

PATIENT-CENTRIC MARKETING STRATEGIES: BUILDING BRAND TRUST AND PREFERENCE FOR BIOSIMILARS THROUGH DIGITAL HEALTH

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in

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by

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Under the Supervision and Guidance of

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CERTIFICATE

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I, SHRUTI SHUKLA Enrolment No. IIHMR-U/02/2023-25/0577 Here by Declare That This Dissertation is Titled Patient-Centric Marketing Strategies: Building Brand Trust and Preference for Biosimilars Through Digital Health Ecosystems the Bonafide Record of My Original Research Work. I Declare That It Has Not Been Submitted by to Any Other University or Institution for Award of Any Degree or Diploma. information Derived from The Published or Unpublished Work of Others Has Been Duly Acknowledged in the Text.



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ABSTRACT

This comparative analysis examines the impact, effectiveness, and outcomes of patient-centric marketing strategies in enhancing brand trust and preference for biosimilars through digital health ecosystems. Biosimilars, as cost-effective alternatives to biologics, face challenges related to trust, awareness, and adoption among patients and healthcare providers. With the rise of digital health tools, the pharmaceutical industry is shifting toward personalized and value-driven engagement to improve patient education and build confidence in biosimilars.

The study reviews data from patient behavior reports, digital marketing campaigns, healthcare professional insights, and real-world case studies. Key parameters analyzed include brand trust, personalized communication, digital adherence support, user experience, and overall brand preference. The research explores how integrated digital tools—such as mobile health apps, telemedicine platforms, online patient communities, and AI-powered chatbots—can enhance patient involvement, improve therapy adherence, and facilitate meaningful interactions between brands and end-users.

This Findings indicate that digital health ecosystems, when aligned with patient needs and supported by accurate, transparent content, significantly boost brand loyalty and treatment satisfaction in biosimilar users. These platforms reduce information gaps, support shared decision-making, and empower patients to make informed choices. Compared to traditional marketing, patient-centric digital strategies demonstrate higher engagement, stronger emotional connection, and better long-term outcomes. While cost and digital literacy may pose barriers, the overall trend indicates a favorable shift toward digital-first strategies.

This research highlights the strategic potential of patient-focused digital marketing in positioning biosimilars as trusted, preferred treatment options in an increasingly connected and value-driven healthcare environment.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Form
HCP	Healthcare Professional
DTC	Direct-to-Consumer
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
mHealth	Mobile Health
AI	Artificial Intelligence
EHR	Electronic Health Record
DHA	Digital Health Application
UX	User Experience
RWE	Real-World Evidence
CME	Continuing Medical Education
B2C	Business to Consumer
B2B	Business to Business
WHO	World Health Organization
EMA	European Medicines Agency
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
ROI	Return on Investment
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
IoT	Internet of Things
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HIE	Health Information Exchange

CHAPTER-1
INTRODUCTION

Increasing patient trust and encouraging active participation are more important than ever in the quickly evolving pharmaceutical industry, particularly in relation to biosimilars. These drugs improve access to care by providing more reasonably priced treatment options and are fairly equivalent to existing biologics. Despite being safe and effective, biosimilars usually face business resistance. The primary causes of this are patients' ignorance, concerns about their reliability, and poor brand positioning.

To tackle these challenges, the industry is turning away from traditional advertising methods and towards more patient-centered ones. These more modern methods place a strong focus on open communication, patient education, and relationship building. At the core of this shift is the growing area of digital health, which includes technologies such as wearables, telehealth platforms, mobile health apps, chatbots driven by artificial intelligence, digital medications, and online patient networks. These digital tools help patients make educated decisions about biosimilar medications by addressing knowledge gaps.

As a result of this digital transformation, pharmaceutical companies are attempting to provide value that is focused on the patient's needs rather than just selling items. Direct patient engagement through tailored information is crucial since biosimilars are often more scrutinised than the original biologic drugs. In addition to collaborating with authorities and medical professionals, companies must now see patients as significant players in the treatment process for their marketing to be effective.

This dissertation explores the potential for patient-centered marketing strategies to alter attitudes, promote confidence, and boost the adoption of biosimilars. Through case comparisons, primary research, and practical insights, the study illustrates how digital technology might play a critical role in developing reliable branding for biosimilar drugs.

CHAPTER-2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

With the introduction of patient-centered marketing, the pharmaceutical sector has witnessed a dramatic change from traditional product-driven approaches to ones that place an emphasis on active patient participation, awareness, and empowerment. In the biosimilars sector, where patient cynicism and poor confidence sometimes impede uptake, this change is particularly crucial. This survey of the literature brings together significant scholarly and industry perspectives on three key topics: the marketing of biosimilars, the integration of digital healthcare technology, and the evolving dynamics of patient trust.

Evolution of Biosimilar Acceptance and Market Dynamics

Lower costs and simpler access to treatment are two major benefits of biosimilars, which are biological drugs that closely mimic reference biologics that have already been approved. Despite these advantages, its adoption has been slower than anticipated in some international nations. Patients' and healthcare professionals' ongoing worries regarding their efficacy, safety profile, and the process of transitioning from original biologic drugs are the main causes of this reluctance (Blackstone & Fuhr, 2013). According to studies, patients' hesitancy is made worse by false information or a lack of knowledge, and trust is essential for biosimilar adoption (Jacobs et al., 2016).

Patient-Centric Marketing: An Emerging Imperative

Patient-centered marketing prioritises the delivery of succinct, perceptive, and customised messages in order to build stronger, more trustworthy connections with patients (Peyrot et al., 2012). In the case of biosimilars, this strategy necessitates identifying patient concerns, clearing up misconceptions, and highlighting therapeutic similarities through reliable and fact-based messaging. Studies have shown that when patients are informed and actively participate in selecting a treatment plan, their faith in biosimilars rises dramatically (Moorkens et al., 2020).

Digital Health Ecosystems and Their Role in Brand Building

Digital health ecosystems, which include teleconsultation services, mobile health applications, electronic health records (EHRs), and smart wearable technologies, provide up new possibilities for focused, timely, and interactive patient involvement. People with digital connections are more likely to be proactive in controlling their illnesses, following treatment plans, and getting health information, claims Deloitte (2021). In the biosimilars sector, these digital solutions act as reassuring systems and educational materials, bridging knowledge gaps and boosting brand confidence.

The importance of mobile technology in providing real-time data, personalised healthcare material, and timely reminders that influence patient decision-making has been emphasised by research (Kumar et al., 2019). Furthermore, AI-powered solutions that can replicate sympathetic human connection, including as chatbots and intelligent content systems, can enhance patient satisfaction and strengthen brand confidence.

Building Trust and Preference: Key Determinants

Clear communication, personal prior experiences, peer review, and recommendations from medical experts are some of the elements that affect confidence in biosimilars (Sarnola et al., 2020). Existing research emphasises how important it is to engage patients through a variety of channels, especially through personalised communication, in order to increase customer loyalty and brand affinity. Building trust in the modern day involves strategies like influencer-driven outreach, sharing real-life user tales, taking part in discussion forums, and tracking patient sentiment online. Additionally, including digital touchpoints like as AI-enabled nursing assistants, virtual monitoring platforms, and specialised training websites helps create a

continuous support system, which strengthens the reputation of reliability and proactive care associated with biosimilar products.

Gaps Identified in Current Research

Even though there is a lot of research on digital marketing tactics and biosimilar acceptance separately, there are still surprisingly few thorough studies that look at how digital health ecosystems can specifically increase biosimilar preference and trust in a patient-centered framework. This research aims to close that gap by examining the relationship between biosimilar branding strategies and digital patient interaction technologies, backed by real-world data and patient and healthcare provider input.

CHAPTER-3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Research Question:

- i) How important is patient-centric communication in your decision to trust a biosimilar brand?
- ii) Which digital channel do you prefer for receiving information about biosimilars?
- iii) How confident are you in biosimilars compared to original biologic medicines?
- iv) What feature of a digital health ecosystem would most increase your trust in a biosimilar brand
- v) How often do you use digital health tools (apps, portals) to manage your treatment?
- vi) What type of content would make you more likely to prefer a biosimilar brand?
- vii) How important is personalized marketing (tailored messages, offers) in influencing your preference for biosimilars?
- viii) What concerns do you have when considering biosimilars?
- ix) Would integrating your biosimilar treatment with a digital health ecosystem improve your treatment adherence?
- x) Which factor most influences your brand preference for biosimilars?

2.Objective:

- i) To evaluate the impact of patient-centric communication on trust-building in biosimilar brands.
- ii) To identify the most preferred digital channels for receiving biosimilar-related information among patients.
- iii) To assess patient confidence levels in biosimilars compared to originator biologics and identify key trust barriers.
- iv) To determine which features of a digital health ecosystem most effectively enhance patient trust in biosimilar therapies.
- v) To explore the role of personalized marketing and content in influencing patient preference for biosimilar brands.
- vi) To examine how integration with digital health tools affects treatment adherence and brand loyalty in biosimilar user

Hypothesis:

By emphasizing the therapeutic equivalence, safety, and cost-effectiveness of biosimilars, and by deploying strategic, patient-centric marketing initiatives through digital health ecosystems—such as personalized content, interactive tools, and omnichannel communication—pharmaceutical brands can significantly enhance patient trust, improve treatment adherence, and build long-term preference for biosimilar products.

Material and Methods:

- **Study Design:** Descriptive cross-sectional study

- **Setting:** The study was conducted as primary research through an online survey, targeting patients and caregivers across different therapeutic areas where biosimilars are commonly prescribed. The survey was circulated digitally through patient support groups, online forums,

WhatsApp groups, and personal outreach to contacts known to be using or aware of biologic treatments.

- **Study Population:** Adult patients (aged 20–60 years) currently receiving biologic or biosimilar treatment, or those who have been prescribed such medications in the last two years. A few caregivers who manage the treatment of family members were also included when patients were not digitally literate.
- **Sample Source:** Primary data collected through self-administered online questionnaires distributed using Google Forms.
- **Study Tool:** Google Forms was used to create and disseminate the survey; responses were recorded in Excel and analyzed using basic statistical methods (percentages, charts, and comparisons).
- **Duration of Study:** (April 2025 – May 2025)
- **Sample Size: Total Respondents: 40**
 - 15 Pharmacy and Healthcare Management Students
 - 10 Chronic Disease Patients
 - 10 Digitally Aware General Respondents
 - 5 Caregivers of Patients Using Biologics/Biosimilars

Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling was used due to the constraints of time, digital reach, and the voluntary nature of responses. Participation was anonymous and voluntary.

CHAPTER-4
RESULTAND DISCUSSION

4.1 Analysis of Key Findings

4.1.1 Importance of Patient-Centric Communication in Trusting Biosimilar Brands

A significant **71.4%** of respondents identified patient-centric communication as *very important* in their decision to trust a biosimilar brand. This indicates that communication that is empathetic, transparent, and focused on patient needs is essential in biosimilar marketing. Personalized dialogue helps build emotional and informational trust — a critical factor when patients are asked to switch from originator biologics to biosimilars.

Strategic Use:

Digital platforms should prioritize **clear, jargon-free messaging, responsive support, and two-way communication** such as live chats or patient forums to improve confidence in biosimilar options.

How important is patient-centric communication in your decision to trust a biosimilar brand?

35 responses



4.1.2 Preferred Digital Channels for Biosimilar Information

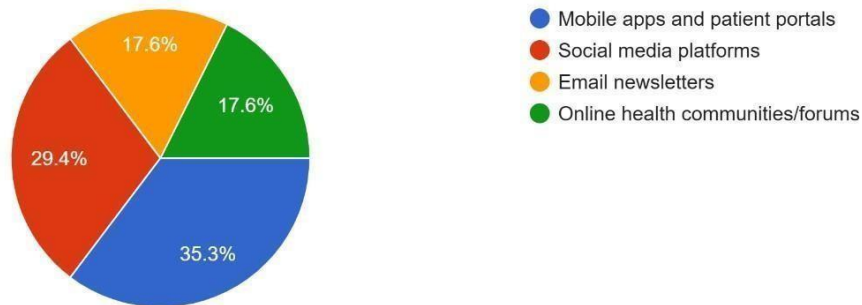
Survey responses show that **Mobile apps and patient portals** were the most preferred digital channel (35.3%), followed by **social media platforms** (29.4%), and **online forums and newsletters** (35.3% combined). This variety suggests patients are accessing biosimilar information from multiple digital touchpoints.

Strategic Use:

Pharma marketers should adopt an **omnichannel strategy** that integrates apps (for personalized care), social media (for engagement and education), and email (for credible follow-up) to ensure biosimilar information reaches patients where they are most comfortable.

Which digital channel do you prefer for receiving information about biosimilars?

34 responses



4.1.3 Confidence in Biosimilars Compared to Original Biologics

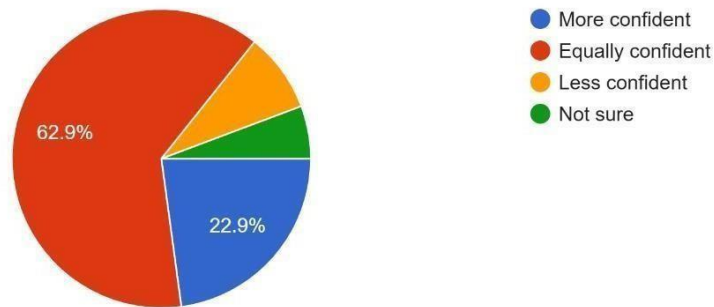
The data reveals that **62.9%** of patients feel *equally confident* in biosimilars compared to original biologics, while **28.6%** are *more confident* in biosimilars. Only a small minority, **8.6%**, expressed lower confidence.

Strategic Use:

This reflects **growing trust in biosimilars**, likely due to increased awareness, improved product quality, and consistent regulatory assurance. Marketers should focus on **amplifying success stories, publishing comparative studies**, and promoting **doctor endorsements** to push the remaining hesitant group toward confidence.

How confident are you in biosimilars compared to original biologic medicines?

35 responses



4.1.4 Most Trusted Features of a Digital Health Ecosystem

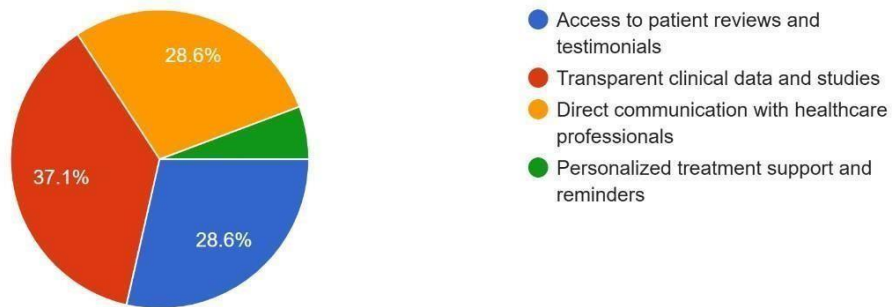
The most valued feature that would increase biosimilar trust was **transparent clinical data and studies** (37.1%), followed by **access to patient reviews** (28.6%) and **direct communication with healthcare professionals** (28.6%).

Strategic Use:

Trust is built when patients are presented with **transparent, science-backed data** alongside **human experiences**. Pharma companies should embed real-world evidence, FAQs, and moderated forums in their digital ecosystems, ensuring scientific integrity while also promoting **peer validation**.

What feature of a digital health ecosystem would most increase your trust in a biosimilar brand?

35 responses



4.1.5 Frequency of Digital Health Tool Usage

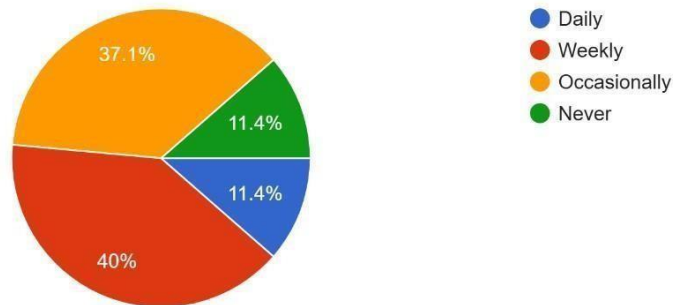
The majority of respondents use digital tools either **weekly (40%)** or **occasionally (34.3%)**, while **11.4%** reported *daily* use. Only **14.3%** rarely or never used them.

Strategic Use:

These findings suggest a **strong digital behavior pattern**, especially weekly engagement. Brands should develop **weekly health tips, push notifications, or reward systems** through apps or SMS to maintain patient touchpoints, improve treatment adherence, and increase brand interaction.

How often do you use digital health tools (apps, portals) to manage your treatment?

35 responses



4.1.6 Preferred Content Formats to Promote Biosimilar Brands

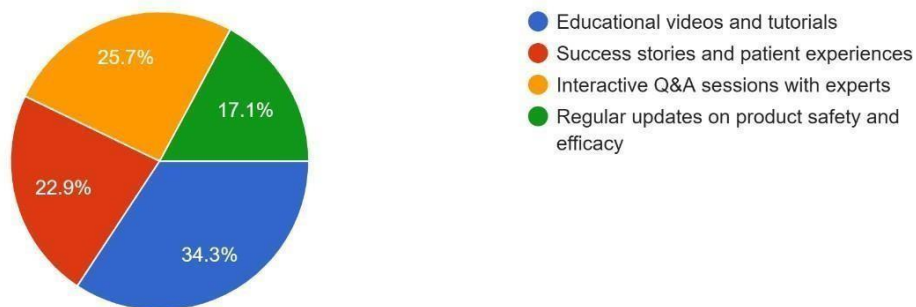
Educational videos and tutorials were the most preferred (34.3%), followed by **patient stories** (22.9%), **expert Q&A sessions**, and **updates on safety and efficacy** (both 17.1%).

Strategic Use:

Multimedia educational content resonates most. Biosimilar marketing campaigns should prioritize **short videos, animated explainers, and real-life experiences** to enhance relatability and retention. Interactive webinars or social media live sessions can further improve engagement.

What type of content would make you more likely to prefer a biosimilar brand?

35 responses



4.1.7 Impact of Personalized Marketing on Biosimilar Preference

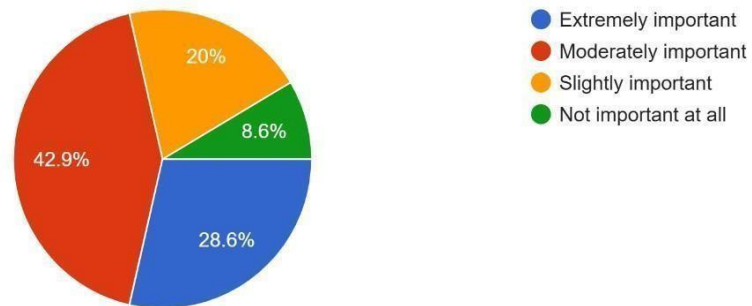
Over **80%** of respondents rated personalized marketing as important, with **34.3%** calling it *extremely important* and **45.7%** calling it *moderately important*.

Strategic Use:

There is a clear demand for **tailored, relevant messaging**. Pharma companies should use CRM systems to segment patients based on diagnosis, treatment stage, or digital behavior and deliver **customized content, reminders, and incentives** to improve perception and preference of biosimilar products.

How important is personalized marketing (tailored messages, offers) in influencing your preference for biosimilars?

35 responses



4.1.8 Patient Concerns Regarding Biosimilars

Top concerns included:

Effectiveness compared to original biologics – 42.9%

Lack of awareness or education – 22.9%

Cost/insurance coverage – 11.4%

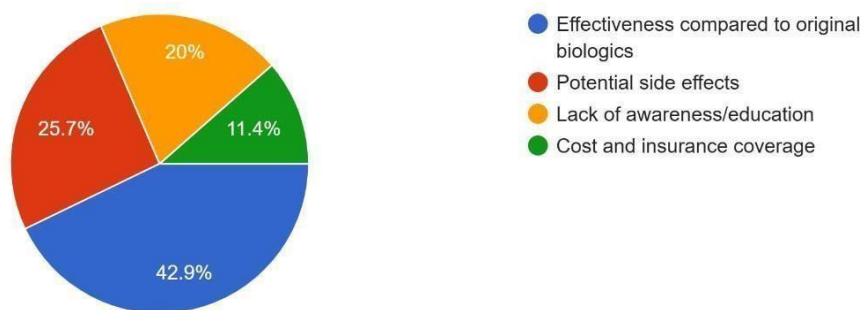
Side effects and safety – 8.6%

Strategic Use:

These insights underline the need for **education-driven content**. Brands must address efficacy with **comparative studies and clinical outcomes**, tackle awareness with **interactive explainers**, and provide clarity on **insurance and pricing** to resolve hesitations.

What concerns do you have when considering biosimilars?

35 responses



4.1.9 Impact of Digital Health Integration on Treatment Adherence

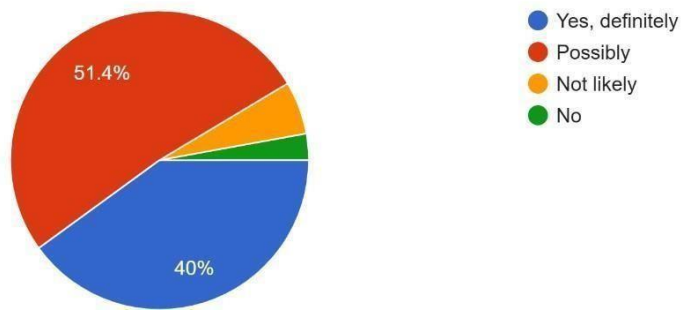
A majority (74.3%) responded positively, with **40%** saying *yes, definitely* and **34.3%** saying *possibly*, that integrating biosimilar treatment with digital tools would improve adherence

Strategic Use:

There is strong interest in digital integration. Brands should offer **apps with adherence tracking, refill reminders, progress dashboards**, and direct chat support to enhance the treatment experience and encourage loyalty toward biosimilar brands.

Would integrating your biosimilar treatment with a digital health ecosystem improve your treatment adherence?

35 responses



4.1.10 Key Factors Influencing Biosimilar Brand Preference

The most influential factor was:

- i) **Recommendations from healthcare providers** – 54.3% Followed by:
- ii) **Patient reviews/ratings** – 22.9%
- iii) **Cost and digital support** – 14.3% (combined)

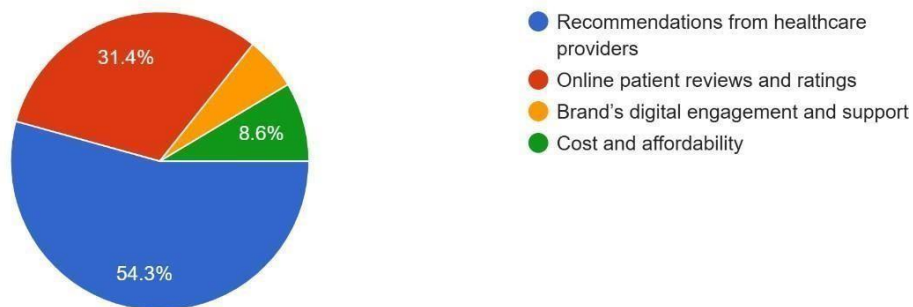
Strategic Use:

Although digital ecosystems are growing, **physician recommendations remain the strongest**

driver of brand preference. Digital strategies should involve **doctor-endorsed content**, co-branded platforms, and in-clinic digital tools to align doctor and patient messaging. At the same time, reinforcing **positive peer reviews** and **cost transparency** builds secondary trust.

Which factor most influences your brand preference for biosimilars?

35 responses



Discussion

Alignment with Existing Literature

The findings of this study are in line with contemporary developments in patient-centered care and the growing role of digital technology in healthcare choices, as noted in recent literature. Clinical evidence is no longer the only factor influencing patient trust and choice for biosimilars, according to previous study. Rather, a greater influence on how people perceive and make decisions is coming from elements like digital communication, shared patient experiences, and interesting instructional information.

The notion that patient-centered communication is crucial to fostering confidence in biosimilars is supported by this study. Its importance was emphasised by more than 70% of participants,

suggesting that digital marketing initiatives need to be more than just information exchange; they also need to be clear, compassionate, and significant to patients.

Many digital health specialists already hold the view that engaging patients through numerous digital touchpoints is crucial in today's tech-savvy society, and this preference for technologies like mobile applications, social media, and web portals confirms this view. These results align with previous research demonstrating that interactive, mobile-first platforms can improve treatment compliance and forge closer bonds between patients and brands.

Implications for Digital Marketing of Biosimilars

The study's main finding is that patients had a very high level of trust in biosimilars; 91.5% of respondents said they felt as confident in biosimilars as they did in the original biologic medications, if not more so. Increased patient education, more transparent regulatory procedures, and higher public awareness are probably the main drivers of this favourable change in image. According to the findings, the two main elements that contribute to the development of confidence in digital health platforms are openness regarding clinical outcomes and patient validation. These insights give marketers a clear path forward: effective biosimilar ads should blend actual patient tales, like video narratives and testimonials, with strong scientific proof, including clinical studies and real-world data.

The material that patients prefer, such as instructional films and sessions with professional Q&As, also shows that traditional, one-way marketing is no longer successful. In order to establish a more intimate and personal connection with the brand, today's patients need information that is not just educational but also engaging and relevant.

Ethical & Behavioral Considerations

It's interesting to note that although biosimilar businesses are increasingly embracing digital tools to help patients make decisions, this survey also shows that patients strongly prefer personalised marketing. According to more than 80% of respondents, personalised offers and messaging have a big impact on their brand preferences. This emphasises a crucial moral obligation for biosimilar producers: to utilise patient information for purposeful personalisation rather than for unethical purposes.

Patients also raised important concerns about insufficient knowledge, possible side effects, and efficacy, which are issues that are consistent with findings from international research that show these to be significant barriers to the use of biosimilars. Using AI-powered learning tools, producing training materials in partnership with healthcare practitioners, and offering straightforward, understandable digital information may all help solve these issues.

Role of Digital Integration in Adherence

The study's significant conclusion is that over 75% of participants believed using digital tools would make it easier for them to adhere to their biosimilar treatments. This highlights how digital health ecosystems are becoming increasingly important for improving clinical outcomes as well as marketing efficacy. It demonstrates how digital tools such as virtual consultations, symptom monitoring, and medication reminders may directly assist better adherence and general health outcomes for patients using biosimilars.

The Continued Role of Healthcare Providers

Notwithstanding the growing impact of digital technologies, the survey's findings unequivocally demonstrate that patient choices for biosimilar brands are still primarily shaped by healthcare professionals' recommendations. This emphasises how important it is to aggressively include physicians as reliable spokespersons for biosimilars in digital marketing campaigns. Giving them access to digital tools, collaboratively produced marketing collateral, and smooth communication channels may strengthen their advocacy role, strengthen the bond between the patient and the physician, and increase long-term brand trust.

Unique Observations

Strong receptivity to adopting digital health tools, especially among people who don't use them frequently, is a noteworthy and encouraging result from the study. Due to the fact that many participants reported utilising these tools frequently or occasionally, there appears to be little resistance to growing biosimilar-related digital activities.

Furthermore, the patient population is more aware, discriminating, and values transparency over persuasion, as seen by their preference for direct, fact-based communication over incentive-driven strategies. This pattern backs the continuous movement in healthcare towards value-focused digital marketing.

Summary

Building confidence and preference for biosimilars requires a combination of patient-centered initiatives and a robust digital presence, as the panel concludes. Biosimilar manufacturers may effectively compete with original biologics and boost patient uptake by coordinating brand messaging with characteristics that patients value most, such as transparency, personalisation, and active involvement.

When used carefully and morally, digital health tools not only enable greater treatment adherence and better patient results, but they also aid in brand growth.

CHAPTER-5

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the ways in which patient-centered digital marketing tactics influence brand choice for biosimilar medications and build trust. Given the growing acceptance of biosimilars as cost-effective and clinically equivalent substitutes for biologic medications, it is critical to comprehend patient thought processes, values, and preferred communication methods. More than 70% of respondents rated patient-focused marketing as "highly important," indicating that such communication greatly increases consumer trust in biosimilar products. According to this research, businesses must communicate intelligibly, sympathetically, and clearly across all digital and traditional media. Patients today want transparency not just in scientific data but also in the experiences and results of other patients in real life.

Social media, online patient portals, and mobile health applications have also become popular information and interaction tools. In order to increase trust in biosimilars, it was discovered that resources including streamlined clinical data, patient endorsements, and convenient access to medical experts were crucial. These findings imply that digital technologies may be used as both instructional aids and motivators for positive patient behaviour when properly included into the therapeutic process.

The survey also revealed that patients are becoming more confident in biosimilars, with many believing they are as reliable as the original biologic medications, if not more so. In today's digital-first world, tailored marketing messages and instructional films clearly influenced patient decisions, proving that one-size-fits-all marketing is no longer effective.

An other significant finding is that, despite the importance of digital interaction, patient brand preferences are still most strongly influenced by healthcare practitioner recommendations. In order to provide a cohesive and reliable patient experience, this highlights how crucial it is to combine digital outreach with physician assistance.

Finally, there was a favourable perception of the incorporation of biosimilars with digital health solutions, particularly with regard to enhancing treatment adherence and consistency. This not only bolsters digital platforms' marketing worth but also emphasises how they might improve patient outcomes in actual healthcare settings.

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