



ADVISORY BRIEF

Patient Journey: A New Approach To Meet The Demands Of Patient Centricity

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Introduction

Patient Journey is a mainstay of **pre-launch commercial insights generation**, traditionally sitting beside demand estimation, segmentation and other key inputs to commercial decision-making and launch preparation.

Historically, Patient Journey has been used to identify leverage points and opportunities to **increase market share** for the new product. It has been **generated through primary market research** (largely qualitative) and presented as a **one-time, standalone deliverable**.

Today, the call to engage on a meaningful level with patients demands a new focus on the **totality of the patient experience** that traditional takes on Patient Journey don't deliver. Patient Journey must evolve from a static, standalone market research activity to a holistic, flexible model of the patient experience to truly provide value to today's patient-centric organizations.

The Elements of a Meaningful Customized Patient Experience

As patients continue to expand their role in healthcare choice and treatment decision-making, expectations have grown for pharma to provide an experience in line with well-known, customer-centric consumer brands. Brands like Apple and Amazon have set a high bar in terms of personalized service, customer empowerment and “real-time” interactions.

To reach this level of engagement and experience design with patients, pharma organizations need insight into the patient’s **holistic journey**, from all relevant dimensions (not just their clinical pathway through care).

Key elements of the holistic journey are included in Trinity’s Patient Journey Dimensional Model

Clinical Journey

The steps in the patient flow, including all diagnostics, treatments, HCPs and settings of care, as well as clinical impacts like outcomes and side effects

Logistics, Finance & Access

How patients navigate through the logistics of their disease: finding specialists, traveling to appointments, securing access and bearing the costs of treatment

Information Seeking

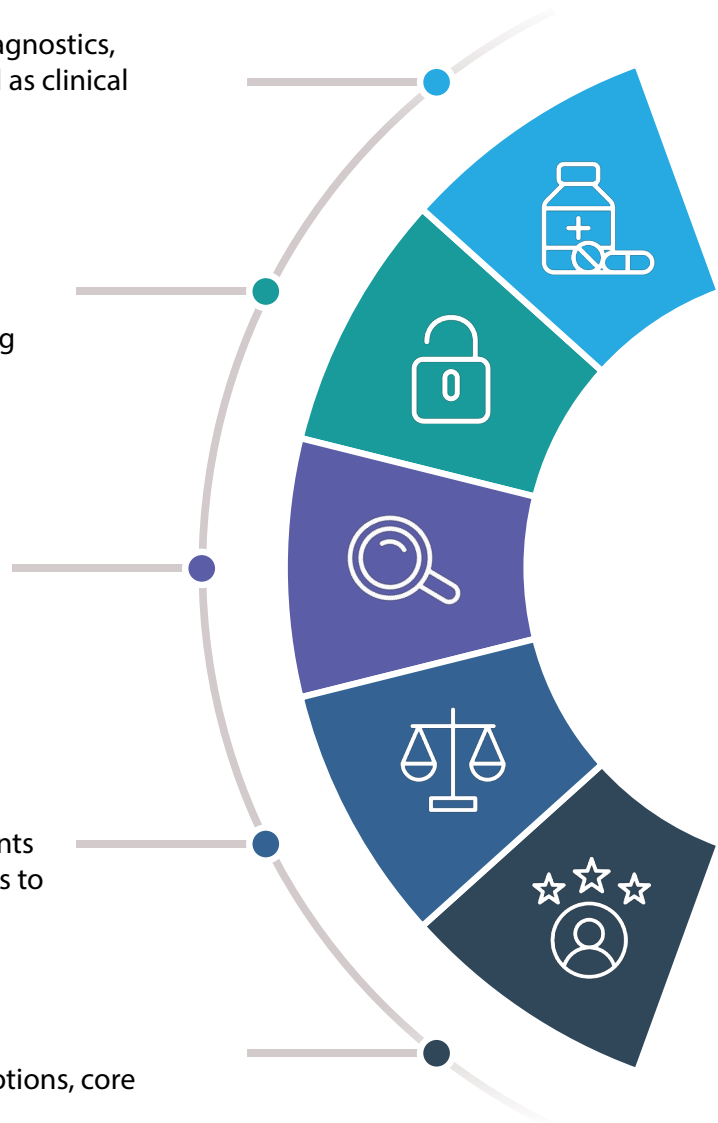
Where and when patients seek disease information, how they engage with advocacy and peers, and key unmet needs around information seeking

Health Equity Considerations

Experiences and needs unique to specific patient populations, tied to social determinants of health (including, but not limited to: access to care, language preference, etc.)

Emotions & Experiences

The patient’s day-to-day experience, key emotions, core relationships and unmet needs



Application of the Holistic Patient Journey

In addition to identifying triggers for patient engagement, a holistic approach to patient journey also provides detailed insight to power a wide range of commercial activities.



Clinical Journey

- » Development of clinical endpoints that address key unmet patient needs
- » Education and support around the most burdensome treatment-related side effects
- » Targeted HCP outreach to shore up gaps in clinical processes (diagnosis, patient selection, etc.)



Logistics, Finance & Access

- » Clinical trial protocols that reduce the burden on the patient
- » Financial resources to address “hidden” costs associated with a disease state
- » Travel support and telehealth options to help patients access specialists



Information Seeking

- » Channel selection based on patients’ preferred media habits
- » Outreach and education customized by stage of the patient journey
- » Targeted education around the topics patients care most about (specific side effects, financial considerations, etc.)



Health Equity Considerations

- » Customization of patient support programs to the needs of specific populations
- » Inclusivity in all patient-facing materials and resources
- » Targeted efforts to reduce gaps in care in specific regions or populations



Emotions & Experiences

- » Patient marketing efforts that speak to real-world patient needs in the language patients use to express them
- » Patient support around the mental health implications of a disease state
- » HCP education around supporting patients at critical emotional timepoints in their journey
- » Development of peer support initiatives and other advocacy solutions

Multiple Lenses and Data Sources are Needed to Build this Holistic View

Given the depth and breadth of insights needed to create this holistic view of the patient, Patient Journeys must go beyond a primarily qualitative market research approach to access a richer level of detail:

- » With Trinity EvidenceFirst, life sciences companies can follow patients over time to map and quantify the diagnostic and treatment journey. A proprietary analytics infrastructure allows clients to define custom patient cohorts, compare patient flows among subpopulations and understand multiple years of progression. In some cases, SDOH can be integrated to start to identify health equity-related considerations and unlock understanding of patient segments—and unmet needs—within the journey.

- » Trinity’s quantitative chart collection capabilities provide key patient insights linked to fine detail about patients. In a patient chart audit, de-identified patient medical charts are collected and analyzed in depth, generating a robust physician- and patient-level dataset that characterizes the key healthcare touchpoints in the patient experience. It also allows for defining and analyzing patient subpopulations for their specific burdens and unmet needs—and provides data unavailable from claims or any other available datasets.

Real World Evidence (RWE)

RWE is a critical element of patient journey, providing an evidence-based Patient/Treatment Flow to act as a clinical framework upon which deep emotional and experiential insights are layered. RWE yields a rich Patient/Treatment Flow: ordering and timing of all clinical milestones (including presentation, diagnostic and treatment flow), involvement of key treater types, referral patterns over time, key settings of care, duration and dosing for all treatments given.

Additionally, datasets exist that can layer Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) into this analysis. This unbiased view of the Patient Flow is based on actual observed events over thousands of patients (via claims analysis), the robustness of which is not attainable through primary research approaches alone.

Chart Audit

Collecting and analyzing a sample of de-identified patient charts is another way to add depth to the patient flow. In this step, the “why’s” behind the clinical decision-making start to become visible at the detailed patient type level.

Key strengths of chart studies in Patient Journey include:

- » **Elucidating HCP-level drivers/barriers that impact the patient journey** (for example, referral delays due to misunderstanding of symptoms, additional texture on SDOH, etc) and provide actionable leverage points for a new product
- » **Analyzing detailed and custom patient sub-populations**, defined by any factors of interest to the brand, in order to build a deep understanding of different Patient Journeys
- » **Quantifying patient factors not optimized in claims** (biomarker status, comorbid conditions, incidence of treatment-related side effects, etc.) to provide foundational datapoints unavailable in other sources

» Trinity’s Qualitative Center of Excellence comprises a dedicated staff of career market research moderators with decades of in-depth healthcare experience. Our moderators expertly lead in-depth interviews and participate fully in all aspects of an engagement to ensure insights are carried through to deliverables. The moderators have diverse experience across continents and stakeholder types, spanning both rare disease & major therapeutic classes; this allows us to tailor moderator selection to the specific needs of a client/project. For patient interviews, we deploy a subset of moderators particularly skilled in empathic interviewing styles, aimed at increasing patient comfort when sharing information that can be personal, distressing or emotionally charged.

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative research is still at the center of uncovering deep insights into the patient’s journey.

When the “backbone” of the patient flow is already known (from secondary data, RWE, chart studies, etc.), qualitative research can be leveraged to do what it does best—explore the patient and HCP experience including motivations, drivers of behaviors, perceptions and beliefs.

Qualitative Patient Journey research can be enhanced with a variety of projective methods and creative techniques, ensuring that the experience – including emotions and likes/dislikes – takes center stage over clinical details that can be gleaned elsewhere.



Projective Techniques to get “under the hood” of stated responses and uncover latent emotional drivers or associations (example: choosing an image that represents the patient/HCP relationship, rather than describing it in a stated fashion)



Web-enhanced or Face-to-face (F2F) interviews to observe the facial expressions and body language that underlie stated responses—and to enhance rapport between the interviewer and the respondent



Homework exercises for patients and caregivers to help them gather thoughts prior to the interview (example: “Chapters of Book” exercise where respondents organize their personal journey into the chapters they perceive to be important)



Ethnographic/diary approaches to collected detailed information on the patient’s day to day, to help quantify the impact of symptoms and learn about how patients are managing their condition outside of HCP visits (example: patients with “fatigue” asked to log how many hours of sleep they get, when they may miss work or need a nap to help quantify the impact of a treatment side effect).

» Trinity's dedicated quantitative research team is expert in designing and analyzing bespoke web-based surveys to provide targeted data to answer critical business questions. Our quantitative staff includes several PhD-level researchers—both in the US and across the globe—as well as support staff who ensure technical details like complex skip logic, choice exercises and other enhancements are soundly designed to yield actionable results. Additionally, our in-house survey programming staff ensures process efficiency and timely data-collection, without the need to engage a third-party.

Quantitative Surveys

Survey data also plays a role in understanding the holistic Patient Journey. Simple descriptive surveys can be used to quantify even the emotional pieces of the patient experience. Examples include quantifying the percent of patients who feel disappointed in their physician's knowledge of a certain condition, understanding the frequency of support needs and rating their impressions of a manufacturer or brand. This step can be taken at the completion of all other research phases—or as a final step leading toward the identification and quantification of opportunities and leverage points. Conducting a final confirmatory step at the end of the process can provide peace of mind, considering the investment decisions that are often made based on Patient Journey insights (market development initiatives, development of Patient Services programs, etc.)

Strategic Application of the Holistic Patient Journey

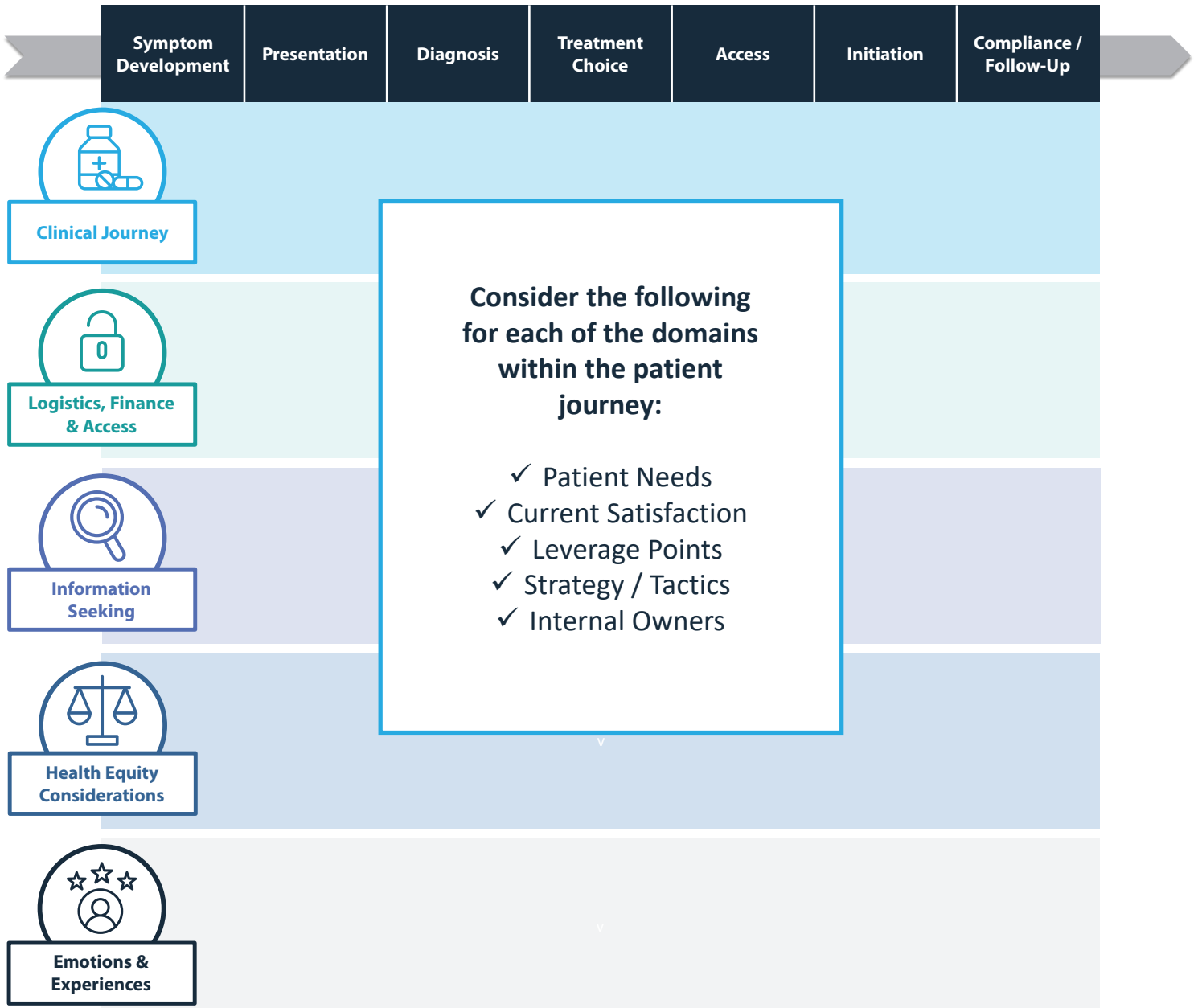
It might seem like assembling a holistic Patient Journey through all these data sources would increase the complexity exponentially, making it more difficult to extract tangible action points and strategies.

We have found that it actually makes the process clearer and streamlined, because of the way we bucket the insights we have generated over time (clinical, emotional / experiential, logistical, informational and equity-related). This structure feeds seamlessly into a prioritization framework where functional groups within the organization can clearly understand opportunities and goals—and prepare to action them. A holistic Patient Journey creates a foundation to measure performance, impact and pull-through post-launch against each bucket.

We use a different kind of Patient Journey Map (one that supplements traditional colorful cartoon journeys or infographics) to focus on linking real patient needs to brand strategy and tactics.

Patient Journey Strategic Roadmap

For each of the domains within the patient journey, our Patient Journey Strategic Roadmap helps teams prioritize and size opportunities, evaluate the investment/effort required and estimate return.



Pulling It All Together

There is a clear need to evolve the Patient Journey approach towards developing the comprehensive insights needed to power Patient Centricity. While fully making this transition may require additional efforts, like generating internal buy-in and budget allocation adjustments, there are initial steps that all patient-focused teams can make now to increase the utility of Patient Journey in today's rapidly changing patient-centric landscape.

Actionable Steps for Enabling a Holistic Patient Journey

- » **Reach beyond the patient's clinical journey in existing qualitative research:** ensure discussion guides contain space for discussions around emotions, access, logistics and the HCP-patient relationship
- » **Explore "non-market research" data sources when building out the journey:** if a full longitudinal analysis is not in the current budget or scope, publicly available data sources can provide some real-world context to ensure the journey contains a broader perspective than a qualitative interview sample
- » **Ensure strategic application** of results with cross-functional brainstorming sessions—taking care that as many internal stakeholders as possible have access to the Journey insights and can use them to inform strategy and tactics within their function. This can be accomplished by including broad audiences in project kick-offs and final workshops—and is a great first step to broader socialization of patient insights

For more Patient Centricity Intelligence, visit us [here](#).

Author



Jennifer Parr | Partner & Head of Patient Centricity

Jennifer currently leads Trinity's Patient Centricity Center of Excellence, helping Trinity's clients weave the Voice of the Patient into all facets of the product lifecycle. Jennifer's group works closely with Trinity's Strategic Advisory, PMR and RWE teams to produce deep patient insights based in real-world data, that are tactically actionable for a wide range of biopharma customers. Over the past 9 years at Trinity, Jennifer has helped clients leverage patient insights in a wide array of treatment areas, including Oncology, GI, and several orphan and neuromuscular diseases.

Jennifer has been involved in patient and consumer insights work for the past 18 years, with prior roles at Forrester Research, Quintiles Consulting and Applied Marketing Science. Having joined Trinity in 2010, Jennifer helped develop the company's primary research capabilities into a core part of the business, specifically in the areas of qualitative research and Patient Journey.

Jennifer earned a BA in Psychology from Boston University. When not at the office, Jennifer is most likely planning the next family vacation for her husband and 3 school-aged kids, plotting her next home improvement endeavor, or being entertained by her extremely active boxer puppy, Ruby.





About Trinity

Trinity Patient Centricity focuses on deeply understanding patient needs and experiences to support life science organizations in product development, launch and beyond. Patient-centric insights and analytics are more relevant than ever, even as inputs grow in complexity and outputs grow in importance. Trinity's patient-centric suite of offerings include integrated, tech-enabled services powered by unique, time-tested methodologies and dedicated teams of Market Researchers, RWE Experts and experienced Strategic Advisors. To learn more about how Trinity Patient Centricity helps clients turn patient-level data and insights into strategic direction for patient-centric decision-making, [click here](#).

For more information, please contact us at info@trinitylifesciences.com.