An R&D executive in charge of a therapeutics strategic unit for a midmarket pharmaceutical company confides how Scopus helps her company move compounds through to the pre-clinical phase with more success and in a shorter period of time than the competition by providing easy access to necessary research and key experts — all in one solution.

Summary
An R&D executive shares how Scopus helps improve success rates and productivity.
Case Study: Improving Pre-Clinical Studies Success Rates by Leveraging External Expertise

“For midsize companies to compete with larger companies that have greater resources, it’s all about agility and creating the most innovative approaches.”

— Calliope Saito, Pharmaceutical R & D Executive

Challenge

Calliope Saito, an R & D executive at a midmarket pharmaceutical company*, and is responsible for ensuring compounds within therapeutic areas find a ‘home’ as well as to evaluate the potential of those compounds in addressing patients’ needs by moving them through pre-clinical studies into clinical trials successfully.

“For midsize companies to compete with larger companies that may have greater resources, it’s all about agility and creating the most innovative approaches that will pick up what will make a molecule as effective as possible,” Saito says. “Otherwise, the company will not be successful, or else that success will be very short-lived.”

Success rate and productivity have become even more crucial in drug development over the past few years. “My team uses Scopus because having the right information is absolutely critical,” explains Saito. “It helps us to improve our success rate in moving molecules from one stage to another.”

Solution

1. Leveraging outside expertise

To be most productive through the pre-clinical phase, Saito’s team must continually identify experts, either to keep up with cutting-edge research or to collaborate with to design approaches that will ensure the molecules are most effective. “Scopus enables us to follow the best minds in science. It also helps us determine whom we should reach out to,” she says. “When we’re entering a brand new therapeutic area, where new molecules are explored, especially for the company, it’s particularly important for us to find the right external experts.”

“Some molecules can be developed for multiple indications,” she points out. “Our company may have an ample expert network for some therapeutic uses or pathways but not for others. So, getting up to speed on a novel indication by knowing what research has already been done is definitely a necessity when ramping up in an unfamiliar area.”

“Identifying and building a relationship with these experts can also be essential in finding a home for this type of molecule,” Saito says. “Sometimes internal resources are not sufficient to come up with a final indication that may be most appealing to the marketplace.”

2. Improving decisions on what to pursue

Saito’s team also relies on Scopus to access the latest research information to help her team make better-informed decisions. “Scopus helps us to avoid the risks of failure and to improve our success rate in moving a drug from one stage to another,” explains Saito.

“Having access to publications, even in the form of abstracts is indispensable,” Saito stresses. “We look closely at publications to pick up what the competition is doing and whether we can glean vital information from them. Learning what has been successful on the indicators for how molecules will react within population sets that we may also be reviewing, or even following the competition to assess how crowded the particular field is, could affect the way we decide progress.”

*For confidentiality purposes, names have been changed.
“Our compound’s trial was successful, and the FDA granted us a fast-track designation for it. That’s an excellent example of how researching the literature with Scopus really made a difference. Analysts have forecast that this compound will be a multimillion-dollar earner.”

– Calliope Saito
Pharmaceutical R & D Executive

**Impact**

**Forecasting a successful multi-million dollar earner and getting FDA approval.**

“Scopus provides incredible time savings. From a patent perspective, getting to market faster can greatly increase the revenues the company ultimately brings in.”

“As an example, when we checked the literature [using Scopus] for compounds similar to one that we were developing, we discovered that a competitor’s compound had failed its trial, except within one subpopulation,” she continues. “We ultimately decided that the optimal approach was to design our trial specifically for that subpopulation alone. Our compound’s trial was successful, and the FDA granted us a fast-track designation for it. That’s an excellent example of how researching the literature with Scopus really made a difference. Analysts have forecast that this compound will be a multimillion-dollar earner.”

Saito’s team also uses Scopus in conjunction with Elsevier’s Pathway Studio, a resource that accelerates biological research by making the interpretation of experimental data easier and by providing greater insight into the mechanisms of disease. “Pathway Studio gives us a quick outline of what is out there in terms of ongoing clinical trials,” she explains. “We then go to Scopus to discover what has been published and by whom – either via the experts or the companies or affiliations involved, which allows us to assess how crowded any particular field is. So, the combination of these two tools provides the breadth and depth we need to move our drug development forward.”

“I would recommend Scopus to my colleagues for two key reasons,” Saito concludes. “It boosts productivity and improves the probability of success.” A third reason lies on the horizon. “The risks of operating without Scopus will increase when new regulations that require companies to publish their protocols go into effect,” she predicts. “In this new era of transparency, maintaining knowledge of what competitors are doing will be a necessity rather than an option.”
Scopus

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