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Drive Engagement by Creating a Truly Personalized Patient Experience
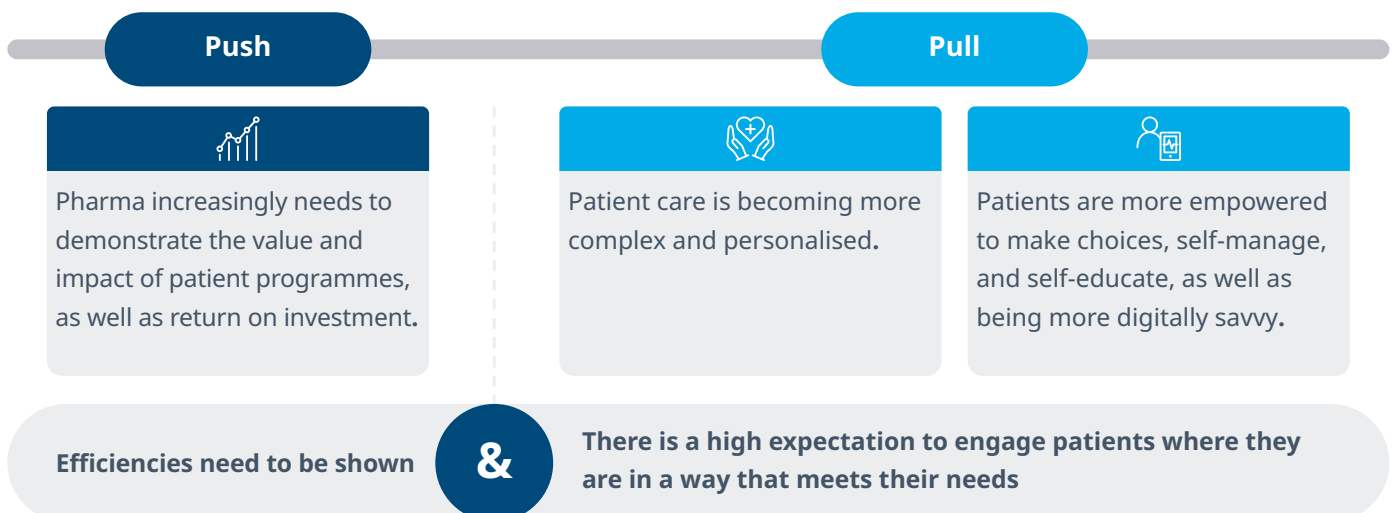
By **SHYAM SAKHRANI, IQVIA**

Sustained adherence to therapy is a problem that impacts all aspects of our healthcare system. Patients who fail to take their prescribed therapies often experience disease progression and diminished quality of life, which can frustrate physicians. Payers shoulder the burden of healthcare costs that could have been prevented. Pharma and life sciences companies forego revenue, and risk potential reputational damage when their lifesaving medications are not taken consistently as prescribed.

Many patients are more empowered than ever in their ability to find resources online and rely on digital devices to better understand and manage their healthcare challenges. Smartwatches and other wearable monitors and devices are actively and passively collecting valuable data related to the patient's daily activities and relevant health indicators. This rich treasure trove of longitudinal data opens the door for brand teams to explore innovative ways to engage and support patients in truly personalized ways that don't interrupt their daily activities.

Outreach from pharma brand teams has historically relied on randomized clinical trial (RCT) data, which represents the holy grail of evidence related to the safety and efficacy of approved medications. But RCT data doesn't begin to tell the full story in terms of capturing the daily struggles many patients face in the real world when it comes to managing one or more chronic health conditions and staying on top of the complex therapy regimens that are required to manage their comorbidities.

Recently, all stakeholders — brand teams, health systems, regulators, and payers — have broadened their view on useful data. This includes exploring insights developed from patient-reported outcomes, especially those that can be clinically validated. But neither clinical trial data nor patient-reported outcomes are monitoring patients consistently over time.

The landscape for patient engagement and support is shifting

Push		Pull	
Pharma increasingly needs to demonstrate the value and impact of patient programmes, as well as return on investment.		Patient care is becoming more complex and personalised.	Patients are more empowered to make choices, self-manage, and self-educate, as well as being more digitally savvy.

Efficiencies need to be shown **&** **There is a high expectation to engage patients where they are in a way that meets their needs**

Leveraging data that is already being collected

More recently, forward-thinking brand teams are focusing on deriving insights by capturing and modeling data that is routinely collected by smartphones and wearable sensor devices to bring value to patients. When it comes to developing value-added patient support programs, not everything needs to be measured with a clinically-validated data program. By collecting data captured by these smart devices and developing machine learning models and artificial intelligence techniques on large data sets, qualitative and quantitative trends can become evident. Then actionable recommendations, personalized alerts and tailored support programs can be sent directly to patients when their own real-time data readings deviate from an established baseline.

Efforts are underway to identify and validate so-called digital biomarkers that can provide deeper insights on how to connect real-time digital data with value-added health interventions and demonstrable outcomes. In the absence of validated biomarkers, valuable knowledge — and actionable insights — can also be gained from non-validated yet still clinically relevant data that is gathered routinely by smartphones and wearable devices. Such data can inform the patient about their condition and support their overall health journey.

Passive data that is routinely collected by a patient's digital devices includes activity metrics such as exercise, sleep, and mobility. Other health metrics that are typically monitored include vital signs, blood pressure, blood glucose, stress, pulse, body battery, VO2 max, and more. Active data, such as medication adherence and food intake, are self-reported and entered by the patient into their device or app.

Efforts to analyze and model such data and use the derived insights to better support patients can be further enhanced by integrating tenets of behavioral science. This can help stakeholders better understand what types of interventions would resonate best with individual patients based on their preferences or behaviors. This coordinated effort allows brand teams to develop support programs and recommendations that are customized to an individual patient's health condition and treatment plan. Doing so can help overcome specific triggers or barriers the patient is experiencing.

The goal of any patient support program is to provide useful interventions that meet individual patients where they are in their health journey. For example, tailored programs can help patients begin their treatment regimen more quickly by offering support that addresses access and affordability obstacles. They can provide targeted education related to the disease, therapy, potential side effects and more. They can also provide tools and programs to support overall wellness and help patients stay motivated, such as access to nurses, behavioral coaches and patient communities.

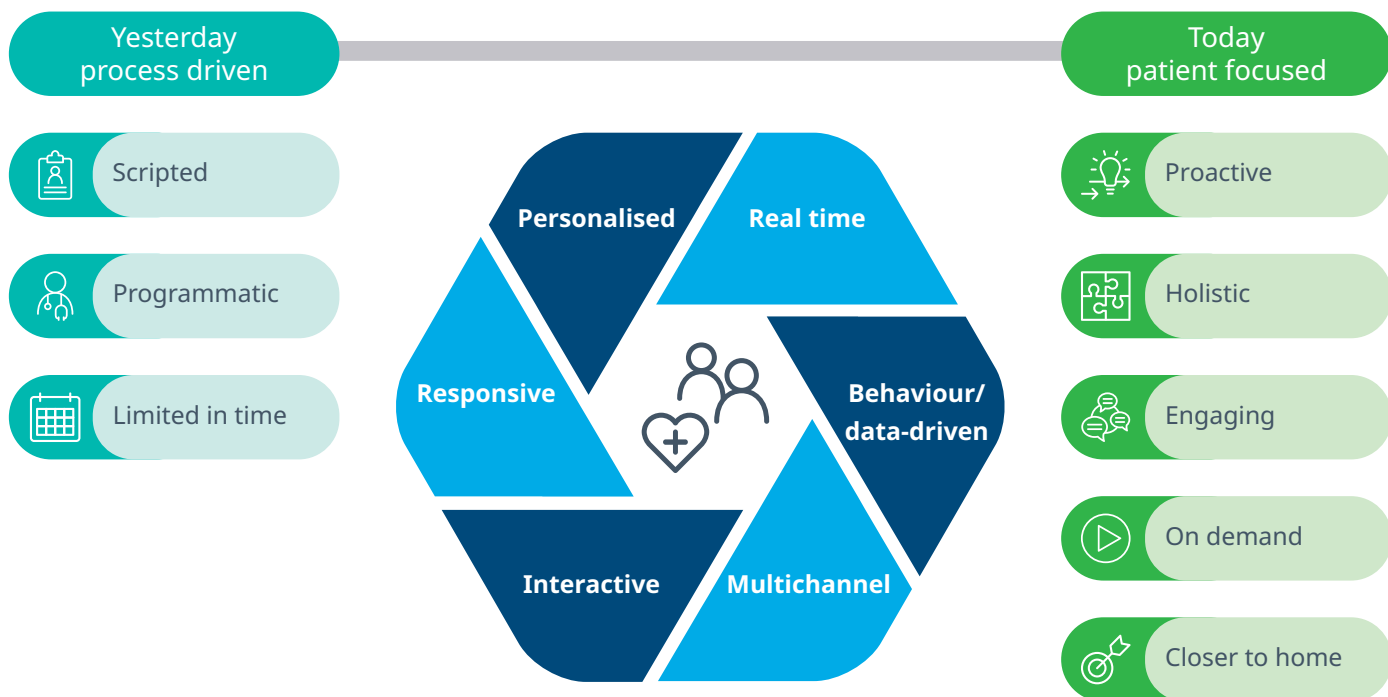## Additional benefits for all stakeholders

Digital health technologies are trusted and being used more widely than ever by consumers. As such, efforts to leverage smartwatches and other wearable devices/sensors provides a scalable, cost-effective opportunity that pharma/life sciences can — and should — leverage when designing next-level patient-support programs. When data-driven insights are created to shape targeted offerings, the brand team is able to help create a more supportive and holistic support framework to help patients manage one or more chronic conditions and remain adherent to their complex medication regimens.
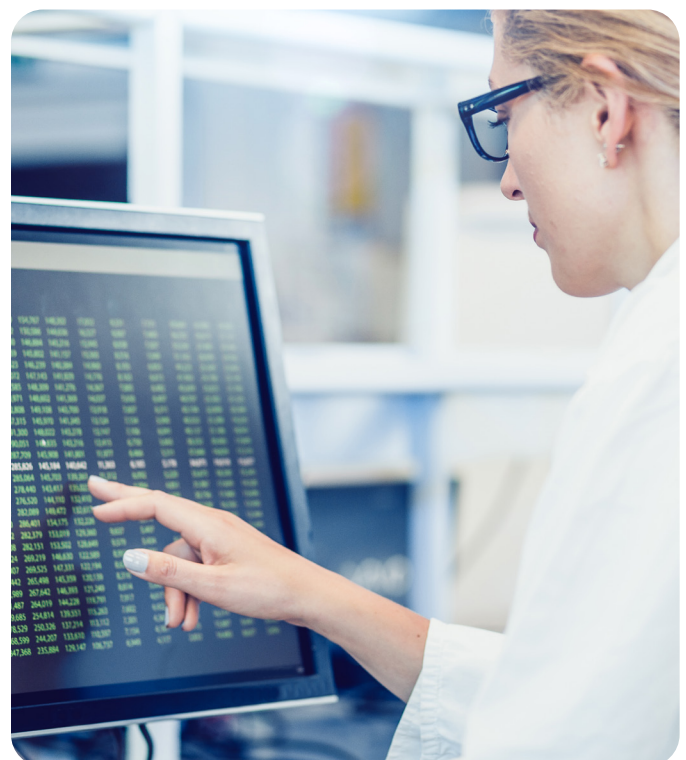
Patients managing complex healthcare challenges are diverse. Each individual has a different level of understanding, acceptance, and expertise about their disease progression, symptoms, triggers, medication regimes, and side effects. Creating dynamic, engaging, and targeted elements in a patient support program is pivotal as the patients themselves continue to evolve over time.

Similarly, harnessing insights from these digital devices has the potential to support broader diversity, equity and inclusion objectives, by engaging and supporting patients throughout their journey, irrespective of race, ethnicity and age.

Patients actively demand a consumer-grade experience when it comes to managing their health

Yesterday process driven	Today patient focused
Scripted	Proactive
Programmatic	Holistic
Limited in time	Engaging
	On demand
	Closer to home

Personalised · Real time · Behaviour/data-driven · Multichannel · Interactive · Responsive

SHYAM SAKHRANI is a senior director at IQVIA. In his role, Sakhrani leads the development of Patient Engagement products and offerings globally, with divisions across JAPAC, EMEA and the Americas. He holds a strong commitment to innovation and bridging the gap between technology, data insights and healthcare to support patient outcomes. He has worked across health care and life sciences for more than 10 years and has a history of leading strategic partnerships and collaborations.

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