

CASE STUDY

Adastra integrates the Multilex Drug Data File to support out-of-hours clinicians

Adastra Software Ltd, an Advanced Computer Software Plc Group Company, is a leading patient management system for unscheduled care across England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, The Republic of Ireland and The Netherlands. Adastra's applications have been developed since its launch in 1994 and now handle over 14 million episodes of care annually. Adastra has been working with First DataBank Europe (FDBE) since 2002, when a need was identified to incorporate its clinical decision support into the Adastra system. Adastra and FDBE work closely to ensure that all relevant standards are met and to guarantee compliance with out-of-hours regulations.

PRIMARY CARE

"We chose the Multilex Drug Data File because the database is already used widely and has a reputation for being safe and reliable. FDBE works hard with us to provide the functionality we need for a first class system."

Alex Yeates,
Medical Director
Adastra

Background

Over 95% of out-of-hours GP services across the UK and The Republic of Ireland, 30% across The Netherlands and over half of all walk-in centres in England use Adastra integration services and 24x7 technology infrastructure solutions. More than 14 million episodes of care are managed, connected, integrated and measured annually across Europe using Adastra. The company was established in 1994 when Adastra's first system was developed to manage the large number of calls made to SEADOC's (South East Kent Association of Doctors on Call) out-of-hours GP co-operative. Since then, the product has evolved and continues to meet the needs of healthcare professionals within urgent and unscheduled care, as well as maintaining its leading position in the market place.

Development on Adastra v3 started in 2002. The system incorporates the requirements set out by the Department of Health in the out-of-hours review, as well as supporting the move from local GP co-operatives to operational hubs. Adastra v3 aims to complement 'in hours' GP systems and has embraced interoperability to encourage continuity

of care. Recent major achievements include the delivery of a solution which allows authorised Adastra users to access a patient's Summary Care Record (SCR) while using the Adastra system.

Integrated clinical decision support

In 2002 Adastra identified a need to incorporate clinical decision support into its system to help reduce prescribing errors. The company chose to use FDBE's Multilex Drug Data File (Multilex DDF), the UK's most comprehensive and widely used drug knowledge base, as it was already integrated into the majority of UK GP clinical systems. FDBE has a large team of pharmacists, clinicians, clinical researchers, healthcare informaticists and software developers who maintain its products and ensure it is at the forefront of product developments.

When integrated into the Adastra system, Multilex DDF helps meet the specific clinical decision support requirements that arise within unscheduled care scenarios. Over the years, the two companies have worked together to ensure they meet the challenges in today's out-of-hours market.

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First DataBank Europe is the UK's leading provider of drug knowledge bases and active clinical decision support.

Through the effective integration of our products into clinical systems, we enable safer prescribing, dispensing and administration.

NHS Connecting for Health has chosen First DataBank Europe to provide drug-related clinical decision support.

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Benefits

Prescribing within the unscheduled and urgent care setting is very different to 'in hours' prescribing. GPs therefore need access to a system which is intuitive and easy to use, as they may only use this system a few times a month and they are also less likely to know the patient's medical history. Aداstra v3's prescribing functionality incorporates many of the features GPs are used to within their 'in hours' systems, with the embedded Multilex DDF providing a range of comprehensive clinical checks.

When a patient presents, the user can access the system to check for an existing patient record. If it is the patient's first visit, the user can run through a set of questions to ascertain the patient's allergies, important medical history and current medication. The decision support functionality will then carry out a series of active clinical checks against the patient's details for drug sensitivities, contraindications, duplicate therapies, precautions and drug interactions. If any risks are detected, a warning message is displayed, alerting the clinician to the potential problem. Multilex DDF is also used to underpin the dispensing, formulary and stock control functions within the system.

Alex Yeates, Aداstra's Medical Director, says: "This is a major advance in safety for prescribing out-of-hours. The stock control functionality built into the system also means that all out-of-hours providers can now comply fully with the guidance issued by the Department of Health on securing proper access to medicines in the out-of-hours period. We chose the Multilex Drug Data File because the database is already used widely and has a reputation for being safe and reliable. FDBE works hard with us to provide the functionality we need for a first class system."

Interoperability

One of Aداstra's key successes is interoperability, which allows the company to maintain its unique position

within the out-of-hours market. Aداstra v3 is now compatible with the majority of the UK's GP systems, thereby allowing any episodes recorded in an out-of-hours setting to be easily transferred back to the patient's GP surgery. This is perfectly complemented and supported by FDBE's wealth of experience in clinical terminologies and coding. With the advent of different electronic healthcare records in different regions and with Phase 2 of the Electronic Prescription Service seeing the start of a fully electronic, digitally signed prescription to a nominated pharmacy, interoperability is vital for out-of-hours systems.

Technology for the future

With the potential for full access to patient information via a patient's care record, the level of clinical decision support available in an unscheduled care setting will increase. Aداstra has been actively working with NHS Connecting for Health in England and has recently delivered an integrated solution which will enable easier access to the SCR. FDBE and Aداstra have been collaborating to enhance the underlying technology of their solutions in order to support these new developments.

Other recent successes include FDBE providing Aداstra with its latest Application Programming Interface (API), built on the Microsoft®.NET framework technology. The integration of this API, which will be rolled out within the next version of Aداstra v3, will enhance functionality and enable improved access to more patient information. The API also provides Aداstra with a better and clinically safer platform for speedier integration of Multilex DDF. The use of native dm+d codes (Dictionary of Medicines and Devices) in this new API means there is not the inherent risk associated with translation tables usually needed for the Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (ETP) and will allow better compliance with all the national requirements for ETP across the UK.