



February 2004

Trajectory challenges current DM approach

Author: *Patty Enrado, Contributing editor*

LOVELAND, OH - Trajectory Healthcare's effort to shift disease management programs' frame of reference from linear time to patient time - a concept borrowed from epidemiology - could upset a few applecarts in the world of disease management.

Thomas Wilson, epidemiologist and founder of Trajectory, says his approach - examining diseased populations through patient events, such as a heart attack - is more predictable and robust than relying on calendar time, which fluctuates widely due to the different mix of people under watch.

Trajectory, which has two patents pending for its system, uses the same logic based on clinical trials - looking at groups or subgroups as opposed to individuals.

Jeffery Gruen, senior medical director for New York-based UnitedHealthcare, said that Trajectory's system is "potentially a very powerful way to identify a subpopulation at risk because its measurements (following the natural course of any disease) are more precise." Gruen said that the standard disease management program doesn't take into account where any given member is on his or her program, whereas Trajectory takes into account where members are in the natural history of their disease course.

Kathleen Brody, senior research associate for the Center for Health Research for Portland, Ore.-based Kaiser-Permanente Northwest, used Trajectory's software as part of a 2003 disease management pilot project for heart failure and was impressed with the outcome.

"I think you'll see a good adoption rate because Trajectory's system addresses gaps in the healthcare system early on," she said.

But Jocelyn Young, program manager for IDC, warns that if a new IT tool requires an organization to change the way it does its work - such as entering information in a different way - acceptance and adoption could be low.

Source: http://www.healthcareitnews.com/asp/trajectory_0204.asp