

A landscape assessment of digital engagement with healthcare decision-makers

Joanna Ng¹; Jasmine Knight¹; Tasmina Hyder¹; Laurie Fazio¹ | ¹ Cencora, Conshohocken, PA, USA

Background

- In 2021, specialty drugs accounted for 75% of all FDA drug approvals.¹ Specialty drugs are increasingly being prescribed. Since specialty drugs are a complex class of therapies, balancing clinical effectiveness, product costs, and access has proved to be a challenge for healthcare decision-makers (HCDMs) during the formulary decision-making process.²
- With all the information that must be considered during a product review, communication between HCDMs and biopharma companies is critical. Efficient, streamlined access to current and relevant product information is vital in assisting the continual assessment of specialty drugs to provide patients access to the most optimal treatment options.²
- The increase in specialty drugs being approved emphasizes the importance of communication between HCDMs and biopharma companies. According to a recent survey, digital engagement has increased after COVID-19 and continues to be an important means of communicating product-related information to HCDMs.²

Objective

- To analyze the trends identified in current research surrounding digital communication between HCDMs and biopharma companies.

Methods

- A web-based literature search was conducted from March 17, 2023, to May 18, 2023, using a variety of keywords and phrases in combinations that related to digital communications between HCDMs and biopharma companies (ie, digital communication, digital engagement, digital communication with HCDMs, manufacturer communication with HCDMs through digital channels, and digital HCDM engagement strategy). PubMed and Google search engines were utilized for this search.
- Digital communication trends identified in relevant articles (eg, market research, grey literature) were consolidated and summarized into a qualitative assessment. Anecdotal articles about digital trends were excluded.

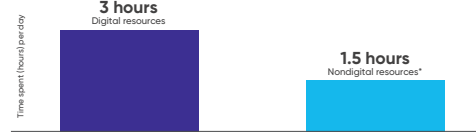
Results

- In total, there were 15 articles that were identified after searching with the keywords and phrases as outlined in the Methods section. Upon exclusion of anecdotal articles with no market research or references, the findings from 5 articles were considered relevant.

Results (cont.)

- Among HCDMs, there is an increasingly stronger preference for utilizing digital resources and supplementing nondigital resources with digital resources.³ Increased time spent reviewing digital resources for formulary review was observed through market research conducted among pharmacy and therapeutics (P&T) committee members (N=189) from various organization types (ie, hospitals, integrated delivery networks, pharmacy benefit managers, managed care organizations, and accountable care organizations) (Figure 1).⁴

Figure 1. Average hours spent per day by P&T committee members reviewing resources for formulary review*



*Nondigital resources include in-person meetings and physical leave-behinds by biopharma companies. Key: P&T - pharmacy and therapeutics.

- Table 1 highlights some desirable characteristics in digital communication identified from HCDM survey responses.

Table 1. Key characteristics of successful digital communication

- Interactive digital materials to make meetings with biopharma company representatives more engaging and meaningful⁴**
- Digital resources that are tailored toward various HCDM types according to organizational type and/or level⁵**
 - Organizational type⁵
 - Example:** HCDMs at integrated delivery networks associated with health plans (65%) expressed high levels of interest in accessing disease trends, while integrated delivery networks not associated with a health plan (50%) had higher levels of interest in having access to interactive budget models
 - Organizational level⁵
 - Example:** National HCDMs have indicated wanting access to clinical data and pipeline insights, while regional HCDMs have indicated wanting more locally relevant evidence
- Easy access to digital resources^{6,7}**
- Asynchronous access and interaction with digital resources^{8,7}**
- Proactive and reactive communication from biopharma companies**
 - Bidirectional communication with biopharma companies to get clarity on information provided⁸
 - Earlier communication from biopharma companies to ensure that HCDMs have all the necessary information to prevent delays to patient access⁹

- Based on findings in Table 1, a best practices framework (Figure 2) was created to guide biopharma companies on how they should approach digital communications with HCDMs. Table 2 goes into more detail as to what tactics and considerations each component of the framework entails.

Figure 2. Best practices framework on how biopharma companies can best engage HCDMs through a digital platform

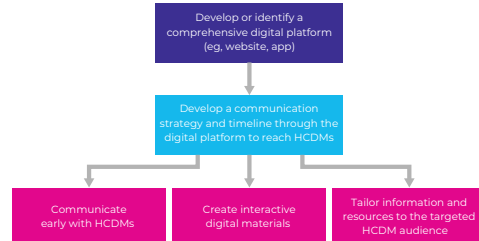


Table 2. Recommendations for biopharma companies on how to best engage HCDMs through a digital platform

- Develop or identify a comprehensive digital platform** (eg, website, app) to upload pertinent information for HCDMs with the following characteristics:
 - Asynchronous access that is secure and reliable
 - Ability to leave feedback on how to improve the quality of the information provided and help in identifying what materials are missing
- Develop a communication strategy and timeline through a digital platform** that takes into consideration when HCDMs may be looking for certain materials on a digital platform (eg, how many months before product launch will an HCDM want to review phase 3 clinical data)
- Communicate early with HCDMs** to ensure that formulary review of products are clinically robust and comprehensive to prevent delays in patient access. Consider providing the following example materials for HCDMs to access through a digital platform as they become available:
 - Unmet need/disease burden landscape assessment¹
 - Pre-approval information exchange²
 - Phase 3 clinical trial data³
- Create interactive digital materials** (eg, interactive dossier, disease background module, economic models, short videos on patient experiences, etc) and upload them to the digital platform to better engage HCDMs
- Tailor information and resources to the targeted HCDM audience** for the disease area/patient population of interest. Be mindful of what type of organizations the HCDMs may be from, as the types of materials HCDMs are interested in can differ between organizational types (eg, academic vs pharmacy benefit manager) and levels (eg, regional vs national)

Limitations

- The method in which this qualitative assessment was carried out was restricted to the articles found using the keywords and phrases used in the web-based literature search. The digital trends identified through this preliminary search were not all-inclusive and only represent the articles that were reviewed.
- There was limited primary research with structured methodologies confirming the increased utilization of digital communication between biopharma companies and HCDMs.

Conclusions

- The results from this targeted, web-based literature review reveal increased utilization of digital communication between HCDMs and biopharma companies.
- There is a need for conducting further market research with robust methodologies to evaluate the true extent to which digital communication and its trends affect the relationship between biopharma companies and HCDMs overall, and in specialty pharmacy.
- There is an increasing desire among HCDMs to see biopharma companies use a digital platform (eg, FormularyDecisions¹⁰) as a way of communicating relevant information so that product formulary reviews can be conducted in a comprehensive manner.

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