
Speeding up high-quality decisions with evidence-based medication information

Belgian hospital uses convenient, mobile access to drug referential content in Lexicomp®

Antwerp University Hospital (Universitair Ziekenhuis Antwerpen, UZA) in Belgium strives to provide every patient with the best medical care possible appropriate to their condition. However, UZA healthcare workers know that the risk of medication errors presents a significant challenge at times when the sheer volume of medical knowledge is beyond what humans can keep up with, especially as significant numbers of new pharmaceutical products continue to emerge in the market. Convenience and speed are key for the acceptance of any tools which provide support in this context.

UZA is renowned for leading clinical and customer-friendly patient care, high-quality academic education, and ground-breaking scientific research. To support the organization's goal of best care everywhere, the Belgian university hospital's leadership knew they needed independent and evidence-based medication information, individualized for each clinical case, says UZA hospital pharmacist, Kay Vandeven.

UZA added Lexicomp® drug reference solution from Wolters Kluwer in the beginning of 2019. The hospital was already using Wolters Kluwer's UpToDate®, the trusted evidence-based clinical decision support solution, at the point of care, and Vandeven says it was part of the pharmacist's routine.

"Today, Lexicomp is one of our main sources of information, together with UpToDate, to quickly find answers to drug-related questions," she explains. "It is compatible with what doctors find in UpToDate, with matching information. This reliable source speeds up high-quality decisions."

Designed with pharmacists in mind

Most of Vandeven's pharmacist colleagues use Lexicomp as their reliable, evidence-based information on drugs, dosing, and indications. They benefit, she says, by being able to quickly find answers to specific drug questions with a single search across Lexicomp's multiple medication information databases.



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UZA**

“This helps us in common cases where pharmacists get a question from the ward, such as, ‘Is a specific drug compatible with another, or multiple, drugs?’ The presentation of findings is very practical: Lexicomp provides a table with all the information shown in a visual way with clickable details. Plus, there are drug comparison tools that UpToDate does not include. They allow us to follow up on interaction found in UpToDate.”

Access to information drives usage

Pharmacists at UZA work in the hospital pharmacy running drug safety screenings to check prescriptions for high-risk interactions and contraindications. Some also work on the wards part-time. When they use Lexicomp, possible interactions and the impact of renal function on dosing are core questions. In the case of noteworthy findings, pharmacists call doctors.

“For broad acceptance, quick access within workflows is of key importance,” explains Vandeven. Like UpToDate, Lexicomp can be IP-authenticated throughout healthcare organizations that have an enterprise subscription. That means that every clinician can have instant access at every terminal in the facility without needing to log in. Vandeven says that ease of access has made a major difference. She expects additional benefits when UZA integrates direct links to Lexicomp within the hospital’s EMR workflow.

“This will make working with the system even more easy and attractive for finding the medication information required. It may also serve to enhance interest from physicians.”

The Lexicomp mobile app is available as part of the enterprise subscription. Clinicians can download it to their personal mobile devices and have unabridged access to all the hospital’s databases even when there is low signal or no Wi-Fi. UZA is testing the mobile app, a feature Vandeven describes as a “highly practical.” She is promoting the convenient app to colleagues as a promising alternative to the desktop.

Tools for prescribing and administration

Lexicomp drug decision support is geared primarily to pharmacists, while physicians currently rely more on the treatment best practices and diagnostic information in UpToDate. However, Vandeven believes that Lexicomp has a lot to offer physicians, other prescribers, and nurses.

“Among nurses, use is not common currently, even though they will have questions as to how prepare, administer, and store medication after dissolution,” she says. “This information is readily available in Lexicomp. Physicians leave these issues to nurses, who may well be interested in using these solutions.”

As for physicians, “they are already familiar with the (Lexicomp) interface from working with UpToDate – which is user-friendly,” Vandeven says, noting the two solutions not only contain aligned, consistent content, but present a consistent user experience as well.

“Other tools may not offer useful tables that provide a concise overview of incompatibilities,” she adds. “There may be other good tools out there, but Lexicomp is certainly our preferred solution.”

Lexicomp provides access to 20 databases, drug monographs, and many interactive tools and calculators including:

- Clinical context from the editors of UpToDate, the leading clinical decision support reference
- An extensive view of adverse reactions
- Details on preparation and administration
- Off-label drug uses
- IV compatibility tools
- Pregnancy and lactation considerations

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About Universitair Ziekenhuis Antwerpen

With more than 570 beds, Universitair Ziekenhuis Antwerpen (UZA), or Antwerp University Hospital, offers a wide range of diagnostic and treatment services. Founded in Belgium in 1979, UZA provides comprehensive care for patients with complex disorders. More than 570 physicians specializing in 38 different fields treat more than 650,000 patients every year.

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