

Anticoagulation decision support tool

What was the aim of the project?

To make national guidance more accessible to UK healthcare professionals, by re-purposing paper-based NICE clinical guidance on anticoagulation therapy into an interactive and dynamic software application.

What was the outcome of the project?

An innovative NICE-endorsed decision support tool was developed, which supports the uptake of NICE atrial fibrillation guidelines and the associated NICE patient decision aid.

Who was involved?

The tool was developed as part of a joint working group initiative comprising the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), Boehringer Ingelheim Ltd and Prescribing Decision Support Ltd at the Centre for Medicines Optimisation, Keele University.

Details of the project

The tool provides a practical basis for patients to participate in an informed discussion with a healthcare professional about their treatment choices in atrial fibrillation, taking into account the options available, their individual needs and preferences and potential benefits and risks.

The group mapped out NICE clinical guidance into a series of algorithms and decision trees. Decision points, such as treatment contraindications, warnings and dose options, were also incorporated. These algorithms comprise the tool's 'logic'. Once the logic was validated, multiple layers of content and text – based on NICE recommendations – were created, for example, individual treatment recommendations, alerts, etc.

The logic and text were then coded into the software to create a prototype version of the tool; this underwent a series of functional user tests to ensure accuracy.

Following testing, the tool was submitted for review by the NICE endorsement process. Endorsement was received in October 2015 and the tool was made available to UK practitioners – free-to-use, unrestricted access – in November 2015.

What impact is the project having?

Since launch, approximately 4,000 users have accessed the tool in over 5,000 sessions. The utility of the tool in practice is also currently being evaluated as part of a Keele University / NICE research project.

Where can I find the resource?

The anticoagulation decision support tool is freely available for all UK practitioners to use, and can be found here: www.anticoagulation-dst.co.uk/