

Specialist Research

Medical research

Pharmaceutical manufacturer

Project Outline

On behalf of a pharmaceutical manufacturer, a market research company wanted to collect information from hospital pharmacies on the type and quantity of drugs dispensed to patients with certain types of cancer. The requirement was for a web survey system that could be used within hospital pharmacies to collect and collate data for patients and maintain a full history of drugs dispensed to each patient.

Research strategy

In collaboration with the market research company, ASR constructed a special project in Survey Manager that was used by each participating pharmacy. The market research company recruited the pharmacies and provided on-site training in the use of Survey Manager. Data was downloaded monthly into SPSS and supplied to the market research company for analysis and integration with other data sources.

Survey Manager was enhanced so that a patient's medical history needed to be entered only once, whereas multiple treatment cycles could be entered for the patient over time. A prescription was not complete until a number of parameters were entered, including patient details, dosage, treatment, etc.

This project provided the market research company with a continuous stream of data for tracking the treatment of patients and the type and brand of drugs used. As it turned out, the survey provided new information on the practice of issuing prescriptions.

Outcomes

The project ran for 18 months and provided valuable historical data. An unexpected bonus was the identification of the doctors' prescribing patterns for the various types of cancer allied to the brands of drug they commonly prescribed. This contradicted the information informally collected by drug company representatives from doctors on which drugs they prescribed and how they recommended that they be used.

The use of Survey Manager and the web to collect this routine information did not intrude on hospital IT systems and did not require additional hardware to be installed. All pharmacies had computer systems with access to the web and pharmacists did not mind entering the data. However, follow-up of incomplete data about the patient's status was a problem as it required tracking down doctors and carers.

“Using Survey Manager to collect information at different stages of the patient treatment cycle”