vital safeguard against the risks of AI models drawing from unverified sources.

Dr. Jackson detailed the practical applications of UpToDate in his daily work, from guiding decisions in his specialist clinic and providing crucial information during acute care and on-call duties, to educating doctors in training and supporting general practitioners with evidence-based advice and patient education. He frequently shares relevant UpToDate content with GPs to ensure patients receive the best possible care in the community.



The impact of UpToDate extends beyond individual patient management. Dr. Jackson believes it plays a significant role in improving clinical outcomes, reducing unnecessary investigations and referrals, and streamlining care pathways. He also pointed to tangible cost savings achieved through more accurate prescribing, reduced prescribing errors and potentially shorter hospital stays.

Furthermore, Dr. Jackson underscored the medicolegal advantages of using UpToDate. In the event of a medical case being reviewed, referencing UpToDate demonstrates due diligence and adherence to best practices, offering a level of protection against liability that relying on general internet searches cannot provide.

Advocating for expanded access and future enhancements

Looking to the future, Dr. Jackson envisions the incorporation of AI to further enhance its utility for busy clinicians. He also passionately advocated for wider access to UpToDate in NHS primary care organisations, expressing concern over the availability of less reliable sources.

In his final recommendations, Dr. Jackson urged healthcare leaders to recognise UpToDate as an essential investment across all NHS settings.

“Every patient deserves the best possible care,” he concluded. “If we have access to a comprehensive, up-to-date clinical resource, we owe it to them to use it.”

Dr. Jackson’s endorsement reinforces UpToDate’s position as a cornerstone of evidence-based medicine, providing clinicians with the confidence and knowledge to deliver high-quality, safe, and efficient patient care.



“Every patient deserves the best possible care. If we have access to a comprehensive, up-to-date clinical resource, we owe it to them to use it.”

Dr. Steve Jackson
Consultant physician,
Associate Chief Medical Officer,
University Hospitals of Leicester
NHS Trust