

How Pharma Companies Can Improve Patient Engagement

In today's world, people are constantly on the go and rushing from one place to another in between work, school and taking care of their families. The art of multi-tasking has become a way of life, all of which is now dependent upon digital capabilities to make it possible. However, what happens when a chronic condition is thrown into the mix, or even the need to incorporate multiple medications? Life doesn't stop, and so the art of multi-tasking and managing one's chronic condition intensifies. Engaging patients in medication management is not a simple task and empowering patients to control complex regimes is even more difficult without the right tools. Patients who are more informed about their health conditions and more involved in their treatment decisions demonstrate better results through increased adherence rates and extended persistency.

How to Help Manage a Patient Journey

There are several ways to empower patients and support them across their journey. As an industry, healthcare has pretty much failed to support and engage patients with modern-day expectations. A study conducted by GE Healthcare Partners found that “81 per cent of consumers are unsatisfied with their healthcare experience – and the less they interact with the system, the happier they are.” For many patients, healthcare interactions may appear impersonal during a very sensitive time of their life, especially when compared to a consumer's other experiences. In most other industries, consumers have personalised experiences – from ordering their daily coffee to online banking through mobile applications. But when consumers have to interact with healthcare, such as going to a doctor or speaking with a pharmacist, they may notice a significant lack of personalisation and convenience that they are used to receiving from other industries. Patients need support outside of their scheduled appointments and therefore critical points of engagement and empowerment arise during patients' daily routines, which are the moments of impact.

The patient journey consists of the obvious check-points from early education and awareness, to physician interaction, appointment follow-ups and reminders for continued care and medication adherence. If the healthcare industry as a whole wants to improve the patient experience, then the industry needs to prioritise the other support incorporated into a patient's routine to address challenges, such as receiving the first prescription fill with insurance coverage or correctly administering an injection to stay on course. In the US alone, medication mismanagement is a \$300 billion problem that requires continual patient support.

Healthcare consumers have become more willing to turn to technology to support their needs and even share their data in order to improve their patient experience. The 2018 Deloitte Healthcare Consumer Survey analysed trends of healthcare consumers and their willingness to engage and share healthcare data, and according to the five-year study, by 2018, over 42% of healthcare consumers surveyed reported that they would use technology for health improvement, which is up from only 17% in 2013. Furthermore, the study found that over 50% of patients managing chronic diseases were willing to share their data with doctors to help provide better care and create alerts for themselves and family members if their health was in danger, in addition to sharing healthcare data with emergency services.

The healthcare industry must look to engage consumers in ways that meet healthcare consumers' expectations. For example, it's important for healthcare providers and pharma to understand that the millennial generation, the future generation aging into healthcare needs, expects instant gratification. According to Kathy Hempstead, director of insurance coverage for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, “As more millennials interact with the healthcare system, the industry will find itself facing a more sophisticated and demanding group that won't stand for

inefficiencies with the same begrudging acceptance of previous generations.” In fact, Dr Ron Rows, chief medical officer of Prominence Health Plan, also recognised the challenge of meeting expectations of millennials and said, “They're used to reaching out when they need something, getting instant gratification, moving on and only coming back when they have the need again.” This is exactly where technology, especially mobile apps and voice assistants, can be useful tools that help ensure patients feel supported throughout their journey.

Millennials are not the only generation using technology to manage their patient journeys. According to American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) research, seven out of 10 baby boomers own a smartphone. Baby boomers are using technology to stay connected with family and friends, and, in the case of emergencies, this generation finds a peace of mind knowing they can receive assistance as fast as possible through a few clicks of their mobile devices. Understanding how the baby boomer generation is using technology can help healthcare companies design impactful online experiences that support this generation's healthcare journey needs. In the instance of medication adherence, adding features to applications that allow baby boomers to invite friends and family into their journey for support can significantly improve the patient journey.

Furthermore, medication management users over the age of 65 have higher engagement than their counterparts under 65. Although those over the age of 65 juggle on average 7.1 medications versus 4.5 medications of those under 65, the baby boomers report even higher adherence rates. Given these statistics, it's essential that the entire health system recognises the technology demands to provide personalised journeys that are targeted for each individual patient, in real time.

Benefits of Digital Health Technology
The emergence of digital health technology is impacting health

outcomes. Digital health technology is the convergence of computing power, connectivity, sensors, and software used in healthcare that can be used as a medical product, incorporated into a medical or pharmacologic product, used to develop a medical product, used to study a medical product, or used as a companion or adjunct to a medical product including diagnostics and therapeutics. With the evolution of technology in healthcare, the industry is forced to open itself to alternative ways to treat or augment treatment with digital connectivity. Some examples of the evolution of personalised technology tools include wearables and using DNA sequencing to help physicians assess the likelihood of a patient developing diseases, detecting diseases earlier and intervening to minimise the impact.

Real-time data that interacts with patients in their everyday lives is another benefit of digital health technology. In today's world, technology with customised programmes can provide pharma companies and health systems with real-time data insights that allow these pharma companies or providers to intervene and help patients manage their complicated condition. Not only can technology intervene at critical moments to pre-empt an exacerbated condition but monitoring and understanding medical behaviours also provides crucial pieces of insight, such as dosage scheduling or reasons for skipping medications. This real-world data helps to inform better support and education across the patient healthcare journey to ultimately deliver the desired outcomes.

Personalised Programmes Empowering Patients

Pharmaceutical companies are quickly evolving to create personalised support for patients by powering data science and digital technologies capabilities. In fact, the Chief Digital Officer role and department is now more common and working closely with companies to support building a patient experience with the brand.

In 2018, a top global pharmaceutical company that is committed to leveraging innovative digital technologies that can support patients in their day-to-day activities, thus maximising treatment outcomes and reducing the burden of the disease, prioritised the need

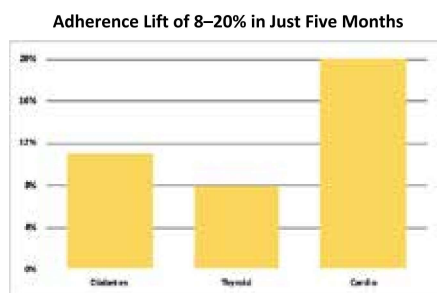
to empower chronic disease patients across three complex therapeutic areas (cardiology, diabetes and thyroid). The pharmaceutical company wanted to help patients better manage their conditions, particularly focusing on medication management, education and convenient refill.

The global pharmaceutical company and their partner developed digital programmes targeting diabetes, thyroid and cardiovascular patients covering over 30 different brands across three countries. Through these programmes, patients received daily support and connectivity to their specific medication dosing and condition needs. Personalised medication reminders provided transparency into complex dosing schedules which were shared with caregivers and later with HCPs. The customised programmes also included condition-specific and/or lifestyle content targeted to patients at appropriate phases of their treatment journey.

The personalised content supported patients to make lifestyle and behavioural modifications and included disease and medication information, healthy lifestyle tips, caregiver support, and trackers for measurements of several health indicators visible only to the patients. The customised digital medication management programmes provided patients with tremendous peace of mind and empowered them to carry on with their daily routines. Within five months, customised programmes achieved an average adherence of 83%, with 73% of patients rating their experience as very to extremely satisfied. Furthermore, the results reinforce the benefits of improving patient engagement and how it can positively impact health outcomes.

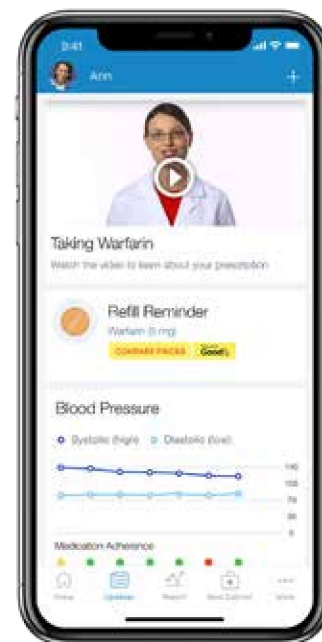
The Future of Patient Engagement

Today we live in a world of technology and strive towards personalisation in medicine. What's needed to help



patients with chronic complex conditions is continual support and personalised, targeted interventions. Digital drug companions provide continual support to patients through both therapeutically designed AI, and a direct connection into care teams at critical times. These programmes deliver results but require real-world data to inform digital designs that deliver personalisation and ultimately outcomes.

Having a digital therapeutics solution to accompany the drug used to be a 'nice-to-have'. In the future, patients, payors and providers will expect a digital solution to manage the patient journey – and a digital therapeutics companion is now the table stakes in 2020. Healthcare consumers expect digital support to manage complexities, especially when left to their own devices to manage.



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Omri is the CEO & co-founder of Medisafe. He was inspired to create Medisafe after his diabetic father accidentally double-dosed on insulin. Tapping into his considerable entrepreneurship experience, Omri successfully grew Medisafe into the leading medication management platform with over 5 million users worldwide.