



## Patient-Centricity: A Progressive Prescription for Modern Healthcare

A revolution is happening in the healthcare industry. Societal pressure to improve our health, technological advances, and market forces are all driving forward a novel patient-centric approach to healthcare: that is, putting the needs of the patient first and designing services or solutions around them. As such, modern pharmaceutical organisations are becoming increasingly engaged in dialogue with patients at every twist and turn of their treatment journeys, from beginning to end.

Listening to the patient's voice is increasingly helpful to assigning added value to new drugs, providing healthcare decision-makers such as sponsors, regulators, payers and physicians with rich real-world data (RWD) that traditional clinical trials alone cannot provide. This patient-generated RWD feeds into a wider real-world evidence (RWE) base, which has the potential to generate significant ROI for pharmaceutical companies in major areas across the product lifecycle.

Despite the substantial benefits to patient care and the valuable insights for regulatory and reimbursement decisions, adoption of patient-centric approaches in the biopharmaceutical industry has been unexpectedly low. One of the key barriers to success is the burden that RWD capture places on both program sponsors and patients, as well as the perceived costs and logistical difficulties involved with implementing such an approach.

New technological advances are promising to overcome these challenges, emphasising that innovative solutions must be developed and implemented to combat barriers to success. As the ultimate end consumer of new medicines, the patient's voice *must* be heard in order to progress patient-centric healthcare decision-making and disease management.

### **Patient-Centricity: What Is it and Why Is it Important?**

Healthcare stakeholders are currently converging on the idea of patient-centricity, which involves improving the lives of patients by acquiring a deeper understanding of their specific diseases, treatment experiences, requirements and priorities to enhance the research and development of biopharmaceutical products and disease management. It's now becoming essential for the biopharmaceutical industry to partner with patients throughout the entire product lifecycle – including discovery, research, development, distribution, and access to medicines – to bring about outcomes that are meaningful to patients, foster innovation, and support the development of novel therapeutics. Although we currently lack a clear definition of patient-centricity, since its emergence there have been concerted efforts to formalise one common definition. Based on collaborative input from key stakeholders, including patients, healthcare providers and payers,

it has recently been suggested that patient-centricity should be defined as:

*“Putting the patient first in an open and sustained engagement of the patient to respectfully and compassionately achieve the best experience and outcome for that person and their family.”*

Patient-centricity means that the traditional approach of physicians and pharma deciding what is best for the patient is becoming obsolete. Instead, informed, technology-driven patients are becoming more involved – and empowered – in managing their own health and well-being, with the internet opening up a wealth of information and community engagement. Patients can now educate themselves about their illnesses, find the best practitioners, and play a direct role in improving their health.

This approach can potentially create self-propagating benefits in every segment of the healthcare system, such as improving patient health, reducing costs to payers, informing reimbursement and regulatory decisions, and ensuring that clinical trials are safe and effective. For example, patient-centric initiatives can improve treatment compliance<sup>2</sup> boost satisfaction in patient-physician interactions<sup>3</sup> and secure profitability for pharmaceutical companies.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Importance of Patient Voice in Healthcare**

A crucial aspect of a patient-centric approach is listening to the patient's voice throughout their treatment journey to obtain robust RWD that can be used to inform healthcare initiatives. Indeed, as a “listening ear” in dialogue with patients, stakeholders can quickly and easily obtain information about patients' treatment journeys that can be incorporated into patient engagement initiatives and healthcare decision-making.

This information includes outcomes that are important to patients; reasons why patients make certain decisions, such as why they adhere to treatments; practical input into future study design and successful study execution; and patients' experiences of illness and care that physicians and program coordinators would not otherwise hear about. Patient-centric services and solutions can then be built around this patient-generated RWD to improve patients' experiences and outcomes.

As such, pharma companies are increasingly using technologies to run contests and competitions to gather ideas and feedback on trial designs, informed consent forms (ICFs) and protocols. Seeking input from patients on their understanding of protocols can help to build patient-friendly protocols and ICFs to improve patient retention, which is key to the success of the overall project<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, companies are actively using social listening techniques to analyse what patients are discussing online to drive better patient participation and relationships.<sup>5</sup> The FDA released draft guidance on social media usage in June 2014, reflecting its growing importance in the industry.<sup>6</sup>

As this patient-generated RWD feeds into a wider RWE base, this information not only informs healthcare services and solutions, but it can also advise key processes throughout a new product's lifecycle from drug development to launch, and finally to the in-market stage. As a result, companies that invest in collecting patient-generated RWD are starting to enjoy significant commercial benefits from the RWE that it generates.

For example, Quintiles IMS estimates that RWE could produce up to \$1 billion for a top-10 pharmaceutical product when it is applied collectively in six key areas: informing clinical development, demonstrating product safety and value, facilitating initial product pricing and market access, enabling productivity and cost-savings, improving product launch planning and tracking, and enhancing commercial spend effectiveness (Figure 1).<sup>7</sup>

Overall, patient-generated RWD can inform patient-centric approaches to not only enhance healthcare decisions, reduce costs to payers and improve future clinical studies and product profitability, but it can also ensure that patients receive effective treatments while living their normal everyday lives. However, capturing robust patient-generated RWD is far from straightforward, and is one challenge that could hinder the success of patient-centric initiatives.

**Dismantling the Barriers to Patient-Centricity**

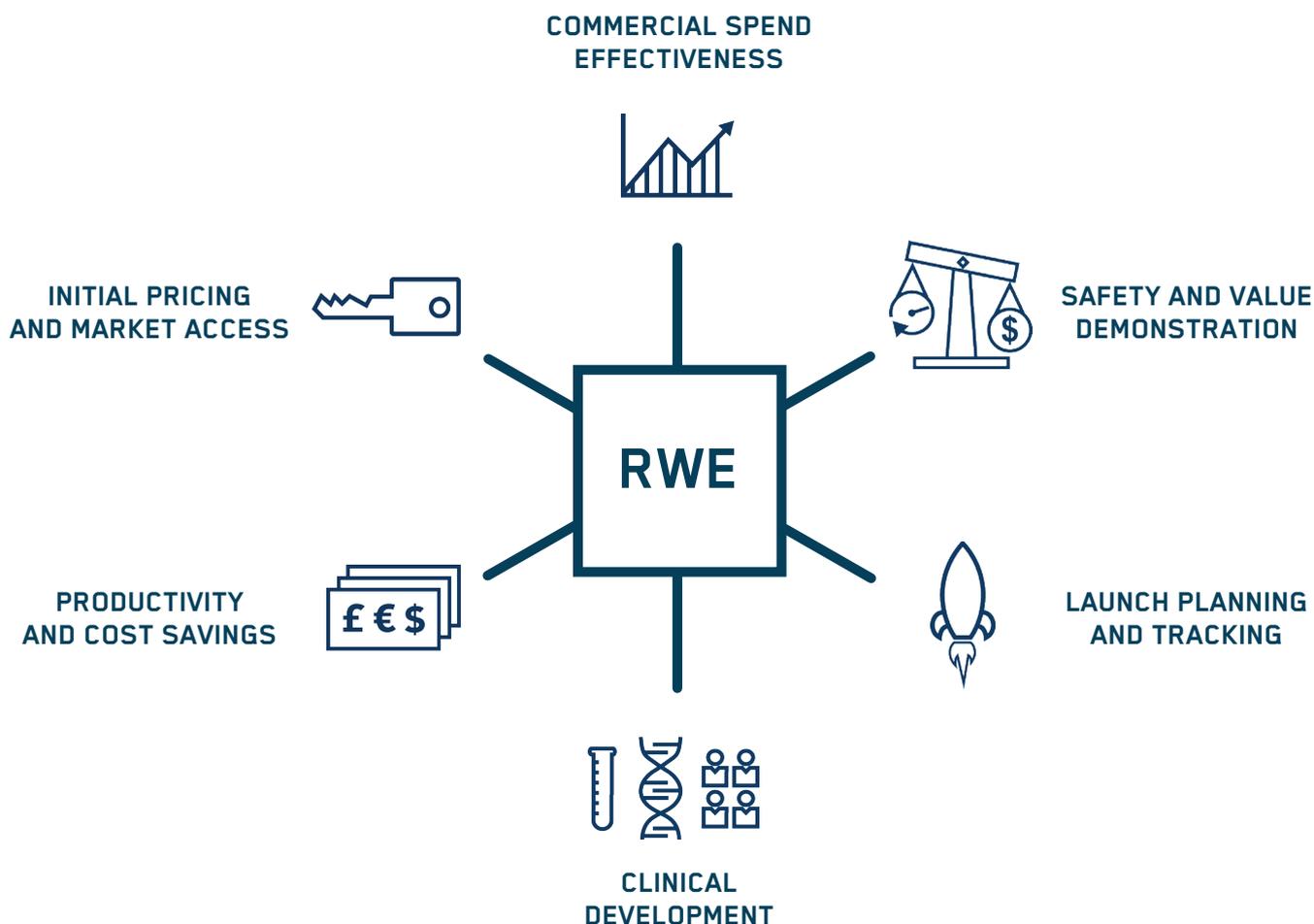
According to Quintiles IMS, only a third of companies who have

attempted patient-centric initiatives have reported any success, citing their inability to uncover real patient insights as one of four key barriers to success<sup>8</sup>.

One challenge of capturing robust patient-generated RWD is the use of paper data recording methods, which can create logistical and administrative problems, introduce the likelihood of human error, and place significant burden on patients, which in turn generates ethical and regulatory concerns. A way to overcome these problems is to implement new technological solutions, such as electronic data capture platforms, that give patients the opportunity to input data and engage in community discussions on their own devices.

Not only are methods like these easily integrated into patients' everyday lives to give them a more positive, autonomous experience and to encourage their continued participation, but they can better ensure the integrity of the data and reduce many of the manual logistical tasks for program organisers that paper recording methods demand. They also enable patient interactions – with other patients as well as with healthcare practitioners and programme sponsors – which can enhance health outcomes, better educate patients, and facilitate discussions among patients and care providers.

Other innovative solutions like these must therefore be developed to dismantle all the barriers to implementing successful patient-centric healthcare. This includes clearer measures of success



**SIX AREAS WHERE RWE PROVIDES ADVANTAGE**

and ROI; establishing patient-centric organisational structure and processes, and forming guidelines on privacy protection and other regulations. Continuing the push toward patient-centricity in healthcare therefore depends on several changes taking place.

This includes recognising companies for their patient-centric efforts, which requires measuring outcomes that matter most to patients (rather than to pharma and clinicians) and rewarding companies if they are successful. Agreement on a clear definition of patient-centricity is also important to generating common understanding, actions and outcomes.

These changes rely on continued public policy initiatives to improve health services and solutions, such as public contributions into future study design and structure; carefully listening to the patient's voice to gain insight and feedback on new treatments in real-world settings, and enabling individual participation, so that the patients themselves regain control of their own healthcare.

## Conclusion

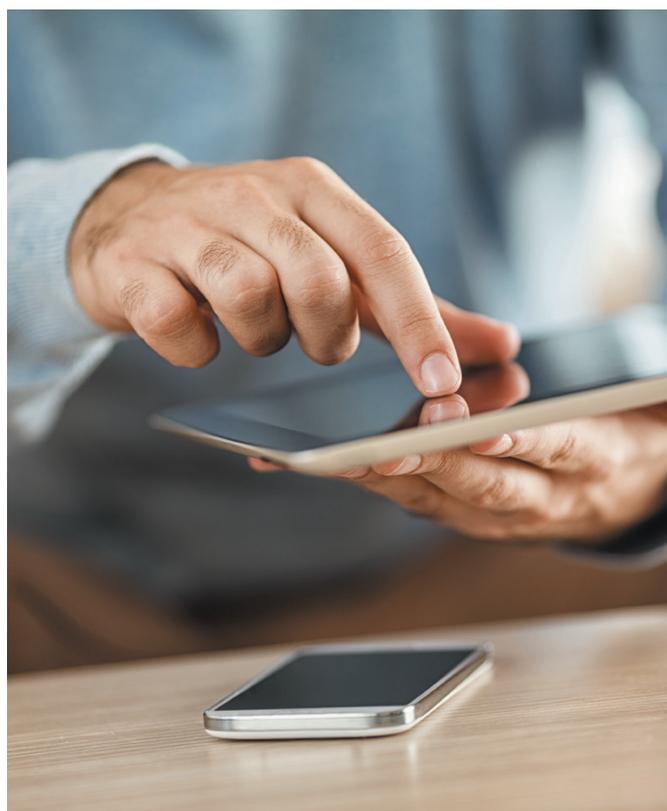
Patient-centric healthcare means putting patients' needs first, so listening to the patient's voice is essential to realising the full potential of this approach. Capturing patient-generated RWD can bring considerable benefits to the healthcare industry, such as improving patient care, reducing costs to payers, informing reimbursement and regulatory decisions, and enhancing clinical study design and execution.

Uncovering real patient insights can be difficult, and can consequently hinder the success of companies' patient-centric initiatives. Therefore, technological solutions must be implemented to ensure that today's 'digital patient' can easily generate robust RWD that can be efficiently captured and used. Indeed, solutions must be put in place to dismantle all the barriers to patient-centric healthcare. In this way, we can gain an increased understanding of what matters most to the patient while they live their normal lives, and apply those learnings across the product lifecycle – to drug discovery and development to distribution from new medicines.

Patient-centricity makes patients more accountable for their own health and well-being, ensuring their autonomy and personal involvement in their own healthcare. To reap the many rewards of such an approach and continue to improve patient outcomes, healthcare providers and pharmaceutical companies must ensure that patients' voices are not only heard, but acted upon and integrated into future healthcare practices.

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