

Wolters Kluwer's Clinical Decision Support Platform Is Up-Dated



15 October 2025: Wolters Kluwer's UpToDate Clinical Decision Support (CDS) platform has had an AI-powered upgrade. Used much like a chatbot, UpToDate Expert AI (Expert AI) can, the company says, quickly generate answers to clinical questions by scouring UpToDate's existing content database. These answers, it argues, contain plenty of context - for example the assumptions on which the answer was based, where the information came from in UpToDate, and the rationale behind the answer.

Expert AI was formally launched a couple of weeks ago, but Wolters Kluwer says it will be available as a free add-on to select UpToDate Enterprise Edition subscribers from the fourth quarter of this year.

The Signify Research View

Wolters Kluwer isn't the only, or the first, vendor to offer an AI tool to support clinical decision-making. The market currently includes legacy players like Elsevier (and its rival ClinicalKey AI solution) and Pathway (which sells an AI clinical reference tool for doctors, and which was acquired by AI firm Doximity a couple of months ago).

There are also 'freenium' start-ups such as Glass Health and Open Evidence. Open Evidence is proving particularly popular among doctors for its AI-generated patient meeting summaries and its search engine capabilities in surfacing medical information. These free-of-charge tools have attracted huge interest from venture capital markets, and have real momentum behind them.

But they have limitations, too, especially when compared to Expert AI.

Twin Wins

In our view, Expert AI has two big things going for it.

One is the continuously updated, expert-authored, peer-reviewed underlying content it exclusively accesses within UpToDate. It's a genuinely trusted resource for millions of clinicians in the US.

The UpToDate content repository is built, maintained and continuously updated by around 7,600 medical experts who contribute, author and edit the platform. These contributors pore over new research from leading medical journals as well as clinical trial data, drug labelling, pharmacology studies and MEDLINE abstracts to update UpToDate content. Care pathways, lab interpretations and clinical case studies are just some of the content on which their work is focused.

The emphasis for the contributors, from Wolters Kluwer's perspective, is to think like a clinician and answer complex, very specific questions without ambiguity.

While clearly valuable and quite unique, it's not a foolproof system. Being hermetically sealed from the Internet does not make Expert AI (and similar tools) immune to generative AI issues like hallucination. With the real risks of misdiagnoses, incorrect treatment plans and wrong medications, it would be a dangerous assumption for anyone to make, or claim, that such a tool could eliminate hallucinations. Last year, gen AI firm Pieces Technology was accused in Texas of inaccurately advertising gen AI tool performance. The company reached a 'first-of-its-kind' settlement with the state, but it was a reminder of the overconfidence and hubris that gen AI can generate.

Wolters Kluwer won't fall into that trap. For a start, hallucination is a feature of large language models, not simply a bug that can be eliminated. And for its part, Wolters Kluwer will have built guardrails into Expert AI to mitigate hallucination risks as far as possible. Again, it's banking on its underlying content being king: the narrower the content set, and the more curated the content set, the better.

This laser-like focus on vetting and validating evidence in the real world gives Expert AI a distinct advantage.

Above and Beyond

The other big advantage that Expert AI can justifiably claim is in integration. Integration is a critical success factor across digital health and UpToDate enjoys solid integrations and partnerships in clinical workflows, in EHRs, within ambient listening tools and elsewhere within care pathways.

The benefit of such integration to the clinician is obvious: they are spared the hassle of leaving their workflow or switching between apps during patient encounters. It's significant that more than half of Wolters Kluwer's enterprise customers have implemented Single Sign On (SSO). As well as APIs, Wolters Kluwer could also explore the use of Model Context Protocols (MCPs), an agent-to-agent communication method pioneered by Anthropic.

Wolters Kluwer already has around 177 EHR integrations, and in the last couple of months launched a patient education capability in Epic MyChart. Adoption there has been strong, the Dutch company says. On the ambient listening front, it is integrated with Abridge, and partners with Suki, Nuance and Corti. The company also partners with different EMR overlay solutions and data analytics and insight vendors.

What sets Wolters Kluwer apart here is its focus beyond just making the clinician's job more impactful. Unlike the free tools, Expert AI is designed to serve other parts of a health system or large hospital. Hospital administrators and non-clinical teams have been using UpToDate Enterprise Edition to help improve patient care and outcomes.

The bottom line is the likes of Open Evidence and Glass Health, while free and useful for doctors, cannot (at present) address the data privacy, data residency and safety compliance considerations and risks that large hospitals and health systems have. Addressing such needs is complex and time-consuming, and something that free tools vendors will be unwilling to get bogged down in.

Doubling Down

Going forward, Wolters Kluwer will need to double down on the core strengths that have served it well so far.

Those who have the best data, and best integrations, will still stand the best chance of success. In the near-term there's an opportunity for Wolters Kluwer to expand the content sets on which Expert AI is trained. There's an opportunity to not only empower clinicians and patients, but also, for example, medical students or nurses.

Expect more partnerships with large enterprises to feature, and for the company to step up its efforts on localised guidance to help fuel expansion outside the US. Compliance with international regulations such as the EU AI Act will be something to navigate. As long as Expert AI is not classed as a medical device - and by guiding decisions rather than making decisions there's no reason why it should be - it should find demand in non-US markets.

There are other hurdles common to all CDS tool vendors that Wolters Kluwer will also need to figure out, even if they aren't necessarily its problem to solve. For example, because models like Expert AI produce almost instant results, there's a danger that clinicians will act without fully considering context. A dependency of LLMs could also lead to clinicians understanding a topic less well.

Wolters Kluwer will argue that Expert AI's ability to prompt critical thinking will help mitigate this.

The trust in the legacy UpToDate platform and its content will be important in hand-holding users through this push.

About Signify Research

Signify Research is an independent supplier of market intelligence and consultancy to the global healthcare technology industry. Our major coverage areas are Digital Health, Healthcare IT and Medical Imaging. Our clients include technology vendors, healthcare providers and payers, management consultants and investors. Signify Research is headquartered in Cranfield, UK.