



Patient Connect

Accelerating Patients through the Care Cascade

Advances in medicine over the years have successfully squared several impossible circles in regard to healthcare. However, despite the amazing progress made, there are even now patients across the globe who are blighted by serious diseases and medical conditions for which treatment is still inadequate.

Take the case of asthma, for instance, where many patients remain at risk of asthma attacks because their condition is not well controlled. Complicated medical regimens and sophisticated treatment administration procedures, coupled with lack of proper knowledge, result in significant unmet clinical needs, and there can be long detours and roadblocks in the care pathway. Closing these gaps becomes imperative to assure a healthier society.

But the question that looms here is: how?

“Research-based digital communications campaigns at the point of care,” says Dr. Grace Lomax, founder and CMO of Patient Connect. Being qualified in medicine and having practiced in both primary and secondary care for many years before co-founding Patient Connect, Dr. Grace has a deep understanding of the inconsistencies in patient medication adherence, caused by a lack of information. Her company, Patient Connect, was born to change this narrative.

Patient Connect conducts robust digital messaging programmes that facilitate patient engagement, drive behavioural change, and empower healthcare professionals to deliver optimised care. Through its programmes, the company accelerates patients through the care cascade and delivers valuable clinical insights to the medical fraternity.

To better understand how Patient Connect is moving the needle in addressing unmet clinical needs, let us delve deep into one such initiative delivered by the company. “The mission was to help the so-called brittle asthmatics,” informs Dr. Grace. “People diagnosed with this condition suffer from



Dr. Grace Lomax,
Founder & CMO

severe asthma attacks. More often than not, they are poorly controlled by their current treatment plan—causing the patients to experience debilitating and potentially life-threatening symptoms.”

So, Patient Connect designed a programme to escalate patient care through the care pathway using digital messaging and developed evidence-based clinical messages to address the critical issues. To that end, Patient Connect’s network of pharmacists and GPs were alerted to the challenge. Responding to a call to action, the campaign prompted healthcare professionals to consider the need to refer the patient to a pulmonologist for initiation of a more

effective treatment. Result? A significant increase in referral rates and initiation of appropriate therapy avoiding hundreds of thousands of asthma attacks that might otherwise have occurred. In short, the programme played a pivotal role in optimising care for patients with severe asthma.

“We address the drivers of suboptimal care,” says Dr. Grace. Making all that possible is her company’s widespread network of pharmacists and physicians, spread across 14 countries to reach more than 500 million patients. “We are integrated into hundreds of software systems so that we can connect with healthcare professionals through programmed digital alerts. We help them address unmet clinical needs and make the best decisions for the patient that is in front of them,” affirms Dr. Grace.

Dr. Grace believes that many unmet clinical needs arise due to the complexity of modern-day medicine regimes and polytherapy. She explains that, with the introduction of newer administration methods such as buccal lozenges, medicinal patches and sub-cut pens, old-fashioned capsules and tablets have taken a backseat. “Although we are able to achieve more for patients from a medical perspective, the reality is that for the patients themselves things are more complex. They are expected to master multiple medications with different applications,” remarks the CMO. “Overwhelmed by such an intricate labyrinth of treatment regimens, people can stop

taking their medication or take it so rarely it is doing nothing for them”.

Patient Connect works towards building a healthier world by helping healthcare professionals find the best possible care options for their patients and helping patients understand and manage their medication. With an extensive global network across more than 800,000 physicians and 250,000 pharmacies, reaching to more than 500 million patients, they are able to glean deep-seated insights and provide targeted messaging that empowers caregivers to make informed healthcare decisions. Programmed into the software systems of medical practitioners, digital campaigns are delivered at scale to reach and optimise care for the greatest number of patients. The company follows a “disciplined approach” to research what patients are struggling with, identify their unmet clinical needs, and zero in on areas where they trail and get lost in care cascades.

Steering Ahead of the Competition

The uniqueness of Patient Connect stems not only from its clinical expertise and massive reach, but also from its capability to measure its healthcare campaigns both clinically and commercially. “We measure the impact of all our campaigns so we can see if persistence or adherence is improving, or if patients are moving through the care cascade to appropriate treatment” says Dr. Grace. “We’ve run hundreds of campaigns, and this means we have a vast knowledge base of data to indicate where the problems are, what should be done, and what can be achieved.”

A typical campaign for Patient Connect begins with secondary research done by its proficient clinical team, surfing through published information and analysing data to identify the things that patients struggle with. The next step involves consulting with its expert knowledge base and creating an effective editorial plan which lays out what needs to be addressed for the patient. These call-to-actions are then digitally integrated as real-time clinical alerts in the workflow management software of physicians or pharmacists. Because of these digital integrations, the campaigns are measurable. “We are innovative to our bones, always seeking to improve what we do. We can see what we are achieving for the patients,” comments Dr. Grace.

Not only does this approach provide objective metrics to demonstrate the efficacy of the digital communications campaigns but it also imparts valuable information to help

enhance healthcare strategies. The company uses artificial intelligence to deliver valuable patient insights. The AI-based techniques analyse the changes in patient behaviour and determine the criteria for optimal outcomes.

At this juncture, Dr. Grace shares another instance when her company conducted a campaign through pharmacists involving 100,000 cancer patients. In the process, Patient Connect figured that only 3 percent of patients who are

prescribed strong opiates to help control their cancer pain were also prescribed antiemetics to combat the common side effect of nausea. The rest, 97 percent, were being left to suffer. Patient Connect interacted with the concerned patients through their pharmacists and advised them to either consult their GP or purchase antiemetics over the counter to avoid the nausea. They witnessed a 52 percent increase in the use of antiemetics as a direct result of the campaign, “By helping the patients to manage their nausea, they were better able to take their opiates. We measured a 14% increase in compliance with opiate treatment” states the CMO. “And if you help a cancer patient manage their pain, you help keep them out of hospital.”

Backed by such favourable outcomes, Patient Connect has been instrumental in leading the charge of improved patient engagement. Today, even in the midst of the pandemic storm, it is playing a crucial role in bridging the gap between practitioners and patients. The company is running several digital campaigns to spread awareness and sew up care processes by ensuring that patients are reviewed, referred, diagnosed, and treated on time. Moreover, Patient Connect is working on various campaigns in rare diseases, building clinical algorithms to identify patients who are yet to be diagnosed, to get them referred to the appropriate specialist and treatment before it is too late. As a progressive firm, it is also continuing to enhance its proprietary dataset that can help teams devise the optimal plan of action to address unmet clinical needs.

With its roots already spread across 14 countries, the company is expanding its physician network, to involve more oncologists, rheumatologists, diabetologists, and other key secondary care specialists to bolster the care cascades. “Our vision is to optimise care for patients across the world, from the very beginning when a patient first falls ill, through the various care cascade and treatment pathways, and even till the last moments of palliative care,” concludes Dr. Grace. **HT**

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**We can easily
find patients
with unmet
clinical needs
via point of care
digital messages
to clinicians**
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