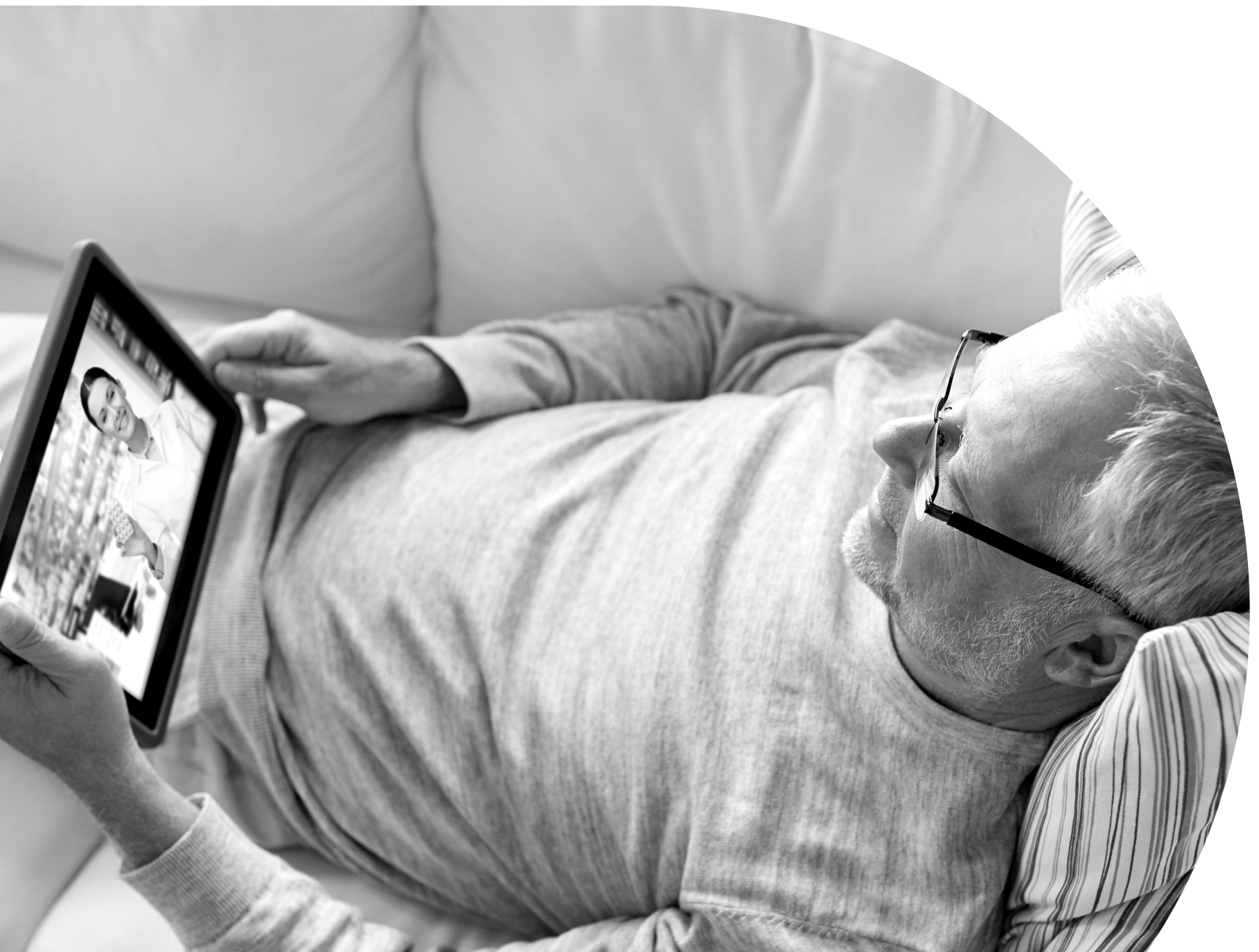


Healthcare on my terms: Why patient-driven care matters

By Catherine Barras



For the past decade, there has been movement away from the idea of the patient as a passive recipient of healthcare and toward the idea of the patient as a consumer. This has been driven both by patients demanding control over their care and well-being and by healthcare stakeholders needing to ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved at the lowest possible cost. In this environment, all healthcare stakeholders — researchers, payers, providers and drug manufacturers — are moving to a patient-driven care model.

Patient-driven care is about enabling an increased level of information flow, transparency, customization, collaboration, and personal choice and responsibility. Crucially, it's about supporting patient preferences in the management of their care.

Technological advances have been integral to enabling patient-driven care. New tools enable care to be based on analytics, data and prediction rather than on conventional medical understanding. Strides in personalized medicine, genomics and advanced biomarker testing do, however, create challenges for physicians, who typically aren't fluent in these new tools. A more collaborative approach is therefore required to ensure that collective knowledge about disease and health is contextually available.

Integral to patient-driven care is the ability to tap into digital solutions. Indeed, more than three-quarters of all patients polled in the United Kingdom, Singapore and Germany prefer to use digital services.¹ And healthcare providers and payers alike are starting to invest in tools that are aimed at improving patient engagement. A 2017 Change Healthcare survey found that investing in consumer engagement was a priority for 72 percent of providers and 80 percent of payers.²

Investment and commitment to patient-driven care is one thing, but what does it mean in practice?

Patients at the center of their journey to health and wellness

Today, patients are demanding convenience and control. They value having conveniently timed appointments with their physicians and want easy access to clinical and pricing information. Patients now expect their healthcare providers to communicate with them clearly.



¹ <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare-systems-and-services/our-insights/healthcares-digital-future>

² <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/payers-providers-patients-provide-unique-perspectives-regarding-consumer-engagement-investments-and-effectiveness-300530814.html>

But patients are also becoming savvier about their own care, and they want a clear picture of their health journey. They want to be able to access a single secure and legal version of their health record, managed with complete security and shared throughout the continuum of care to make their own journey as simple as possible. Scandinavian countries are leaders in this regard, with nationwide platforms supporting citizen health records, and they continue to develop patient-friendly platforms.

For many patients, convenience is rated more highly than quality of care, the experience with doctors and nurses, or even insurance coverage. The 2019 Healthcare Consumer Trends report from NRC Health found that 80 percent of patients would select their provider based entirely on convenience.³ What that means in practice is easy and affordable access to diagnostics and treatments, as well as easy access to doctors. This raises questions about whether patients are sacrificing quality for convenience. This is a possibility, but for the more progressive healthcare practices, it also presents an opportunity to offer services that meet patients' demands for easy scheduling or location flexibility, while delivering the same standard of quality care.

Clinical efficiency

Clinicians also stand to benefit from patient-driven care. Having a single view of the patient through integrated data means clinicians can make better use of their time with the patient. This is already happening in many markets, at least for some patient populations.

There's also a mental health element to patient-driven care. The huge demands being placed on clinicians, due not only to long hours but to the huge amount of time spent entering information into electronic health records, are making them susceptible to burnout — a condition that is now recognized by the World Health Organization as a legitimate medical diagnosis. Integrated, patient-centric health records can reduce stress for busy healthcare professionals, as well as enhance the relationship between physician and patient and improve patient outcomes.

A commercial perspective — how patient-driven care benefits the payer and manufacturer

An integrated healthcare record that is built on a patient-centric approach helps payers by providing greater visibility into personal healthcare needs and practices on many levels. One aspect of this is accurate billing, while risk mitigation is another important consideration. Well-informed patients understand their conditions, what is covered and why adherence to medication is important.



³ <https://go.nrchealth.com/1/279972/2018-12-06/3vnp6>

Life sciences companies also stand to gain from a patient-driven approach, as improved access to data and real-world evidence is proving transformative, helping to provide valuable insights across the product life cycle and to develop targeted therapies.

A holistic approach

Healthcare organizations, payers and life sciences companies that more effectively engage with patients gain competitive advantage and achieve fewer process delays, while decreasing costs.

As patient-driven care takes hold, all stakeholders will need to better understand the patient and develop more innovative digital models to improve how they engage with the patient as a consumer of healthcare.

About the author

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