



BEYOND DISEASE MANAGEMENT: CREATING EMOTIONAL VALUE THROUGH H2H MARKETING IN CHRONIC DISEASE MEDICATIONS - A MIXED METHOD STUDY OF PATIENT-PROVIDER RELATIONSHIPS

Presented by: Shubham Verma

Roll No: 0578

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University: IIHMR University Jaipur



Introduction

What is H2H Marketing?

Originated by Bryan Kramer(2014), expanded by Philip Kotler(2020), Human-to-Human (H2H) marketing is unlike traditional Business-to-Business (B2B) or Business-to-Consumer (B2C) models; It emphasizes the **emotional, personal, and contextual dimensions of communication** that recognize individuals not just as consumers but as human beings with specific emotional needs.

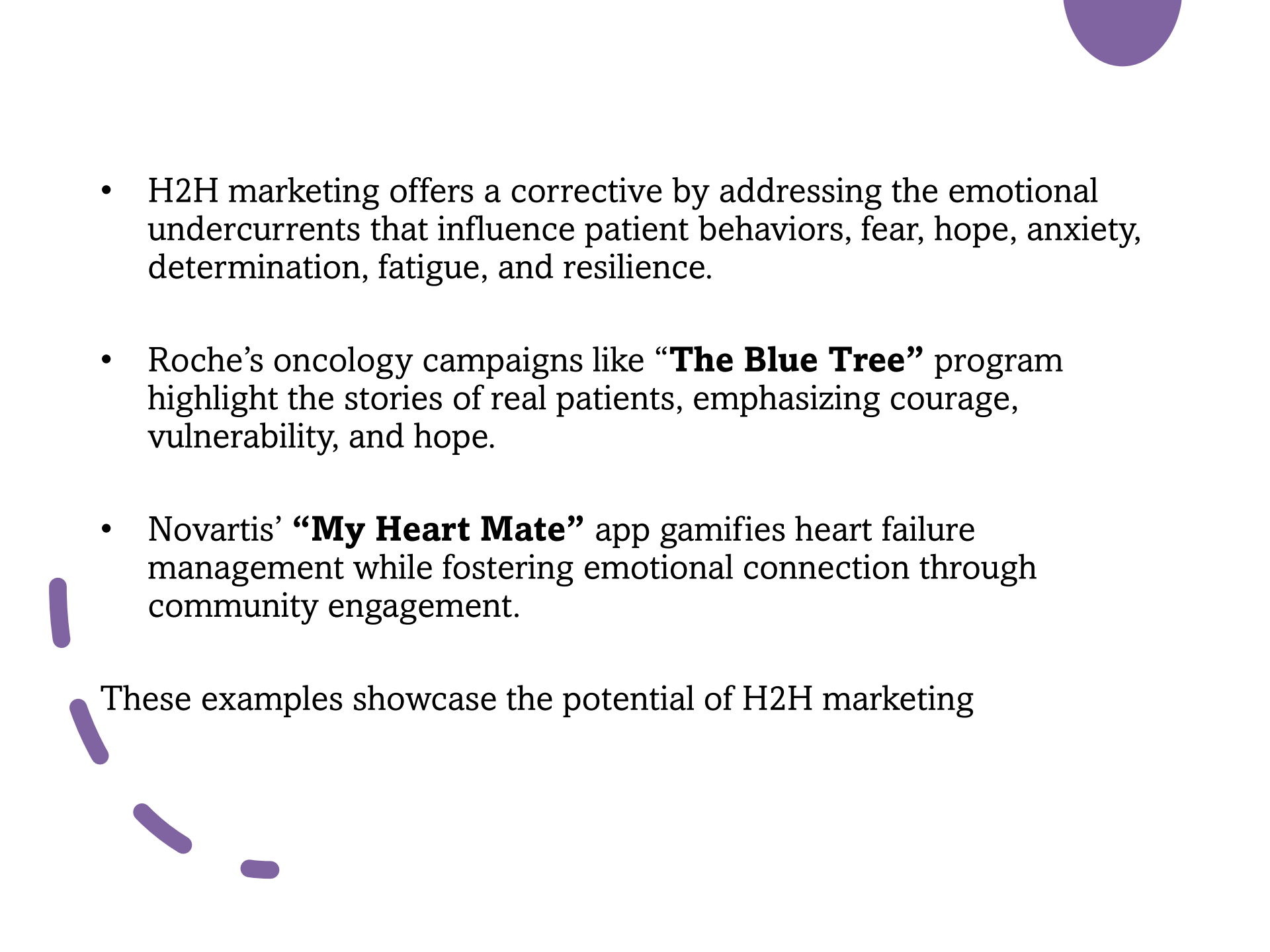
3 Pillars of H2H Marketing:

- **Design Thinking** - Promotes empathy-driven problem-solving
 - **Service-Dominant Logic** - Centers on co-creating value through interaction rather than delivering products in isolation
 - **Digital Transformation** - Enables scalable, personalized, and responsive communication through technology
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- Chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, asthma, arthritis, and cancer are among the most pressing global health concerns of the 21st century. These non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are characterized by their long-term nature, slow progression, and complex management requirements.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023), NCDs are now responsible for over 70% of global deaths.
- In India, the burden is particularly heavy, with NCDs accounting for more than 60% of all deaths.

Need for H2H in Chronic Care

- Pharma marketing has long prioritized scientific detailing, regulatory compliance, and return on investment; while these elements are undoubtedly important, they often come at the expense of human connection.
- In chronic disease management the stakes are high; patients must adhere to complex regimens, confront social stigma, endure side effects, and continuously recalibrate their lives around their health conditions.
- Clinical adherence can be nudged through prescription refill reminders and health tracking apps whereas emotional adherence, defined as the patient's internal commitment to engage with care, is far more difficult to cultivate.

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- H2H marketing offers a corrective by addressing the emotional undercurrents that influence patient behaviors, fear, hope, anxiety, determination, fatigue, and resilience.
 - Roche's oncology campaigns like “**The Blue Tree**” program highlight the stories of real patients, emphasizing courage, vulnerability, and hope.
 - Novartis' “**My Heart Mate**” app gamifies heart failure management while fostering emotional connection through community engagement.

These examples showcase the potential of H2H marketing

Objectives of the study

- ❑ Understand H2H principles in healthcare
- ❑ Assess emotional needs of chronic patients
- ❑ Evaluate pharma communication practices
- ❑ Propose emotional engagement strategies

Research Questions

- How do patients with chronic illnesses perceive the emotional support they receive from healthcare professionals and pharmaceutical brands?
- What forms of communication are considered most emotionally engaging or supportive by patients?
- Do digital tools such as mobile apps, chatbots, or automated reminders enhance emotional connection in chronic care?
- To what extent does emotionally intelligent communication influence patient adherence, satisfaction, and brand loyalty in the chronic care continuum?



Methodology

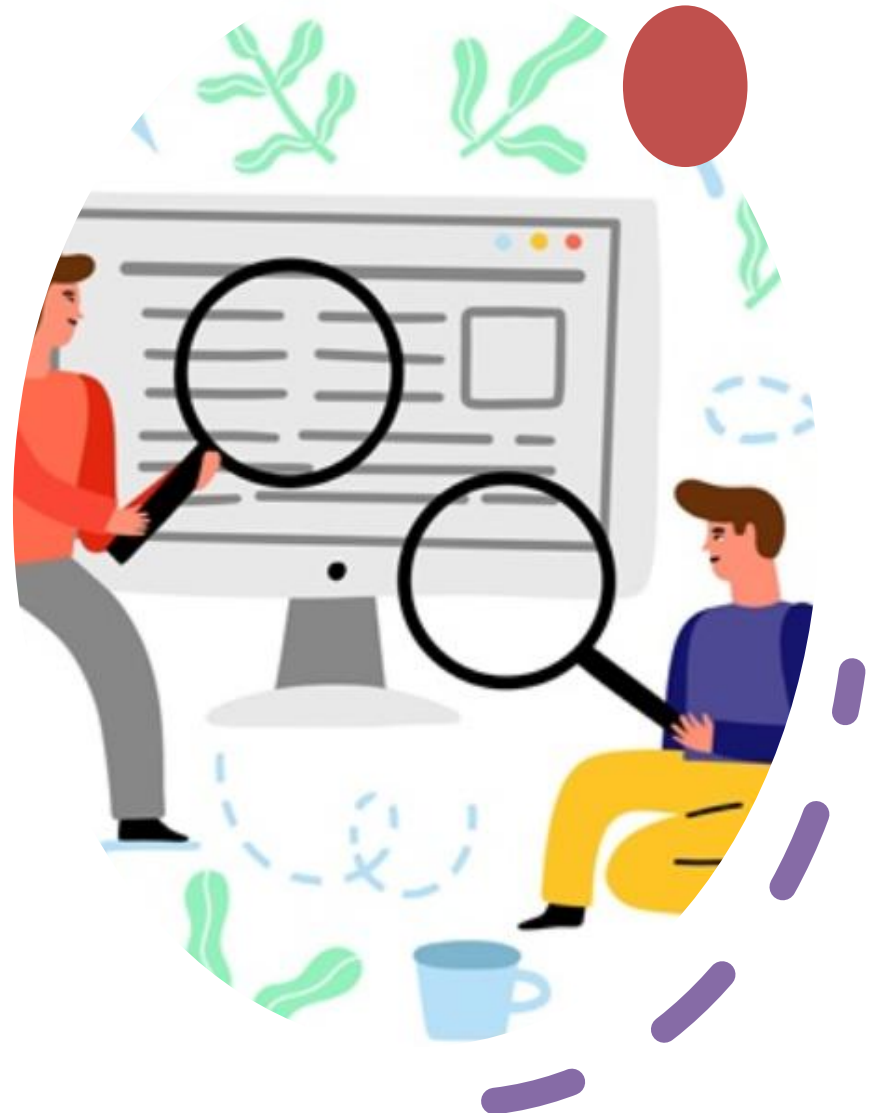
- Mixed-method design approach containing quantitative and qualitative data.
- The research was carried out in the Indian healthcare context, particularly targeting individuals residing in urban and semi-urban regions with access to the internet.
- A total of **40 participants** were included in the final dataset.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Aged 18 years and above
- Diagnosed with one or more chronic illnesses
- Comfortable reading and responding in English
- Provided voluntary consent to participate

Exclusion Criteria:

- Individuals with acute or short-term illnesses
 - Those unable to understand the survey language
 - Healthcare professionals (to avoid role-based bias)
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- Data was collected using a **structured online questionnaire** developed in Google Forms.
 - No incentives were provided, and participation was entirely voluntary.
 - Personal identifiers such as names or emails were collected, and access was restricted to the principal researcher.



Survey Results (Key Findings)

There were total of **40 respondents**.

Demography

- 92.5% of patients were below 45 years of age.
- 57.5% were male while 42.5% were female indicating the prevalence in both genders.

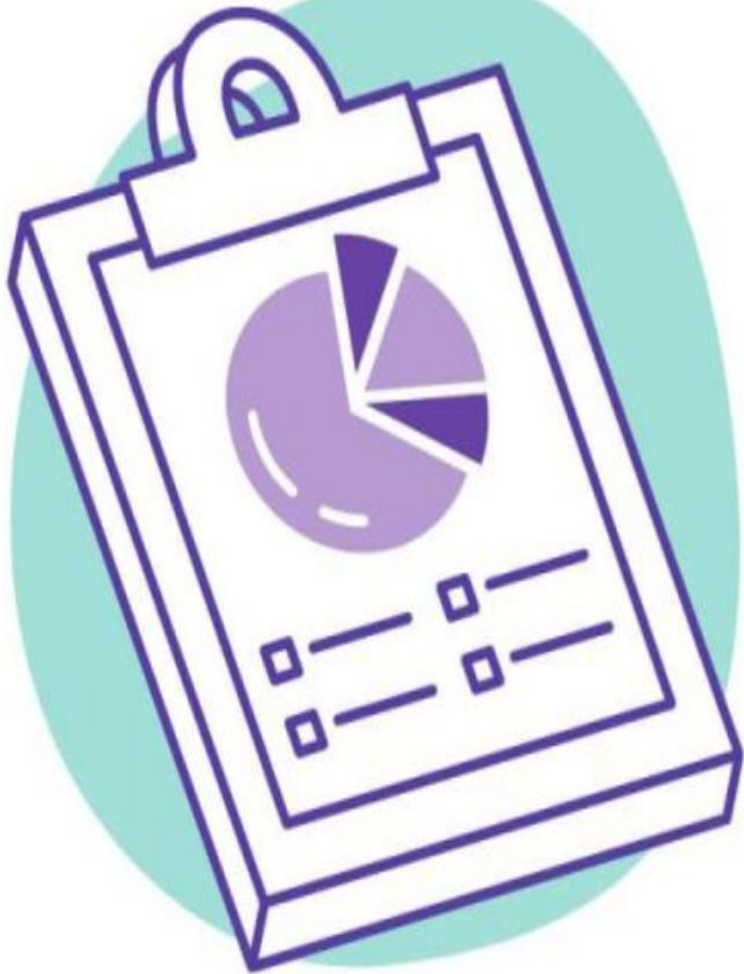
Chronic condition duration

- 65% of overall respondents have been diagnosed for any chronic disease more than a year ago.

Emphasis on emotional support

- 92.5% of patients rated emotional support as important.





Emotional support from healthcare providers

- Approximately 41% of respondents indicated that their healthcare provider always offers emotional support, whereas another 44% receive it only sometimes.

Pharmaceutical communication

- Pharmaceutical companies face a credibility gap. Half of the respondents rated their communication as “neutral”.

Digital health tools

- More than 70% of participants use mobile apps or platforms to manage their chronic conditions, however, only 22% feel “very much” emotionally supported by these tools.

Importance of H2H marketing

- 72.5% said empathetic communication positively impacted their brand loyalty.
- A significant proportion of respondents expressed openness to human-like digital interfaces.

Discussion Highlights

Emotional connection is foundational and not optional

- The findings strongly validates the central hypothesis that emotional connection is not an auxiliary feature of healthcare, it is foundational.

H2H communication is the need of the hour

- Patients respond better to emotionally attuned care and emotionally intelligent marketing, rather than purely scientific facts.
- Patient hesitancy to express emotional needs, they often withhold emotional concerns unless prompted, due to fear of being dismissed or misunderstood.
- Human-to-Human (H2H) marketing and emotionally driven communication affect patient engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty in chronic disease care.





Doctors need training in emotional intelligence

- The gap between patient need and perceived responsiveness by healthcare providers reinforces the argument that clinical competence alone does not ensure quality care.

Technology must simulate human warmth

- The results showed that while digital tools are widely used (52.5% adoption), their emotional utility is moderate at best; this points to an underutilization of emotional design in digital health interfaces.

Pharma brands must shift from transactional to relational marketing

- Half of the respondents described it as “neutral”, this neutrality signals a clear branding deficiency; patients remember emotion, not only information

Conclusion

- Human-to-Human marketing is not just a strategy; it is a philosophy of care; emotional value is central to effective chronic care.
- From a patient care perspective, there is a significant gap between the emotional needs of patients and the services they currently receive; the emotional burden of chronic illness manifesting as stigma, anxiety, fear, and fatigue is often overlooked in standard medical treatment.
- Empathy is not a luxury, it's a necessity in healthcare; for healthcare providers the delivery of care must extend beyond prescriptions and diagnostics to include emotional reassurance and empathetic dialogue.
- H2H marketing transforms pharma from product-seller to emotional ally; pharmaceutical companies stand to gain from adopting H2H strategies. When brands engage patients with compassion and cultural relevance, they foster emotional resonance that transcends product promotion.



“At the heart of every healthcare decision lies a human being with fears, hopes, and needs.”

**THANK
YOU!!**

