ClinicalPath reduces the time searching for information. It therefore plays an important role in assisting clinical treatment and training.

Yi-Chun Chiu, MD, Department of Urology, Taipei City Hospital

From diagnosis to staging, treatment selection and implementing treatment. Which stage of the process is the most difficult challenging?

“There are usually two key steps; one is determining the tumour stage and the other is recommending the treatment. For the latter, the decision should be supported by the latest evidence-based practice. Yet the challenge lies in the regularity of guideline updates plus the fact that treatment methods can change in line with alternations in tumour staging.”
Which stage occupies most of your time?

“For the doctor, staying abreast of the ever increasing volume of knowledge inevitably becomes the most time consuming dimension. Yet with Taiwan healthcare system advocating a shared-decision making process with the patient, we should be seeing the most time allocated to patient engagement. Patients trust their doctors with regards to the diagnosis but are often confused in regard to the effects of treatment and options available, for example.”

What do you refer to when you have questions about diagnostic work-up or the treatment?

“Early on in my career I consulted textbooks but now guidelines are my first port of call. I work in the Department of Urology and therefore refer to guidelines from the Taiwan Urological Association, the European Association of Urology or the American Urological Association. In addition to this, we use reference databases such as ClinicalKey and research platforms to identify specialist journal papers. The result, however, can be various recommendations arising from different knowledge sources and with a different focus from each.”

Is the treatment selection support from ClinicalPath valuable?

“ClinicalPath is very useful resource. The database integrates both diagnostic work-up and treatment which is useful to the young attending physicians. For senior and specialist oncologists it can help confirm treatment plan options for common case whilst saving time in researching and developing those for lesser seen or more complex cases.”

Would ClinicalPath be suitable for study purposes?

“Yes, ClinicalPath would find value in the context of problem-based learning for students in year 3 or 4. If investigating a means of localising a bladder cancer case, for example, they would need to consult a number of different information sources, including learning to read the guidelines. ClinicalPath presents the rationale and supporting references behind the necessary decision-making and therefore has a role to play in assisting study as well as clinical treatment.”

If your hospital licenses ClinicalPath, are you going to use it?

“Absolutely. As a urologist working in a regional hospital, I would consider myself a generalist oncologist. ClinicalPath would offer me great value in helping to develop optimal treatment plans for a broad range of tumor types and disease scenarios.”