

# How To Enrich The Doctor-Patient Relationship

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**There is a change taking place in the healthcare industry right now - from a research and product-driven to a patient-centric perspective: Many efforts are currently being made to understand the patient in his or her individual situation and to find out what is necessary to improve the health outcome.**

Patient centricity is most important when it comes to chronic diseases - those not only result in the longest and most inconvenient journey for the patients, but also accumulate the highest costs. For example, the global costs of informal care and the direct costs of social care in 2010 are estimated at 604 billion US-Dollar - that is 1 percent of the global gross domestic product. Covering those costs is crucial for our societies.

Whether dementia, diabetes or other chronic illnesses - a better understanding of patients, including a tailor-made support and more effective care, is needed. This can be achieved by collecting data through medical devices and by using AI and so-called "mobile companion apps" to assist the patient during his or her journey. A good communication with patients - possibly also by using gamification - is crucial. If all these measures work, then pharmaceutical companies can help to improve health outcome, reduce expenditure and get closer to patients, all at the same time. It would be a clear win-win-situation.

## **Presenting information in meaningful and understandable ways**

Some years ago, there had been a similar transformation in the FMCG industry: An efficient supply chain and a good shelf positioning were no longer sufficient, direct consumer contact was needed and became a key for success. And while there obviously are some differences, a few things can be learned from that shift in the retail business in order to improve patient centricity in the healthcare industry.

When it comes to FMCG, consumers are usually well capable of grasping the important aspects of their purchasing decision. With regard to widespread chronic diseases (e.g. diabetes or dementia), patients have access to extensive information nowadays - but this is not necessarily helpful, because patients still lack the medical expertise to correctly understand medical data. This results in a variety of challenges for patients, physicians and even pharmaceutical companies. Adherence is one of them - to name an outstanding example. Therefore, providing patients with understandable information is an important step towards more patient centricity.

Clinical evidence and an integrated workflow are needed

Another important step is the involvement of physicians. Only 26% of clinicians recommend patient engagement technologies and only 13% of them use remote patient monitoring technologies, according to a survey by the American Medical Association (AMA). Therefore, clinical evidence on app efficacy is needed. Privacy and safety must be guaranteed, while workflow integration is necessary to gain widespread acceptance by physicians.

In addition, we have to consider how mobile companion apps can lead to patient engagement: More than 85% of all health apps have less than 5.000 installs. Currently, there are less than 50 health apps with 1 million or more downloads respectively. What's their secret? Many of those popular health apps do not rely on patient input data exclusively anymore, but also connect to sensors . Thus, suitable, powerful and also widespread hardware is a prerequisite for successful digital health solutions.

This finally leads to the main conclusion: Even the digital products that are definitely helpful often lack a way of enriching the relationship between physician and patient. By focusing on improving the doctor-patient relationship and aiming to make it one between equals, we can combine a physician's expertise and the patient's interest in being part of the whole decision-making process - thereby achieving a higher commitment of the patient thanks to digital tools. Based on this perspective, the pharmaceutical industry can establish its relationship to patients through the already strong connection to physicians and create digital solutions that help physicians and patients alike.