

# Person-centered Pharmaceutical Business

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## ABSTRACT

Person-centered care is a phrase, which seems omnipresent in medical discourse. Can pharmaceutical businesses and industries be person-centric? This article explores the various facets of person-centered pharmaceutical businesses, it suggests ways of incorporating and measuring person-centricity in the business milieu, and describes best practices shared by leading pharmaceutical houses.

**Keywords:** Chronic disease, corporate social responsibility, patient-centered care, person-centered care, psychosocial aspects

The phrase ‘person-centered’ has entrenched itself in modern medical praxis, and rightfully so. Person-centered care is the right of every person or individual who wishes to promote and optimize health, and prevent or manage disease<sup>1</sup>. It is also the responsibility of all stakeholders. These include not only physicians and policymakers, but the pharmaceutical industry as well.

## DEFINITION

Person-centered care has been defined in various ways. The Institute of Medicine, Washington DC, USA, defines person-centered care as “care that is respectful of and responsive to individual patient preferences, needs, and values” and which ensures “that patient values guide all clinical decisions”<sup>2</sup>. South Asian thought leaders have highlighted the need for responsible person-centered care, and included the health care ecosystem, apart from doctors, as stakeholders who need to practice responsible person-centered care<sup>3,4</sup>. To this, we add the pharmaceutical industry.

## THE ROLE OF PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

As Atreya points out, in his eponymously named Quadruple, the physician is but one of the four aspects

of therapeutics<sup>3</sup>. Equal attention must be paid to the person living with disease, drugs and their attendants. The drug, and the drug manufacturer, need to work in collaboration with the person living with disease, and their caregivers, in order to achieve optimal outcomes. This calls for integration of person-centered care in each and every step of pharmaceutical development and delivery.

There is increasing recognition of the need to enhance person-centricity amongst the pharmaceutical industry. This is required to ensure sustainability, and improve satisfaction among the customers that the business serves. As Batla et al quote Robinson, person-centricity is the right thing to do, it makes commercial sense, and will soon be expected by regulators<sup>5</sup>. In fact, person-centricity is being considered as a part of corporate social responsibility as well<sup>6</sup>.

## MESUREMENT AND MONITORING

The International Alliance of Patients’ Organizations (IAPO) is a global leader in advocating for person-centered care. In its review of person-centered health care indicators<sup>7</sup>, IAPO cites Carlson EH (2009). She lists five factors that pharmaceutical companies need in order to become more patient-centered. She suggests that companies should put the patient at the center of every decision, right from the beginning of commercialization; translate clinical benefits to real-world health gains; facilitate a collaborative relationship between doctor and patient; improve patient and carer experience through their journey; and take nothing for granted<sup>7</sup>. The review also mentions Patient View, which has used six indicators to rate company performance: the presence of an effective patient-centered strategy;

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## BRIEF COMMUNICATION

quality of information provided; patient safety record; usefulness of products; transparency with external stakeholders; and integrity<sup>7</sup>.

### TANGIBLE TOOLS AND TARGETS

Person-centricity is required not only in public-facing verticals of business, but also within internal domains of organizations. Box 1 lists eight alliteratively crafted aspects of person-centricity for pharmaceutical businesses. These can be used as targets or goals, and also as tools and techniques to achieve these targets. We hope that this will motivate discussion and debate regarding person-centered pharmaceutical processes, and lead to better health for humankind.

### BEST PRACTICES

We list here a few best practices, shared by colleagues from the pharmaceutical industry:

Bayer is committed to patient centricity, prioritizing the needs of individuals living with health conditions and their care partners. Patient engagement at Bayer involves partnering with people with lived experience at every stage of the product lifecycle, from preclinical to commercialization. This approach aims to enhance decision-making and generate measurable value across the entire value chain. By fostering open communication based on trust, Bayer seeks to improve health outcomes and treatment satisfaction for patients. The company's mission is to advance health for all by partnering with people with lived experience to shape the future of care standards. Bayer's patient engagement focus includes amplifying the patient voice, democratizing access to patient and care partner analytics, and collaborating to deliver customer-centric solutions. The Patient Insights & Engagement (PIE) Community plays a crucial role in ensuring a dedicated and consistent approach to engaging patients and care partners across Bayer's Patient Engagement ecosystem.

KareIndia is a patient-centered program launched by Bayer India in 2023 to support patients of chronic kidney disease (CKD) associated with type 2 diabetes. The program aims to address two major challenges in disease management: Lower diagnosis rates and nonadherence to the treatment. Through unique tie-ups with pathology lab-networks and mobile based point of care kits, KareIndia program facilitates awareness and usage of urine albumin-creatinine ratio/albuminuria testing enabling early diagnosis. Till date >5,000 undiagnosed patients have been detected through this initiative. KareIndia patient counseling program aims to

#### Box 1. Eight Principles of Person-centered Pharmaceutical Business

- Insert person-centeredness into one's vision/mission statement
- Inform all stakeholders about one's person-centered aim and ambition
- Involve person living with disease/disability in all relevant decision making, e.g., style of packaging
- Include person-centered/patient reported outcomes as part of all clinical trials/research
- Integrate person-centered care in all educational events
- Initiate steps to engage and empower persons living with disease through digital/social/other media
- Introspect about the spirit and spectrum of person-centered care
- Improve continually. There is always scope to do better

improve adherence through tele-counseling services by handholding the patients throughout the CKD journey with dietary and lifestyle tips, therapy awareness and pill-reminders.

Forum for Injection Technique (FITTER) India, supported by Embecta, educates health care professionals (HCPs) and patients, publishes in leading national and international journals, and conducts media awareness sessions every January, to advocate for optimal insulin injection practices to support people living with diabetes on insulin therapy. Since 2012, over 3,00,000 HCPs and 4,00,000 individuals with diabetes have undergone training<sup>8</sup>. In 2020, FITTER launched its educational initiative IGNITE "Insulin optimization Guidelines 'N' Injection Technique Expertise" in partnership with reputed medical institutes, led by FITTER members and eminent national speakers in the field of endocrinology and diabetology, with the aim to sensitize physicians at the early stage of their practice around optimizing insulin injection technique and its impact on glycemic control<sup>8</sup>.

Lupin works hard to integrate person-centricity in its endeavors. It runs HumRahi, a patient support program designed to increase awareness, adherence, and access to diabetes care. Over 27,000 persons living with diabetes have benefited from this. Lupin has taken the lead in creating a national task force on person-centered endocrinology, and hopes to incorporate this aspect of management in its continuing medical education programs.

At Novo Nordisk, patient-centricity is the cornerstone of operations, driving innovation, quality, and health care

provider education through groundbreaking formats. The robust research and development (R&D) expenditure fuels a dynamic product pipeline, ensuring early innovation and the swift transition from product discovery to patient solutions. It addresses unmet needs with pioneering products, including modern insulins, new generation insulins, and once-weekly formulations, alongside the invention of glucagon-like peptide-1 therapies.

Their commitment extends beyond product development. Initiatives like the DiabetesWhatNext (DWN) website, the Digital Patient Support Program, and the MISHTI chatbot benefit thousands of patients in India, providing support and educational materials within regulatory frameworks. Novo Nordisk also backs numerous patient education programs solicited by doctors, reflecting their dedication to empowering patients and enhancing their health outcomes. At Novo Nordisk, patient-centricity is not just a concept; it is a practice embedded in the DNA, driving innovations for a better tomorrow.

Sanofi chases the miracles of science to improve people's lives. It is an organization that listens, acts, and leads with patients. Sanofi relentlessly pursues scientific advancements to deliver life-changing medicines and vaccines and prioritizes patient needs by collaborating with patients, advocates, and utilizing real-world data. This patient-centric approach fuels the R&D, ensuring that the innovations address critical health goals. Sanofi empowers patients and families through comprehensive support programs, educational resources, and disease awareness initiatives within the regulatory framework. Programs like Sanofi India's Patient Support Programme, Diabetes Dialogue have already impacted thousands of lives. At Sanofi, the aim is to help the patients to break through the complexities of diabetes management by developing a simplified novel combination of two antidiabetic drugs in a single injection.

USV prioritizes person-centered activities by providing patient education in regional languages using audio and video formats, and leveraging social media, apps, and websites for health awareness. They develop innovative formulations with flexible dosage forms, fixed-dose combinations, and user-friendly packaging; ensuring

affordable medicines are accessible omnichannel. Their patient support programs offer counseling and follow-up care. USV focuses on upskilling health care staff, HCPs, and paramedics through regular training to enhance patient interactions and care delivery. By implementing digital health solutions like telemedicine and mobile apps, their aim is to improve accessibility and patient outcomes across India.

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