

Pioneer's Perspective



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AstraZeneca 

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The Digital Therapeutics & Digital Medicine industry is attracting more attention now than ever before - why do you think that is?

We are at an inflection point in patient care. With the advances in technology, including sensors, medical devices and smart packaging, the uptake of smartphones globally, and the explosion of data analytics - there is an incredible opportunity to dramatically improve patient outcomes.

Additionally, there is a massive need to reduce long-term healthcare costs, and Digital Health provides great potential.

In your opinion, how does Pharma view the Digital Therapeutics and Digital Medicine industry?

As an opportunity to continue to help improve patient outcomes, to generate real-world evidence, to reduce costs and to improve how clinical trials are run. Even if you just look at a couple areas, for example, managing side effects in real-time and improving medication adherence, the impact of Digital Therapeutics can generate enormous value for patients, payers, and innovators.

Given recent collaborations, such as Novartis and Pear, are you seeing value in the shifting relationship between pharma and tech?

The overall healthcare industry benefits when we build partnerships which harness broad expertise. Success in the future may depend on these strong partnerships, which bring together the best attributes of technology innovators and pharmaceutical companies.

Where do you see this industry in five years time?

Rather than pockets of CoEs, I see the “think digital health” mindset embedded across the industry and across the entire development cycle, from discovery and early clinical development, through late-stage registrational trials, and into commercialization / clinical practice. Perhaps a “digital TPP”, as part of development, will simply be the status quo.

What conversations need to happen now, for the Digital Therapeutics & Digital Medicine industry to move forward?

Continued increased clarity on medical device regulations for these types of products, particularly in the US. Also, for payers to value the evidence, or make the path to reimbursement clearer. Even companies with clinical outcome data on par with pharmaceutical products, struggle to get reimbursed - despite markedly lower prices.

Diverse experiences and perspectives are so valuable in biotech. What advice would you give to people considering a career in this sector?

The field of biotech itself offers incredibly diverse opportunities in areas such as R&D, commercial, and operations. Seek out the opportunities that interest you. In my career, I've had the opportunity to work in an early discovery lab, with celebrities while leading public relations campaigns, to lead photo shoots for marketing and sales materials, to prep investor relations reports, to work in manufacturing and even to run clinical trials. I've learned so much from each experience and it makes me a much stronger leader to understand the business broadly. I also regularly get to see the direct impact of my work on the lives of patients: Amazingly fulfilling!

What do you plan to take away from the DTxDM East Summit?

It's tremendous to be in a room of “like-minded” experts focused on Digital Therapeutics. However, it's the spirited debate that I enjoy most. The diversity in perspective helps challenge my thinking about the value these advances may bring to patients. My lens skews to the perspective of pharma / biotech, so hearing from technology companies, where this is their core business, will continue to help me re-evaluate some aspects, including a better understanding of the potential business models.