PRODUCT REVIEW / CRITIQUE

Product: RxTx and Micromedex

Purpose: Web-based point of care clinical decision-making drug information tools

URLs: http://www.pharmacists.ca/products-services/ and http://truvenhealth.com/products/micromedex

Introduction

Drug information tools are an integral part of medical education and health care practice. Although Western University does not have a pharmacy program, students in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and the Faculty of Health Sciences regularly require access to drug information to prepare for their professional careers. It is quite common for academic libraries, especially those with medical and pharmacy programs, to subscribe to one or more drug tool. However, frozen or reduced acquisitions budgets across many Canadian institutions are creating challenges for subscribing to more than one drug resource. This product review will compare two common drug information tools: RxTx and Micromedex Solutions (Micromedex).

Production Description

RxTx is the rebranded name for the suite of evidence-based, point of care products available from the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA). RxTx includes the Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties (CPS), Compendium of Products for Minor Aliments (CPMA), Compendium of Therapeutic Choices (CTC), Compendium of Therapeutics for Minor Ailments (CTMA), Clin-Info tool, and Lexi Drug Interaction and Product Identification tool. RxTx offers several subscription packages, including the full suite of CPhA products or the specific content of drug and therapeutic modules. This is a significant change, with budgetary implications for institutions, as previously individual products were purchased. RxTx has an editorial staff that includes expert physicians and pharmacists, who seek out and review the best available evidence.

Micromedex (a Truven Health Analytics product) is an evidence-based, point of care clinical decision-making drug information tool. Its features include drug searching, drug interactions, IV compatibility, drug IV, drug comparison, CareNotes, NeoFax Pediatrics, Red Book, calculators, and toxicology and drug product look up. Micromedex employs in-house editorial staff to evaluate and synthesize the literature across multiple content areas.

The intended audience for RxTx and Micromedex is very similar and include pharmacists, physicians, nurses, and other health care providers. Micromedex also identifies emergency department clinicians, medical librarians, and students and residents as its intended users. Both RxTx and Micromedex are subscription-based resources, with pricing dependent upon institutional needs and user groups.

Usability

RxTx and Micromedex are browser-based applications compatible with all common web browsers, and mobile applications are available as part of the subscription. RxTx keeps users within one browser tab as they navigate the resource, and internal tabs below the search bar keep track of visited pages. This tab feature is helpful for backtracking. Micromedex in comparison does not create tabs and like RxTx does not allow users to open new windows. Printing is simple for both products, including selected sections.

Both products have a search bar to enter general search queries, with the option to restrict results to drugs or disease/condition. Micromedex also gives users the choice to restrict to toxicology. Search results in RxTx are displayed in order of keyword occurrence. Micromedex displays three tabs: Quick Answers, In-depth Answers, and All Results. Quick Answers is the first page shown, which is helpful for users seeking general information. Users are still able to browse all the results if they so choose. Both RxTx and Micromedex can filter results, but RxTx allows for

specific keyword filters whereas Micromedex provides links to related results.

Both products offer support in various formats. RxTx provides Quick Tip Videos, FAQs, and a downloadable user guide. The Micromedex Training Centre makes available web seminars, video demos, and hands-on tutorials. While both provide customer service during regular business hours via telephone and online forms, Micromedex also offers 24-hour technical support.

Product Features

Both resources provide monograph information including dosing, contraindications, precautions, adverse effects, warning, toxicology, pharmacology, pharmacokinetics, and patient information. RxTx does not provide a monograph reference list but does include a revision date. In comparison, Micromedex includes a reference list at the end of each monograph as well as a last modified date. The chart below lists additional features in both products.

RxTx includes the Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties (CPS), a well-known drug information tool containing primarily Canadian drug information supplied by pharmaceutical manufacturers and approved by Health Canada. Micromedex recently introduced Canadian approved drugs and dosing, Canadian specific labelling, and brand names for generic drugs. This feature in Micromedex is a welcome addition but keep in mind the following. The Regulatory Authority automatically defaults to the Food and Drug Administration (USA) but by selecting Health Canada, the change remains effective for the duration of the session. The display of the American or Canadian flag provides a visual reminder of which regulatory authority's information one is viewing.

Both RxTx and Micromedex offer comprehensive drug information, but they are only two of a number of tools available. Deciding which product best meets your education and research needs is dependent upon curriculum and collections budget priorities.

RxTx	Micromedex
Shared Features	
Product Identification Tool	Product Identification Tool
Condition Information (Therapeutic Choices)	Condition Information (in search results)
Drug Interactions (Lexi-Interactions)	Drug Interactions
Patient Information	Patient Information (CareNotes)
Drug Cost (CAD in Therapeutic Choices)	Drug Cost (USD in Red Book)
Calculators and Dosing	Calculators and Dosing
Unique Features	
Clin-Info Topics	Alternative Medicine Monographs
Products for Minor Ailments	IV Compatibility
Public Drug Programs	Drug Comparison
Minor Ailments	Pediatrics and NeoFax
Minor Ailments: Information for Patients	

Statement of Competing Interests

No competing interests declared.

Kelly Hatch
Research & Instructional Services Librarian
Allyn & Betty Taylor Library, Western Libraries
Western University
London ON
Email: khatch@uwo.ca

Shawn Hendrikx
Research & Instructional Services Librarian
Allyn & Betty Taylor Library, Western Libraries
Western University
London ON
Email: shendri4@uwo.ca