

A Treatment Recommender Clinical Decision Support System for Personalized Medicine: Method Development and Proof-of-concept for Drug Resistant Tuberculosis

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1 **Title: A treatment recommender clinical decision support system for personalized medicine:**
2 **method development and proof-of-concept for drug resistant tuberculosis**

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19

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21

22 **ABSTRACT**

23 **Background**

24 Individualised or precision medicine tailors care based on the patient's or pathogen's
25 genotypic and phenotypic characteristics. An automated Clinical Decision Support System
26 (CDSS) could help translate the genotypic and phenotypic characteristics into optimal
27 treatment and thus facilitate implementation of individualized treatment by less experienced
28 physicians.

29 **Methods**

30 We developed a hybrid knowledge- and data-driven treatment recommender CDSS.
31 Stakeholders and experts first define the knowledge base by identifying and quantifying drug
32 and regimen features for the prototype model input. In an iterative manner, feedback from
33 experts is harvested to generate model training datasets, machine learning methods are
34 applied to identify complex relations and patterns in the data, and model performance is
35 assessed by estimating the precision at one, mean reciprocal rank and mean average
36 precision. Once the model performance no longer iteratively increases, a validation dataset
37 is used to assess model overfitting.

38 **Results**

39 We applied the novel methodology to develop a treatment recommender CDSS for
40 individualized treatment of drug resistant tuberculosis as a proof of concept. Using input from
41 stakeholders and three rounds of expert feedback on a dataset of 355 patients with 129
42 unique drug resistance profiles, the model had a 95% precision at 1 indicating that the highest

43 ranked treatment regimen was considered appropriate by the experts in 95% of cases. Use of
44 a validation data set however suggested substantial model overfitting, with a reduction in
45 precision at 1 to 78%.

46 **Conclusion**

47 Our novel and flexible hybrid knowledge- and data-driven treatment recommender CDSS is a
48 first step towards the automation of individualized treatment for personalized medicine.
49 Further research should assess its value in fields other than drug resistant tuberculosis,
50 develop solid statistical approaches to assess model performance, and evaluate their
51 accuracy in real-life clinical settings.

52 **KEYWORDS**

53 Clinical Decision Support System, treatment individualisation, machine learning

54

55 **INTRODUCTION**

56 Evidence-based medicine aims to integrate individual clinical experience with the best
57 available external scientific evidence to develop trustworthy clinical practice guidelines and
58 optimize clinical decision making [1, 2]. Under the evidence-based medicine paradigm, the
59 clinician uses sound evidence to formulate the best therapeutic choice for their patient, most
60 often through a standardized public health approach where national or international
61 guidelines are implemented. More recently, personalised medicine has gained increasing
62 attention. Personalized or precision medicine tailors medical decisions to the individual
63 patient based on their predicted response to treatment in order to administer “therapy with

64 the right drug at the right dose in the right patient” [3, 4]. To implement personalized
65 medicine, diagnostic tests are performed to determine the patient’s and/or the pathogen’s
66 phenotypic and genetic characteristics. Integrating individual patient genomic information
67 into a clinical decision is however challenging, especially for non-experts, given the rapid
68 evolution in knowledge on the genotype-phenotype associations. The use of a clinical decision
69 support system (CDSS) could facilitate the use of personalized medicine approaches by less
70 experienced physicians and other health care workers at the time and location of patient care
71 [5, 6].

72 CDSSs for guiding treatment decisions can either be data-driven or knowledge-driven.
73 Knowledge-driven CDSSs use a rule-based system, implement guidelines developed by
74 national or international organizations such as CDC and WHO, and operate at a rather coarse
75 level and do not consider all available patient or pathogen information [7, 8]. In contrast, data
76 driven CDSSs use techniques such as machine learning and data mining aim to use all relevant
77 data to learn complex relations and dynamics from past experience and reveal patterns in the
78 data in order to assist with the complex decision making. For personalized medicine, data-
79 driven CDSSs are attractive as data is increasingly being collected and stored [9-13].

80 Recommender systems use machine learning and data mining techniques to predict the
81 preference a user would give to a specific item based on their preference history [14].

82 Recommender systems are mostly used to make personalized recommendations in e-
83 commerce (e.g. Amazon), online media (e.g. Netflix), social media, and online news feeds [15].

84 Most recommender systems either use collaborative filtering, content-based filtering, or a
85 combination of the two. Collaborative filtering recommender systems predict which items a

86 user might like based on other similar users that watched similar items [16] and implicit (i.e.
87 a user watched a movie) or explicit (i.e. a user gave a 5-star rating) preferences by the user.
88 Content-based recommender systems predict which new items the user will like by learning
89 a classifier of the likes and dislikes of a user using the features associated with the items they
90 like. [14, 17]. Data driven CDSSs and recommender systems are uncommon in clinical practice,
91 mostly due the perception that they are a ‘black box’ tool [6] with a decision process that
92 lacks transparency, even though transparent recommender systems exist [18, 19].

93 Crowdsourcing is a problem-solving model in which a large open group of actors try to
94 collectively solve a larger problem [20] with many applications such as street mapping
95 (OpenStreetMap; a collaborative effort of mappers contributing to create and maintain world
96 map data), and data science (Netflix Prize; an open competition to develop the best
97 collaborative filtering algorithm for Netflix [21]).

98 In this study we report the development of a fully automated hybrid knowledge- and data-
99 driven CDSS to identify the optimal treatment regimen for individual patients and present the
100 personalized treatment of drug resistant tuberculosis as a use case to explain the
101 methodology and its potential application in global health.

102 **METHODS**

103 To ensure a transparent and standardized process, we adapted the multi-step approach for
104 the development of a decision aid [22] (Fig 1). In this methods section, we describe the
105 complete process of developing the treatment recommender CDSS. In the results section, we

106 present the results of the application of this developed treatment recommender CDSS for the
107 individualized treatment of drug resistant tuberculosis.

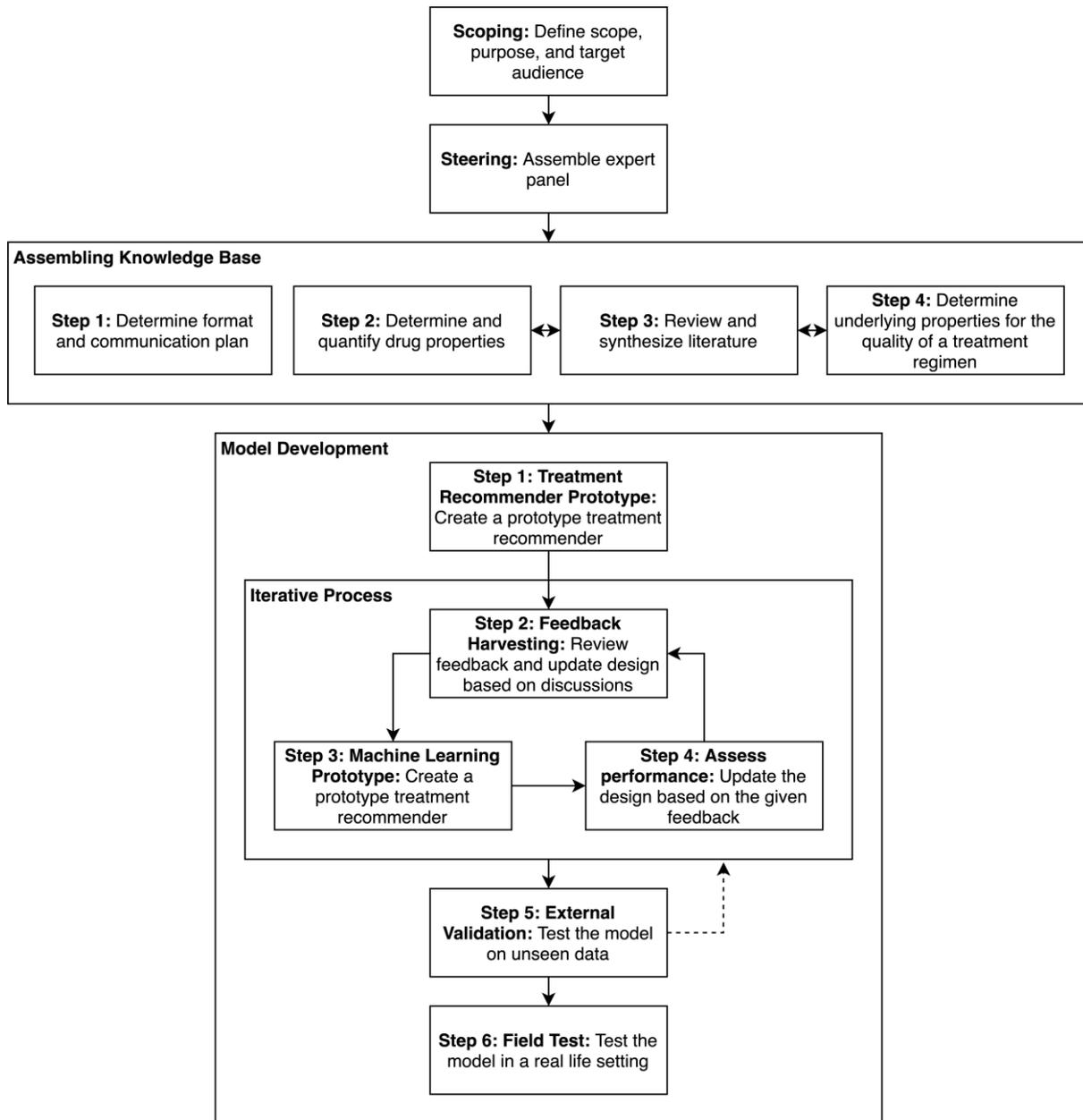
108 ***Defining the scope and assembling the expert panel***

109 After defining the purpose and target audience of the treatment recommender CDSS (scoping
110 step), an expert panel was assembled (steering step). To ensure a multidisciplinary and
111 holistic approach, the panel represented expertise in pathogen genomics (knowledge of
112 genotype-phenotype associations), pharmacology (characteristics of the drugs, drug-drug
113 interactions, and synergy and antagonism between drugs), clinical experts, as well as health
114 system and health economic experts. In addition, patients were consulted to provide their
115 perspective (e.g. the impact of side effects on their quality of life).

116 ***Assembling the knowledge base***

117 The knowledge base was developed in an iterative manner by combining review of published
118 literature, non-published data when gaps in the literature were identified, and consensus
119 building between experts using a standardized format for efficient expert feedback. First, the
120 key features of relevant individual drugs were determined. Next, the features of the
121 treatment regimen were established, hereafter referred to as regimen features, including the
122 number of effective drugs required and how drug features are aggregated into regimen
123 features. Third, data input requirements and decisions on user-friendly design of the
124 treatment recommender and communication of the recommendation were made.

125 ***Model development***



127

128 Development of the model consists of 6 steps (Figure 1). First, a prototype was developed to
 129 rank all possibly valid treatment regimens for an individual patient. Second, expert feedback
 130 was harvested on a sample of the top scoring regimens for patients that are representative
 131 of the target population. Third, the expert feedback was used to develop a training dataset.

132 Fourth, the model performance in recommending the optimal individual treatment regimen
133 was assessed. When the model performance was shown to be suboptimal, the rankings for
134 the patient-regimen pairs obtained by the random forest classifier were used in determining
135 the sampling for the next round of expert feedback harvesting. This process of machine
136 learning, expert data harvesting and assessment of model performance was repeated until
137 the model no longer substantially improved. Fifth, the final model was tested on a different
138 real-life clinical dataset to assess the degree of overfitting to the training data and verify that
139 the model is transferable to new data. Overfitting occurs when a model corresponds too
140 closely or exactly to the data on which it was trained, and may therefore underperform on
141 new and unseen data. The final step in the development process was a field test to assess the
142 effectiveness of the treatment recommender CDSS model for individualized treatment in
143 clinical trial participants. In the intervention arm, the minimum required patient information
144 and data on genomics information (treatment recommender CDSS input) was used by the
145 treatment recommender CDSS to propose the optimal individualized treatment for that
146 patient (treatment recommender CDSS output). In the section below, we describe the first
147 three steps in greater detail.

148 Step 1: Developing the treatment recommender prototype

149 Based on the knowledge base assembled, the prototype computes a quality score for every
150 valid patient-regimen pair (Fig 2). A valid regimen is defined as a regimen that only contains
151 valid drugs, and valid drugs are defined as drugs that are effective (no resistance detected)
152 and can be included in the individualized treatment regimen because of absence of clinical
153 contraindications, drug stock outs, or country-specific drug licensing issues.

154 The number of possible regimens r for a given patient is:

155
$$r = \binom{n}{k} = \frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!} \quad 1)$$

156

157 where n is the number of drugs available for a specific patient and k is the number of effective
158 drugs required in a treatment regimen. If the number of drugs to be included in the
159 individualized treatment regimen can vary, then the total number of possible regimens for
160 each patient equals the sum of formula 1 for all possible values of k .

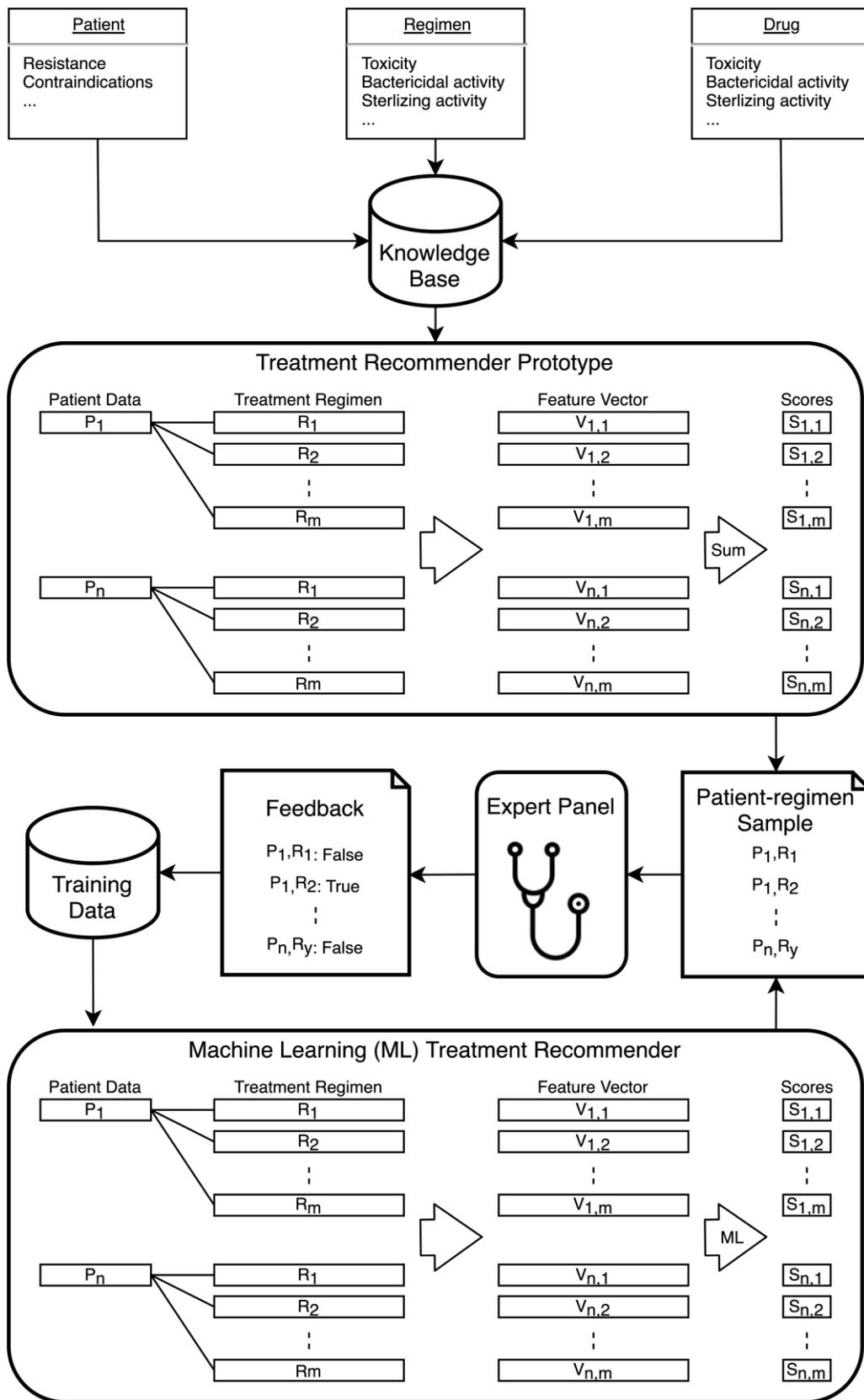
161 The total number of unique resistance profiles rp for a disease is:

162
$$rp = \sum_{k=0}^d \binom{d}{k} = 2^d \quad 2)$$

163 where d is the total number of available drugs for the disease of interest.

164 In the prototype, all regimen features were normalised from 0 (bad) to 1 (good) on the patient
165 level, meaning that the entire 0 to 1 interval is used to represent each regimen feature even
166 in patients with few available drugs. A higher score can be interpreted as better for the patient
167 and the highest scoring regimen is assumed to be the best regimen for that patient. After
168 normalising all regimen features and inverting negative features, such that for all regimen
169 features a lower score means worse for the patient, the sum of all features equates to the
170 quality score for that regimen, which is then used to rank the regimens for individual patients.

171 Step 2: Harvesting expert feedback



174 For each of the patients selected to represent the target patient population, a sample of the
175 top scoring regimens was reviewed by clinicians experienced in treating the condition of
176 interest (Figure 2). The number of cases reviewed was fixed and set to be large enough to
177 generate sufficient data to train the machine learning model but small enough so that the
178 experts were able and willing to carefully review every case presented. We sampled with
179 replacement to allow that multiple experts provide feedback on the same patient-regimen
180 pair, to allow that experts can provide feedback on the same patient-regimen pair multiple
181 times, and to ensure that a single expert cannot veto a top scoring regimen. The sampling
182 function randomly samples 1 regimen from the top 3 regimens (based on the ranking) for that
183 patient. A regimen i that has been sample before however has a probability p_i

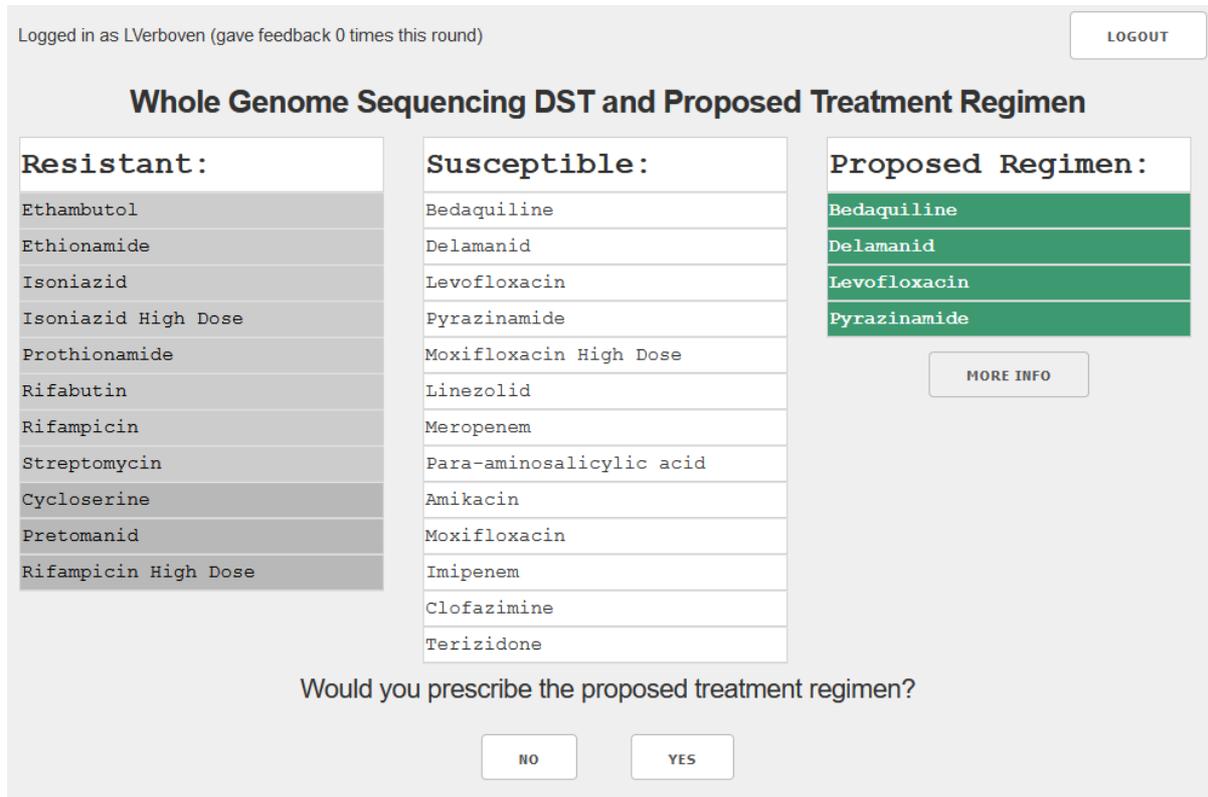
184

$$185 \quad p_i = 1 - p_{initial}^{f_i} \quad 3)$$

186

187 where $p_{initial}$ is the initial probability and f_i is the amount of feedback already received for
188 regimen i , to be removed from the top 3 making room for the next regimen in the ranking.
189 Parameter $p_{initial}$ can be tuned to make regimens more or less likely to be removed from the
190 top 3. After tuning, we found $p_{initial} = 0.2$ to give a good balance between resampling a
191 regimen and allowing new, lower ranked regimens to be sampled.

192 *Figure 3: Layout of the web interface*



193

194 To harvest the experts' feedback on the regimen-patient pairs, we developed a secure web
195 interface (Figure 3) that captured the feedback in a structured format. The web interface
196 contained four components: list of drugs that are not valid for this patient (due to resistance,
197 contraindications or not being available), list of valid drugs for the patient, and the
198 recommended treatment regimen. Upon review of this information, the expert is asked
199 whether he/she would prescribe this regimen for the individual patient. If the expert
200 responded they would not prescribe the recommended regimen to the individual patient,
201 they were asked why (open field) and were asked to list the regimen they would prescribe.
202 The alternative regimen increased the number of patient-regimen pairs with positive
203 feedback. The reasons for rejection were used to identify recurring topics that were then

204 discussed with the experts. The outcome of these discussions led to additional literature
205 review and possible addition, modification, or removal of drug or regimen features.

206 Step 3: Data driven machine learning model development

207 Our recommender model is different from standard recommender systems in that it does not
208 use a patient's treatment history to propose a new treatment, instead our recommender
209 model works by learning the underlying qualities of good treatments from other patients. The
210 feedback given by the experts was stored in a database and served as training data for the
211 machine learning model. We used a random forest classifier to learn the importance of
212 features and interactions between the features of a treatment regimen because random
213 forest classifiers are robust against overfitting and easy to develop. An additional advantage
214 of random forests is that they are constructed by having many decision trees vote and taking
215 the consensus of these trees. The concept of a decision tree and the way they are used in
216 random forests is very intuitive, making these more likely to be accepted by clinicians. Using
217 the normalised features, the model learns which regimen is good for a given patient,
218 accounting for the fact that not all options are available. The model is trained on the patient-
219 regimen-feedback pairs obtained through the expert feedback harvesting step and tries to
220 predict the probability that a patient-regimen pair was deemed good by the experts (Figure
221 2). These probabilities are then again used to rank all patient-regimen pairs for a given
222 patient, with the highest ranked regimen being the optimal treatment for that patient.

223 We used a patient level leave-one-out cross validation strategy to predict the new ranking of
224 regimens for a given patient. In other words, when using the model to predict the ranking for

225 patient p , we used the entire training data excluding all training data on p to train the random
226 forest classifier.

227 Step 4: Assessing model performance

228 We used three patient level performance measures: Precision at 1 ($P@1$) which assesses the
229 highest ranked regimen, Mean Reciprocal Rank (MRR) which represents the average of how
230 high the first regimen is ranked over all patients by the model, and Mean Average Precision
231 (MAP) which takes the position of all appropriate regimens into account.

232 Precision at 1 is a performance parameter where precision at N is defined by equation 4.

$$233 \quad P@N = \frac{\#good\ treatments\ in\ top\ N}{\#total\ treatments\ in\ top\ N} \quad 4)$$

234 $P@1$ is the fraction of patients for which the top ranked regimen is classified by the experts
235 as an appropriate regimen, with appropriate regimen defined as regimen the expert would
236 be willing to prescribe for that patient. When experts disagreed on the highest ranked
237 regimen, a majority voting was used to determine whether the regimen is appropriate.

238 The mean reciprocal rank is defined by equation 5,

$$239 \quad MRR = \frac{1}{|P|} \sum_p^P \frac{1}{rank_p} \quad 5)$$

240 where P is the set of patients and $rank_p$ the position of the first regimen classified by the
241 experts as appropriate for patient p .

242 The mean average precision is defined by equation 6,

243
$$MAP = \frac{1}{|P|} \sum_p^P AvgP(p) \quad 6)$$

244 where $Avg(p)$ is defined in equation 7

245
$$Avg(p) = \frac{1}{|GT_p|} \sum_i^{TX_p} (P@i \times rel(i)) \quad 7)$$

246 where GT_p is the set of appropriate treatments for patient p , TX_p is the set of all valid
 247 treatment regimens for patient p , and $rel(i)$ indicates whether treatment i is an appropriate
 248 treatment for patient p ($rel(i) = 1$), or an inappropriate treatment ($rel(i) = 0$).

249 **RESULTS**

250 In this section, we present how the newly developed method was as a proof-of-concept,
 251 applied to develop a treatment recommender CDSS to guide the individualization of
 252 treatment for Rifampicin Resistant Tuberculosis (RR-TB).

253 The scope and purpose of the development of a rifampicin resistant (RR)-TB treatment
 254 recommender was defined as “improving RR-TB treatment outcomes by optimizing the
 255 individualized treatment regimen in high TB burden resource limited settings”. The primary
 256 target audience were the clinicians treating patients with RR-TB in such setting.

257 A multidisciplinary steering group of experts was assembled by inviting clinicians with
 258 experience in treating RR-TB, pharmacologists with expertise in TB drugs, molecular
 259 epidemiologists with expertise in interpretation of the genotype-phenotype associations
 260 regarding drug resistance in *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, health systems experts to assess
 261 integration of individualized treatment in routine care, and ex-RR-TB patients.

262 The design phase started with a stakeholder meeting where all the members of the steering
263 group discussed the treatment recommender input parameters. Discussions focussed on
264 number of drugs needed in an effective treatment regimen, health system burden of
265 treatment monitoring, monitoring burden, drug toxicity, drug features, and clinical patient
266 characteristics, and genomic drug resistance profile. Uncertainties regarding the input
267 parameters identified during the meeting were resolved through literature search,
268 identification of unpublished data and iterative discussion until a consensus was reached on
269 all features to be included in the model. These discussions resulted in a set of 24 drugs that
270 are licensed for treatment of tuberculosis in South Africa, 9 drugs features, 18 regimen
271 features, and the consensus that 4 effective drugs need to be included in all individualized
272 regimens (Table 1). Based on these decisions, up to 10626 valid treatment regimens were
273 possible (Equation 1) for a patient without resistance.

274 *Table 1: Knowledge base on drugs, drug features and regimen features included in the treatment*
 275 *recommender for drug resistant tuberculosis*

Drugs	Amikacin, Bedaquiline, Clofazimine, Cycloserine, Delamanid, Ethambutol, Ethionamide, Imipenem, high or standard dose Isoniazid, Levofloxacin, Linezolid, Meropenem, high or standard dose Moxifloxacin, Para-aminosalicylic acid, Pretomanid, Prothionamide, Pyrazinamide, Rifabutin, high or standard dose Rifampicin, Streptomycin, Terizidone,
Drug features	Route of administration, toxicity, QT prolongation, cost, early bactericidal activity, bactericidal activity, sterilizing activity, mechanism of action, propensity to acquire resistance
Regimen features	Core or companion drug ^a [23], prevention of acquired resistance ^a , four different mechanisms of action ^a , fully oral regimen ^a , cost ^b , toxicity ^b , QT prolongation ^a , high early bactericidal activity ^a , early bactericidal activity ^b , high early bactericidal activity ^a , bactericidal activity ^b , high sterilizing activity ^a , sterilizing activity ^b , synergism ^b , antagonism ^b , contra-indications ^a , same drug class ^a , first line drugs included ^b

276 ^a Binary features, ^b Continuous features

277 We used a dataset that contained both clinical and whole genome sequencing data on 355
 278 patients diagnosed with RR-TB in three provinces in South Africa. The whole genome
 279 sequencing data represented 129 different drug resistance profiles. A group of 6 clinicians
 280 experienced in treatment of drug resistant tuberculosis were then asked to provide feedback
 281 on the recommended treatment using a structured online survey (Figure 3).

282 *Table 2: Training and external validation of the treatment recommender CDSS model*

	Number of regimens presented to experts	Total number of observations^a	Number of participating experts	Precision at 1	Mean average precision	Mean reciprocal rank
Training round 1	479	855	5	89%	53%	90%
Training round 2	445	719	6	95%	69%	97%
Training round 3	360	607	6	95%	72%	95%
Training round 1-3	1284	2181				
External Validation	375	592	5	78%	68%	87%

283 ^aNumber of observations include the alternative proposed by the expert in case the recommended regimen was
 284 not considered appropriate by the expert. The performance figures for the training rounds indicate the
 285 performance when training and validation on all currently available training data.

286

287 Assessment of the performance of the prototype model showed precision at 1 of 89%, mean
 288 average precision (MAP) of 53% and mean reciprocal rank (MPR) of 90% (Table 2). The written
 289 comments on regimens judged to be inappropriate were discussed with the expert group
 290 which resulted in modifications to the treatment recommender CDSS prototype. For example,
 291 the efficacy of the different drugs, which was initially quantified using a single feature was
 292 changed to three features: early bactericidal activity, bactericidal activity and sterilizing
 293 activity. Using the feedback, a random forest classifier was used to identify complex relations

294 and patterns in the data. Based on these results, the updated treatment recommender CDSS
295 reclassified the order of valid treatment regimens from which a sample was drawn for a
296 second round of feedback harvesting from the expert clinicians. The model had improved,
297 with an increase in all three performance parameters. Precision at one increased from 89%
298 to 95%, MAP from 53% to 69% and MRR from 90% to 97%. After three rounds, the
299 performance no longer improved, with precision at 1 and MRR stabilizing at 95% and MAP
300 around 70%.

301 For the external validation, another dataset consisting of 64 unique resistance profiles for
302 patients diagnosed with RR-TB in another province of was used. On this external validation
303 set, the model performance was lower, with a precision at 1 of 78%, MAP of 68% and MRR of
304 87% (table 2).

305

306 **DISCUSSION**

307 We developed a novel treatment recommender CDSS that combines a knowledge-driven
308 approach using feedback harvesting methodology with a data-driven approach using machine
309 learning methods to automate the individualisation of treatment. The knowledge-driven
310 component consists of input and feedback from stakeholders and experts. The data-driven
311 component consists of the machine learning methods to identify complex relations and
312 patterns.

313 Our approach is fundamentally different from standard knowledge-driven approaches to
314 CDSSs and offers several advantages for personalized medicine. Standard knowledge-driven

315 systems implement clinical guidelines using if-then rules which allow limited treatment
316 individualisation [6] and offer little flexibility as they need a complete overhaul when new
317 drugs become available or new knowledge becomes available. In contrast, including new
318 drugs and incremental knowledge on existing drugs in our novel methodology is possible
319 without new model training through quantifying the features of the new drug or updating the
320 relevant drug features.

321 Our approach is also fundamentally different from the data-driven methods that have been
322 used for other CDSSs. Grasser et al. developed two therapy decision support systems that use
323 historical treatment data to individualise psoriasis treatment based on patient attributes and
324 past treatment attributes to predict the response to different therapies [6]. The main
325 limitations of this methodology are that it does not learn the underlying properties of optimal
326 treatment but bases decisions on which treatments have worked well in the past similar
327 patients. Consequently, this method suffers from concept drift where statistical properties of
328 data change over time due to the discovery of a new drug or new knowledge on drug features.
329 Our model is less subject to concept drift, as it is possible to assign features to a new drug or
330 update the features of the drugs when statistical properties of drug or regimen features
331 change.

332 Machine learning and artificial intelligence methods such as neural networks have been used
333 in the framework of personalized medicine to learn complex and nonlinear relationships
334 between prognostic features and an individual patient's risk of treatment failure [11]. This
335 approach requires a dataset with treatment outcomes. Because of the relative novelty of
336 personalized medicine, such datasets with treatment outcome only allow the model to learn

337 the underlying properties of the current standard of care instead of novel individualized
338 treatment regimens.

339 The application of our newly developed treatment CDSS methodology to the individualization
340 of treatment of RR-TB provided proof-of-principle by demonstrating that the novel approach
341 is well suited to guide a personalized medicine approach when multiple combination of drugs
342 are possible in one individual patient. Using the proposed method, a treatment recommender
343 CDSS for personalized treatment can be built in a relatively short period of time using a
344 combination of stakeholder input, published and unpublished evidence, and expert feedback.

345 By harvesting expert feedback on patient scenario's simulated from real-life data, we created
346 a minimal dataset consisting of diverse individual treatment regimens that are representative
347 for patient care. By allowing the experts to provide an alternative regimen when disagreeing
348 with the proposed regimen, the resulting dataset contained a wide variety of accepted and
349 rejected treatment regimens.

350 While our novel method has many strengths for the field of precision medicine, including the
351 hybrid data- and knowledge-driven approach, the use of a structured 'crowdsourcing'
352 approach with predetermined experts for treatment decision making research [24], and the
353 high degree of flexibility, several limitations should be noted. First, given the novelty of our
354 approach, there is no consensus method yet to assess the performance of the model and
355 there are no clear decision boundaries on when to stop the iterative development process.
356 The external validation of our model for drug resistant TB demonstrated substantial
357 overfitting on the training data, suggesting that the current performance parameters may not
358 accurately capture the model's performance. Using a more diverse set of patient profiles and

359 repeating the development process on this new dataset in combination with the already
360 collected data is likely to reduce overfitting. As such the data now used for external validation
361 could be included as training data before bringing this model into clinical practice. Second,
362 the model was developed using a limited group of experts. It is unknown to which degree the
363 model development is dependent of the number and composition of the expert group. Use
364 of other performance parameters and evaluation of the model in clinical trials in different
365 regions of the world will be needed to determine its accuracy for real-life decision making in
366 a personalized medicine.

367 In conclusion, while novel and promising, our hybrid knowledge- and data-driven treatment
368 recommender CDSS for individualising treatment is an important first step in the
369 development of methods aimed to facilitate the widespread implementation of personalized
370 medicine. Further research should assess its value in fields other than drug resistant
371 tuberculosis, develop solid statistical approaches to assess model approaches, and evaluate
372 their accuracy in real-life clinical settings.

373 **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

374 CDSS Clinical Decision Support System

375 MAP Mean Average Precision

376 MRR Mean Reciprocal Rank

377 P@1 Precision at 1

378 RR-TB Rifampicin Resistant Tuberculosis

379 **DECLARATIONS**

380 **Ethics approval and consent to participate**

381 The research was performed in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. Collection of the
382 clinical strains and the determination of the genotypic drug resistance profile was approved
383 by appropriate ethics committees. For the training dataset, ethical approval was obtained
384 from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Witwatersrand in South
385 Africa and the Institutional Review Board of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in
386 the United States (reference numbers M111139 and 11-2273). Approval of study activities
387 was also obtained from relevant health authorities. Participants gave verbal informed consent
388 by phone (recorded). The Research Ethics Committee or Institutional Review Board of Human
389 Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa (M111139)
390 and the Institutional Review Board of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the
391 United States (11-2273) waived the need of informed consent for patients who had died or
392 were lost to follow-up from TB care prior to study enrolment and could not be contacted
393 despite multiple attempts. For the validation dataset, ethical clearance was obtained from
394 Stellenbosch University Health Research Ethics Committee. This ethics approval (ref number
395 N09/11/269) has a waiver of informed consent. The study titled "a personalised
396 recommender system for whole genome sequencing-based individualised treatment for drug
397 resistant tuberculosis" reported in this manuscript was approved by the Ethics Committee of
398 the University Hospital Antwerp and the University of Antwerp (ref number 2107101).

399 **Consent for publication**

400 Not applicable

401 **Availability of data and materials**

402 The datasets analysed are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

403 **Competing interests**

404 Not applicable

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411 Department of Science and Innovation - National Research Foundation, South Africa

412 **Authors' contributions**

413 LV, AVR, RW and KL set up the concept of the study. LV, KL, TC, and AVR developed the
414 methods. AVR was principal investigator of the study that collected the data used in the
415 training data set. RW is the principal investigator of the study that collected the data used in
416 the validation data set. SC, GM, SP, JB, and KD contributed as experts to the data. LV analysed
417 and interpreted the data. LV wrote the first draft; AVR and KL contributed substantially in
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424

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484

Figures

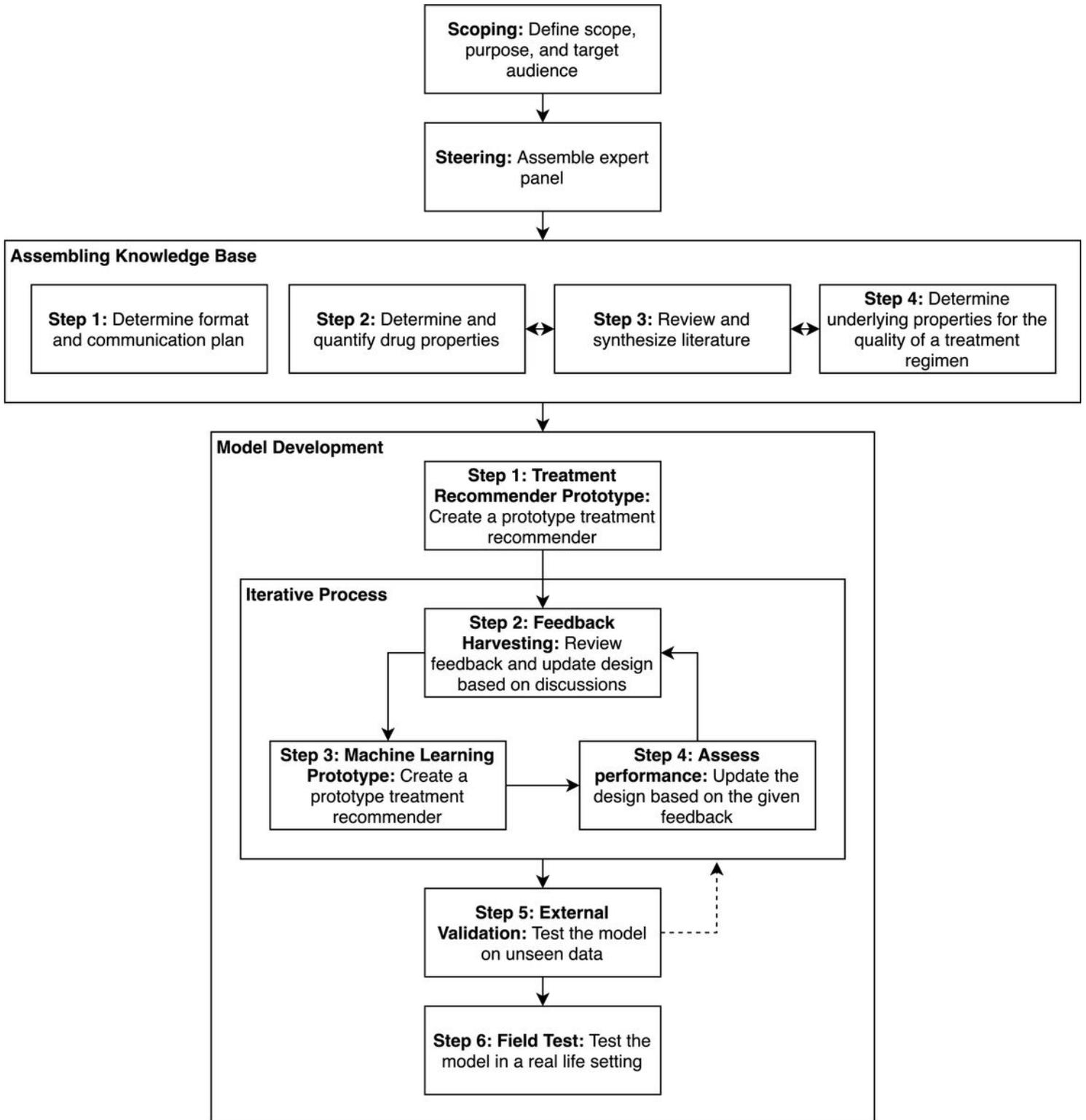


Figure 1

Steps in the development process of an automated clinical treatment recommendation system

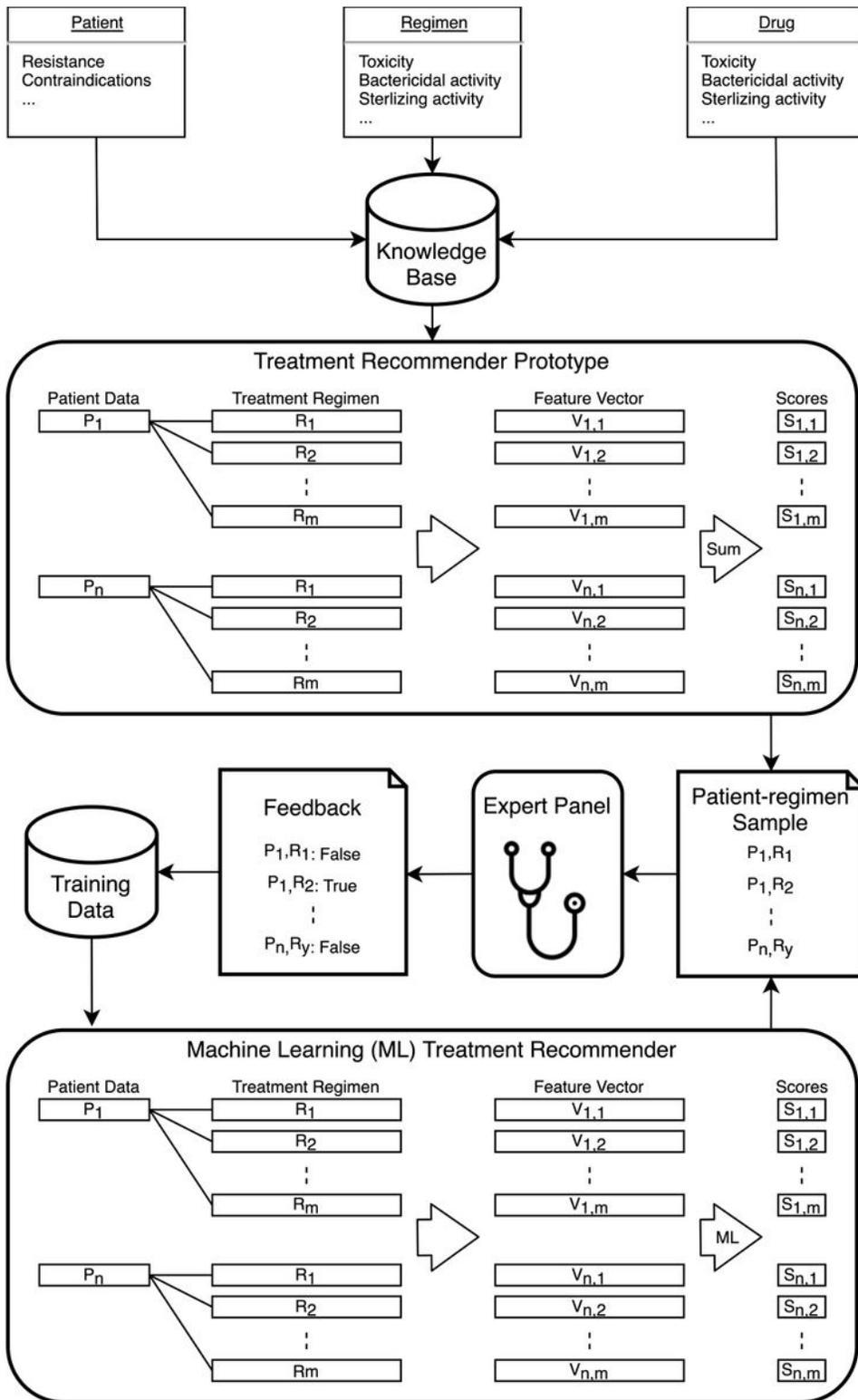


Figure 2

The model development flow

Whole Genome Sequencing DST and Proposed Treatment Regimen

Resistant:

Ethambutol
Ethionamide
Isoniazid
Isoniazid High Dose
Prothionamide
Rifabutin
Rifampicin
Streptomycin
Cycloserine
Pretomanid
Rifampicin High Dose

Susceptible:

Bedaquiline
Delamanid
Levofloxacin
Pyrazinamide
Moxifloxacin High Dose
Linezolid
Meropenem
Para-aminosalicylic acid
Amikacin
Moxifloxacin
Imipenem
Clofazimine
Terizidone

Proposed Regimen:

Bedaquiline
Delamanid
Levofloxacin
Pyrazinamide

MORE INFO

Would you prescribe the proposed treatment regimen?

NO

YES

Figure 3

Layout of the web interface