

Real-world data is king (or queen)

See how Boehringer Ingelheim is advancing research
with diverse, longitudinal data



The pharmaceutical industry is experiencing considerable growth.

According to one estimation, the global pharmaceuticals market is expected to grow to nearly USD \$1700.1 billion by 2025.

Boehringer Ingelheim is proof of this growth.

In the past three years, the Germany-based pharmaceutical company has experienced a significant expansion, with net sales of EUR 19.6 billion in 2020. Its 2020 revenue also placed the company at number 16 on FiercePharma's Top 20 Pharma Companies list.

Boehringer Ingelheim's primary therapeutic areas include cardiovascular, oncology, respiratory, central nervous system (CNS), metabolic diseases, immunology and retinal health. The company prides itself as a leader in the industry and has worked diligently to build its pharmaceutical pipeline over the past several years to help bring treatments to the patients who need them most.

With growth comes new challenges, and one challenge Boehringer Ingelheim realized during this growth was the need for more in-depth, patient-level, longitudinal, real-world data to help make its research processes more efficient and thorough.

"We realized the importance of data at a very early stage," says Paul Petraro, Global Head of Real World Evidence for Boehringer Ingelheim.

"Data is key to success because you can't base important decisions on your gut. Our customers need data. And we wanted to provide them with direct, quality data."

Petraro continues, "[Clinical] trial results are great. They help, but for every single customer — whether it's payers, patients, healthcare systems, governments — it's always going to be about their data."

To drive the research process and address the demand for quality real-world insights, the organization needed a flexible data solution that would allow it to access necessary information agilely and reliably across the product lifecycle.

"We needed direct data," says Ling Zhang, Director, Real World Evidence, Global Epidemiology, at Boehringer Ingelheim. "We were in need of vast, quality data that provided the information we needed as we continued to grow globally."

To accomplish its short-term and long-term goals, the Boehringer Ingelheim team turned to Merative and the global life sciences team for assistance in updating its systems and processes with rich, deidentified real-world data from the Merative™ MarketScan® Research Databases.

"Overall, we were in need of support and a product that could help us provide high-quality research studies and a broader use of our data for more advanced analytics and more advanced research studies," says Petraro.



“We knew we could use Merative MarketScan Research Databases across the board to help us improve cost, healthcare utilization and processes — all while making everything more efficient for our team.”

Ling Zhang
Director, Real World Evidence, Global Epidemiology
Boehringer Ingelheim

Improving efficiency using real-world data

Adapting to technology advancements in general and acknowledging the importance of data in particular are key factors for future innovation and success. Boehringer Ingelheim sees these factors as great opportunities for the company.

“Data is king — or queen,” says Petraro. “We knew that if we wanted to take advantage of data and its capabilities and resources across the lifecycle, we would need to move fast and put everything in motion as early as possible.”

First, Boehringer Ingelheim had to determine how to utilize the MarketScan portfolio of products — which didn’t take long. The team realized early on how the MarketScan Research Databases could help them more efficiently implement advanced analytics and research methodologies to support value communication to their customers.

“We knew we could use MarketScan across the board to help us improve cost, healthcare utilization and processes — all while making everything more efficient for our team,” says Zhang.

“MarketScan has so many features, and in our case, more is definitely better in helping us get the information we need for research and studies.”

Dr. Jeffrey Galles
Chief Medical Officer,
Utica Park Clinic

The team discovered that the MarketScan portfolio encompassed a wide array of databases. They selected various databases to help them address their unique research goals, including:

- MarketScan Commercial Database and MarketScan Medicare Supplemental Database
- MarketScan Lab Database
- MarketScan Multi-State Medicaid Database
- MarketScan Explorys Claims-EMR Data Set

“Having access to all these solutions was more efficient for both us and our customers,” says Zhang.

For example, the MarketScan MultiState Medicaid Database helped the Boehringer Ingelheim team develop real-world insights for a unique population that requires specialized care and resources. Although it would be possible to access Medicaid data from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Boehringer Ingelheim team found it much easier and quicker to access this data from Merative, especially given that MarketScan database includes important elements such as diagnosis, treatment, costs and utilization information.

The Boehringer Ingelheim team found that the breadth and depth of the MarketScan Research Databases helped them uncover critical insights to support their research objectives. The MarketScan solutions can capture the full continuum of care, providing Boehringer Ingelheim with important information on healthcare utilization and costs, which are essential components of evidence generation for any pharmaceutical organization. Further,

Boehringer Ingelheim cites the availability of real-cost data — as opposed to estimated costs — in the MarketScan portfolio as an essential element when analyzing the differences in costs between providers and within states, as well as when considering targeted sales outreach.

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In addition to the depth of the data, the Boehringer Ingelheim team credits MarketScan Research Databases with providing more reliable information due to the size and recency of the databases and the multiple data contributors. “Merative provides data from multiple providers, providing data and more detailed information,” says Petraro.

For researchers and data scientists, this is key to providing a more representative view of healthcare costs and utilization, which is important when sharing the results of research studies with stakeholders.

Additionally, working with a global organization such as Merative has proven to be extremely valuable for the team. Petraro credits the success of their transformation to the global Merative team that supported their initiatives.

“Merative provided everything we needed from a data point of view, and it was their engagement and support that helped with our transformation because they understood our needs and, in the end, we built a relationship and worked together to build the best assets that were tailored to our team,” says Petraro.



Driving research with advanced analytics

While Boehringer Ingelheim is still determining their quantitative success from the use of MarketScan Research Databases, the team feels there are other results that have proven beneficial to their team.

“Being in this space, data is obviously important to us,” says Petraro. “Over time, it will be helpful to get to the point where we are truly determining quantifying costs and ROI – but right now, quantifying our success is purely based on data and our relationship with Merative.”

The agility and flexibility of MarketScan Research Databases have contributed to indirect benefits for Boehringer Ingelheim. With convenient access to academic-quality patient-level databases that are in-depth, compliant, and able to capture the full continuum and cost of care, researchers can more efficiently conduct research using these curated databases.

“We conduct so many studies,” says Zhang. “Other vendors don’t have the data collection from the wide variety of insurance providers or a huge population on all products.”

She continues, “having the data on our own – through MarketScan – has helped us find results easier and provide better insights to help with studies.”

Petraro credits Merative for a tremendous transformation and states that:

- Merative provides rapid insights with recent, up-to-date data.
- The MarketScan data helps drive research and decisions to help do a better job of data mining.
- The Merative team provides excellent, responsive and thorough client interaction and customer service.
- As a global organization, Merative provides a large volume of data to meet the needs of all audiences.
- Merative data is reliable and trustworthy

“We’ve gotten more work accomplished since implementing MarketScan into our workload,” says Petraro. “Data is truly the most important resource. We know that the data from Merative is trusted and of top quality. The real-world data has helped us answer questions earlier, and for us, that is priceless because we are able to meet our goal of helping our customers quicker and more efficiently.”

Boehringer Ingelheim continues to use the MarketScan databases to drive business decisions through commercial analytics all the way through more traditional health economics and outcomes research (HEOR) and epidemiology work, such as feasibility assessments, hypothesis generation, and full-on research studies.





About Boehringer Ingelheim

Boehringer Ingelheim is working on breakthrough therapies that improve the lives of humans and animals. As a leading research-driven biopharmaceutical company, Boehringer Ingelheim creates value through innovation in areas of high unmet medical need. Founded in 1885 and family-owned ever since, Boehringer Ingelheim takes a long-term perspective. Around 52,000 employees serve more than 130 markets in the three business areas: Human Pharma, Animal Health, and Biopharmaceutical Contract Manufacturing.

About Merative

Merative is a data, analytics and technology partner for the health industry, including providers, payers, life sciences companies and governments. With trusted technology and human expertise, Merative works with clients to drive real progress. Merative helps clients reassemble information and insights around the people they serve to improve healthcare delivery, decision-making and performance. Merative, formerly IBM Watson Health, became a new standalone company as part of Francisco Partners in 2022. Learn more at www.merative.com.

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MSN-3041070254 Rev 3.0

