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Consumers are playing an increasingly important role in the evolution of healthcare marketing research and will continue to do so in during the coming years. The list of healthcare stakeholders still includes prescribers, patients, nurses, pharmacists, hospitals, payers, etc. but the increasing role of government and payers has continued to raise the visibility of all things medical in the public eye, and consumers are noticing.

Greater access to health information and the impact of healthcare discussions taking place in the media continue to transform patients from the old *"I do what my doctor tells me and don't ask too many questions"* paradigm to the new *"it's my health and I want a say in what happens"*. Actually, that transformation has largely happened already and we as marketers are seeing that impact every day.

Savvy healthcare manufacturers will be more patient-centric in their approach to marketing their products and are relying on patients to tell them what matters to them and why. Our clients are keen to understand how certain disease states impact patients not only from a medical standpoint but from a "life" standpoint - how is quality of life affected? How are caregivers and family members impacted? How do patients feel about their health conditions and medical remedies? How can we reach patients with information that helps them make the most informed decisions about their care, or helps them have the most productive conversation with their doctors?

Marketing research with clinicians is included very early in the clinical development process for new treatments – they are involved during the design of clinical trials in order to understand parameters that will produce data with the most clinically appealing profile. I would argue that patients should also be consulted for input into clinical trial design, with an eye towards producing data and claims that are most aligned with their needs and perceptions.

Our industry will continue to tap into patients and caregivers for their opinions – clinicians are typically the target for marketing efforts but consumers have to live with decisions arrived at through collaborative discussion with prescribers. They want a say in their healthcare, and we should listen to them!