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NEWS AND TRENDS

Analytics and workflow improvement the big stories at RSNA 2013

BY JERRY ZEIDENBERG

CHICAGO – Some of the most interesting and significant product announcements at the recent RSNA conference, held in December, weren't about the traditional imaging modalities, like CT and MRI. Instead, they involved eye-popping improvements in process management and analytics.

Also on the analytics front, ABS Systems of Toronto, demonstrated its business intelligence solution for radiology and cardiology departments at RSNA '13.

ABS has a long history in business intelligence, and for the past five years has provided Toronto's University Health Network and its joint imaging department partners

With easy-to-use analytics, physicians and staff can spot bottlenecks and determine what to do about them.

at Mount Sinai Hospital and Women's College Hospital with its analytics solution.

"We've developed an easy-to-use analytics system," said Oren Chervinsky, executive VP of ABS. "Doctors didn't go to medical school to learn analytics, so we've created a very intuitive system for them."

The system provides basic reporting, with some 20 pre-defined reports. It also has more advanced features, like time-series analysis, cross tabs and correlations, enabling doctors and administrators to quickly spot problem areas.

"They can see if there's a bottleneck in one room as opposed to another," said Chervinsky, or whether one site at a hospital is performing better than another. "But the software also helps them figure out what to do next. Even more importantly, it helps them solve problems like, 'why am I spending more in one room than in another?'"

According to Chervinsky, the software allows users to find answers in minutes. That compares with the days or weeks that are often needed to analyze trends in hospitals. What's more, he says the system is much easier to use than BI systems that are traditionally used in hospitals and other organizations.

ABS recently scored a big win by signing a contract with Alberta AIM (a multi-stakeholder organization in Alberta); the Toronto company will provide its solution to the Alberta healthcare quality improvement program, so that healthcare teams can analyze how they deliver care and make improvements accordingly.

A contract with hospitals in northern Ontario is also on the horizon; ABS will soon supply a number of hospitals in northern Ontario with a business intelligence system for their shared information system. Chervinsky noted that ABS has created a special version of its solution, one that has been tailored to the needs of the northern hospitals.

He observed that the next big wave in BI for healthcare won't be technological, as powerful algorithms and concepts already exist. Instead, it will involve the benefits derived from comparing practices and outcomes across multiple sites. "You can then compare what's being done and attain a set of best practices," he said.

M*modal, a large dictation and transcription company based in Franklin, Tenn., demonstrated recent innovations in adding intelligence to D/T. In particular, it's offering a new version of its radiology product with analytics, quality-improvement and workflow capabilities, said chief scientist Dr. Juergen Fritsch.

For example, "A side-panel [on the screen] presents additional information

that comes from the EMR and other sources, including oncology and pathology," said Dr. Fritsch. In this way, the radiologist can see what happens to the patient as he or she continues his or her journey through the hospital.

"A radiologist often doesn't know whether his diagnosis was right," he said. "This shows whether he was right or wrong, and enables him to score himself.

It's a feedback loop that results in a smarter worker." M*modal won a huge D/T contract in Canada at the end of 2012; it was the winning bidder on a deal to supply all of the health authorities in British Columbia's lower mainland with its solution. The cloud-based system was selected as the sole dictation platform to be used by 10,000 physicians in 38 hospitals and medical centres.

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