Supply chain management

Resah leverages reliable healthcare product data to improve patient safety

French hospitals are today challenged by new regulations that require them to track and trace all healthcare products. As a result, pharmacists in these hospitals need reliable and complete trade item data for greater knowledge about the products they use and for improved patient safety.

Réseau des Acheteurs Hospitaliers (Resah)—the second largest French group purchasing organisation (GPO) that purchases for 320 care providers in France—requested that all its suppliers send synchronised trade item data through the Global Data Synchronisation Network (GDSN). This measure is expected to save time and money for hospitals and pharmacies while ensuring better data quality and greater patient safety.

By Vani Barsoumian

In need of quality data

Health professionals need complete and accurate data related to healthcare products for efficient processes—order-to-cash, inventory management and dispensing of the products they use every day. In fact, the quality of data received is especially critical when it comes to ensuring the quality of patient care and safety.

For more than 10 years, French hospitals have been very aware of this need and have attempted multiple times to synchronise product information with their suppliers and their points of care.

Leading the way for data synchronisation

Now, Resah, a major GPO of health products in France, has succeeded in its project of data synchronisation between suppliers and healthcare providers.

To start, the company created a task force comprised of stakeholders all along the value chain who were concerned about issues related to the quality of their product information. The group included representatives from medical device manufacturers (B.Braun, Bio-Rad, Vygon), a pharmaceutical laboratory (Roche), a solution provider that specialises in information systems for hospitals (MiPih), a pharmaceutical database (CIP), hospital pharmacists (Hospitals of Argenteuil, Saint-Denis and Groupement Hospitalier de l'Est Francilien), the medical service of the French Army (Service de Santé des Armées) as well as GS1 France.

The objective of the task force was to collect users' needs that would conform to regulatory prerequisites with the aim of getting responses from manufacturers.

The Resah task force was initially focused on the definition of two data models: one for medical devices and the other for pharmaceutical drugs. The data model for medical devices took into account the list of data elements requested by

the U.S. Food & Drug Administration's (FDA) Unique Device Identification (UDI) regulation.

The task force then enhanced the data model with other useful information needed by pharmacists and healthcare providers for the efficient receipt, storage and management of pharmaceutical drugs and medical devices. Regarding the data model for pharmaceutical drugs, the task force retained the regulatory data in France and the necessary information for pharmacists. The two data models integrated all of this mandatory information required by GS1 standards for the exchange of trade item data via the GDSN.

Exchanging information via data pools

Once the two data models were defined, Resah organised tests to exchange trade item data through the GDSN. It partnered with one of the major solution providers for hospitals in France called MiPih, based on the company's expertise in providing ERP-based solutions for healthcare providers. Today, MiPih information systems solutions support more than 600 French healthcare providers in their day-to-day activities, effectively mastering the integration of product data in its current solutions.

MiPih's role was essential for the tests. The company developed a data pool based on GS1 technical specifications and connected to the GDSN. The data pool was designed to receive data from suppliers through the GDSN and then distribute this reliable information to any existing and future hospital member of Resah. A data pool called "eCatSanté" (means "e-catalogue in healthcare") has been developed by MiPih and can now provide hospitals with product records directly from manufacturers.

The initial tests through the GDSN took place in September 2015 with successful exchanges of complete trade item data realised in October 2016. On 1 January 2017, Resah officially announced the launch of eCatSanté to all of its suppliers.

€65›€10

All along the value chain, GS1 France estimates costs are reduced from €65 to €10 per product record, in terms of data management costs.

Benefits of data synchronisation

The initiative is compliant with recent European and French regulations related to e-procurement. The use of an electronic catalogue is now recognised by authorities as a possible way to organise tenders.

In terms of benefits for data recipients and the quality of the care, a parliamentary report from the British Department of Health[1] had anticipated by 2015 that each hospital equipped with such a tool could realise up to €3.5 million a year in savings.

Initial results in the French hospitals show that synchronised trade item data decrease the workload of administrative staff—two percent of assistants can thus be reallocated to other activities.

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The advantages for manufacturers are also numerous. A standard data model enables them to reduce the number of product record formats sent to their customers. Above all, manufacturers can control their data.

Thanks to synchronised data exchanges, manufacturers know precisely who can request and access their product data. Finally, the system makes it possible to provide pharmacists in hospitals with reliable, up-to-date and complete information.

1 *Interim Report, by Lord Carter of Coles: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/434202/carter-interim-report.pdf*

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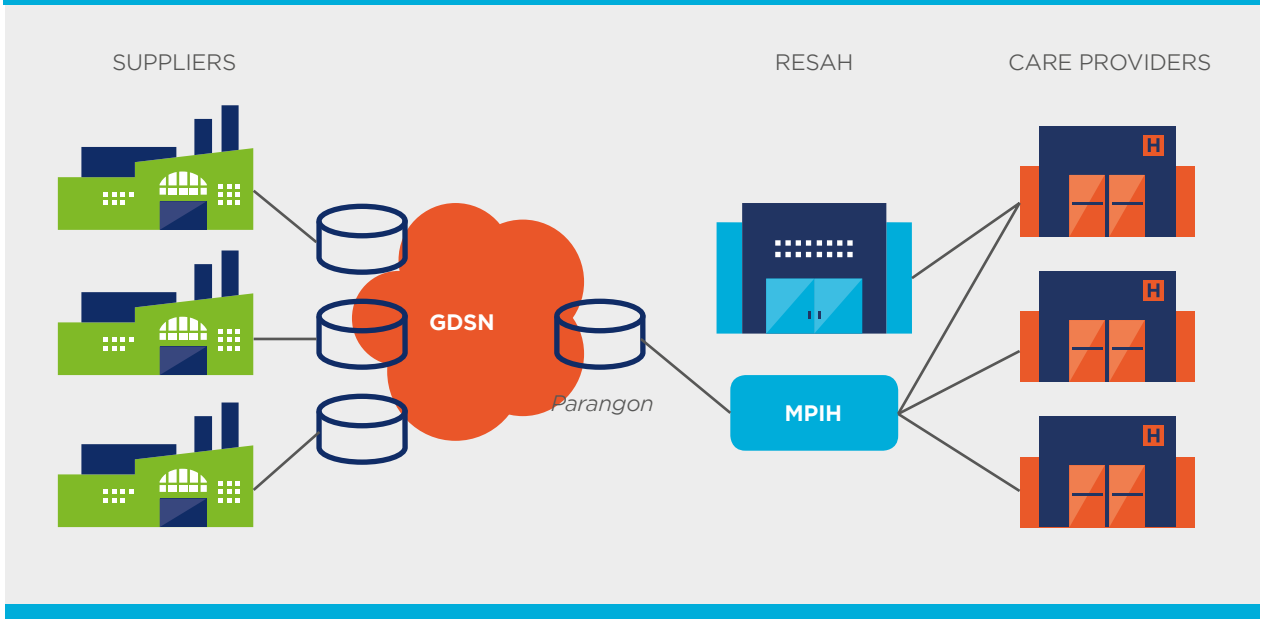

For the next steps of its initiative, Resah plans to extend this system of data exchange to most of its suppliers, including those in foodservice and laboratory supplies.

About the Author

Vani Barsoumian *is a project manager at Resah, with 10 years of experience in hospital management. She leads projects aimed at improving the performance of purchasing activities in hospitals. Vani leads the eCatSanté project, organising healthcare stakeholders and working to harmonise and optimise data management related to healthcare products (pharmaceuticals and medical devices) in hospitals. Vani graduated with a Masters degree in Healthcare Economy from Paris-Dauphine University and with a University degree in Hospital Management.*

About Resah

Resah *is a public group purchasing organisation in France that supports high performance for all actors in the healthcare, medico-social and social sectors, thanks to mutualisation and professionalisation of purchasing and logistical activities. Its activities are organised around two major areas of services: as a purchasing group and as a resource and expertise centre.*

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