

PATIENT CENTRIC MARKETING IN ORTHODONTICS

Dissertation Submitted to



The IIHMR University, Jaipur

for the partial fulfillment for the award of the
degree of Master of Business Administration

(MBA)

in

Pharmaceutical Management

by

ANUPRIYA R

Under the Supervision and Guidance of

Dr ASHOK PEEPLIWAL

Associate Professor

School of Pharmaceutical Management

IIHMR University

2021

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this dissertation titled **Patient centric marketing in Orthodontics** is the bonafide record of my original research work. I declare that it has not been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been duly acknowledged in the text.



Anupriya R

27-06-2021

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that **Anupriya R** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MBA (Pharmaceutical Management)** from the IIHMR University, Jaipur has successfully completed her internship at **Group Pharmaceuticals** during March 22, 2021 to June 19, 2021.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 29-06-2021


Mr. Laxmikant P Sugandhi
Associate Vice President- Sales and Marketing
Group Pharmaceuticals

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that dissertation titled **Patient centric marketing in Orthodontics** is a record of the research work undertaken by **Anupriya R** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MBA (Pharmaceutical Management)** from the IIHMR University, Jaipur under my guidance and supervision and his/her approach to the research study has been sincere, scientific, and analytical.

Faculty Guide
IIHMR University, Jaipur

Date

School Dean
IIHMR University, Jaipur

Date

ABSTRACT

Patient centricity is the process of crafting the services around the patient. This in turn helps the companies to gain the trust of the stakeholders and differentiate themselves, especially when the market is flooded with generic products. While in general health sector, the companies have started to leverage the patient centricity in their marketing communication, the approach is still rudimentary in dentistry. During the treatment phase, patients are compromising their quality of life due to long duration of treatment, multiple visits to Dentists, transitional appearances of face, ulceration, pain, oral hygiene maintenance, diet restrictions, gum problems, bad odours and fear of extraction. The key research background was to evaluate the attitude of Dentists towards patient centric approaches in Orthodontics and to know where the Dentists require the help of the pharmaceutical organizations to hand hold their patients. Convenience and snow ball sampling method was employed, by which 107 Dentists answered the questionnaire. The study found that majority of the dentists have positive attitude toward patient centric practices while some fear that it may intrude the relation between the patients and them. The most challenging part of Orthodontic treatment as answered by Dentists is educating patients about oral hygiene practices and facilitating patients the adhere to the treatment guidelines. Even when the patient centric approaches are welcomed by the dentists' community, it is equally important for the companies to alleviate the fear and gain the trust of the dentists, as they are the key stakeholders whose participation will largely contribute to the success of the patient centric practices. On the long run, these patient centric approaches on the long run enables the organization to come up with new R&D ideas and the advantage is that as its from understanding patients' the marketing of these products becomes relevant and easier.

Keywords: Patient centricity, Marketing, Patient centric marketing, Orthodontics, Patient Centric marketing in Orthodontics, Patient centricity in Dentistry.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- DCI – Dental Council of India
- BDS – Bachelor of Dental Surgery
- MDS – Master of Dental Surgery
- MS- Excel – Microsoft Excel
- ROI – Return on Investment
- Q- Question (E.g., Q1 is Question 1)

1. INTRODUCTION

Orthodontics by definition is “a dentistry specialty that addresses the diagnosis, prevention, and correction of mal-positioned teeth and jaws, and misaligned bite patterns” [1]. The market is said to grow at CAGR 36.4% from 2019 to 2025 and thereby is all set to witness the spurt in increase in the number of patients undergoing Orthodontic treatment [2]. The average time for completion of the treatment being around 24.9 months [3]. During the treatment phase, patients are compromising their quality of life due to long duration of treatment, multiple visits to Dentists, transitional appearances of face, ulceration, pain, oral hygiene maintenance, diet restrictions, gum problems, bad odours and fear of extraction [4]. Further, as majority of the patients undergoing the treatment are in their teens, it is important to handhold them for better adherence and outcome of the treatment. This is exactly where Dentists and companies producing and/or marketing products and services in this sector can play a major role by supporting the patients emotionally and empowering them with adequate knowledge for better trust, adherence, acceptance and outcome out of the treatment. The importance for emphasis on patient centricity can be used by companies to the best as Dentists have lack of time and/or that the patients are unable to comprehend and/or practice the advised treatment guidelines. When used properly, this gives a win-win situation for all the stakeholders of the process. Additionally, this would serve as a differentiator amidst the world of similar products and give companies with sustained competitive advantage. Thus, it is important for companies operating in this space to win the stakeholder by moving early to implement patient centric practices in Orthodontics. This study gives an ignition/aid companies with an idea to come up with such patient centric strategies in the near future.

Aim

To conduct an exploratory research about patient centric marketing in Orthodontics.

Objective

- To study the attitude of Dentists towards patient centric marketing practices in Orthodontics.
- To know about the challenges currently faced by Dentists while treating the Orthodontic patients, thereby crafting a basic approach for patient centricity in Orthodontics.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Patient centricity in healthcare

Patient centricity is “Putting the patient first in an open and sustained engagement of the patient to respectfully and compassionately achieve the best experience and outcome for that person and their family” [5].

Benefits of being patient centric include increased engagement, decreased expenses, enhanced knowledge, better decision taking by patients, increased competitive advantage, better quality of life along with increase in trust and satisfaction of doctors and patients. The most challenging part of an organization to turn into patient centric involves an in-depth understanding of patients and most importantly the financial perspective of implementing the same [6].

Currently we are seeing more and more companies in general health who has gained therapy captainship and they are making patient centricity fundamental pillar in the future of pharma marketing. Firms have set to use these practices as marketing strategies and deploy brand promotions around this for better differentiation opportunities in the market place [7].

The process of becoming patient centric is first understanding the patient in their treatment journey, second is to understand their emotional state, third develop a support system and finally be able engage the patients and stakeholders for success of the approach [8].

Orthodontics

Orthodontics by definition is “a dentistry specialty that addresses the diagnosis, prevention, and correction of mal-positioned teeth and jaws, and misaligned bite patterns” [1].

The orthodontic treatment takes a longer time on an average of about 24.9 months. This long time causes burden in patients and often the patients face various effects that affect their quality of life [9].

The risks of orthodontic treatment are periodontal problems, resorption, pain, temporomandibular problems, caries, speech problem and enamel damage [10].

During the treatment phase, patients are compromising their quality of life due to long duration of treatment, multiple visits to Dentists, transitional appearances of face, ulceration, pain, oral hygiene maintenance, diet restrictions, gum problems, bad odours and fear of extraction [4].

Patient centric marketing in healthcare industry

Building custom built commodities, designing evidence-based program, driving patient interventions, getting feedback and using multi-stakeholder communication to drive marketing strategies is the process to design patient centric marketing. The companies can capitalize these interventions, physician can effectively use their time with more educated patients and patients are more educated and enjoy better health outcomes [11].

Patient centricity is the best way for attaining future profitability and to developed a substantially sustainable competitive advantage [12].

Lot of pharmaceutical companies are concentrating in product features, while benefits and outcomes actually plays a major role and patient centricity can help to increase the outcome of the therapy [13].

Having a thorough idea of the digital journey, getting content right along with enabling shared decision making amongst patients and physicians are crucial for the success of patient centricity marketing practices [14].

3. METHODOLOGY

- The study was about ‘Patient centric marketing in Orthodontics’. The key research background was to evaluate the attitude of Dentists towards patient centric approaches and to know where the Dentists require the help of the pharmaceutical organizations to hand hold their patients.
- **Study population** – Dentists (2,70,000 DCI registered Dentists in India)
- **Sample size** – At 95% confidence interval, 10% error and 50% population proportion, 97 Dentists was needed to be statistically significant. The study had 107 Dentist respondents.
- **Inclusion Criteria** – Dentists with minimum qualification as BDS running a non-institutional practice having a clinic of his own along with junior Dentists of the clinic and Dentists with MDS in Orthodontists.
- **Sampling method** – Mix of non-probability convenience and Snowball sampling methods.
- **Study area** – PAN India
- **Duration of study** – April, 2021 to June, 2021 (3 months)
- **Research procedure** – Quantitative research
- **Study design** - Exploratory cross- sectional research.
- **Data collection** – Mix of primary and secondary data collection.
- **Study instrument** – Questionnaire with 10 close ended questions and 1 open ended question. The questionnaire is attached in the Appendices session of this report.
- **Data collection tool** – Microsoft Forms
- **Administration of questionnaire**- Questionnaire was administered via electronic mail and WhatsApp.
- **Method of Analysis**- Study was analysed using MS-Excel using simple and cross tabulations.
- **Ethical consideration** – The study was approved by IIHMR university. The respondents were informed about the objectives and that the participation in the study is voluntary and that they can discontinue from the study at any point of time. The preamble also ensured that no questions will seek their direct personal identification, Confidentiality about the identity of respondents and data will be maintained.

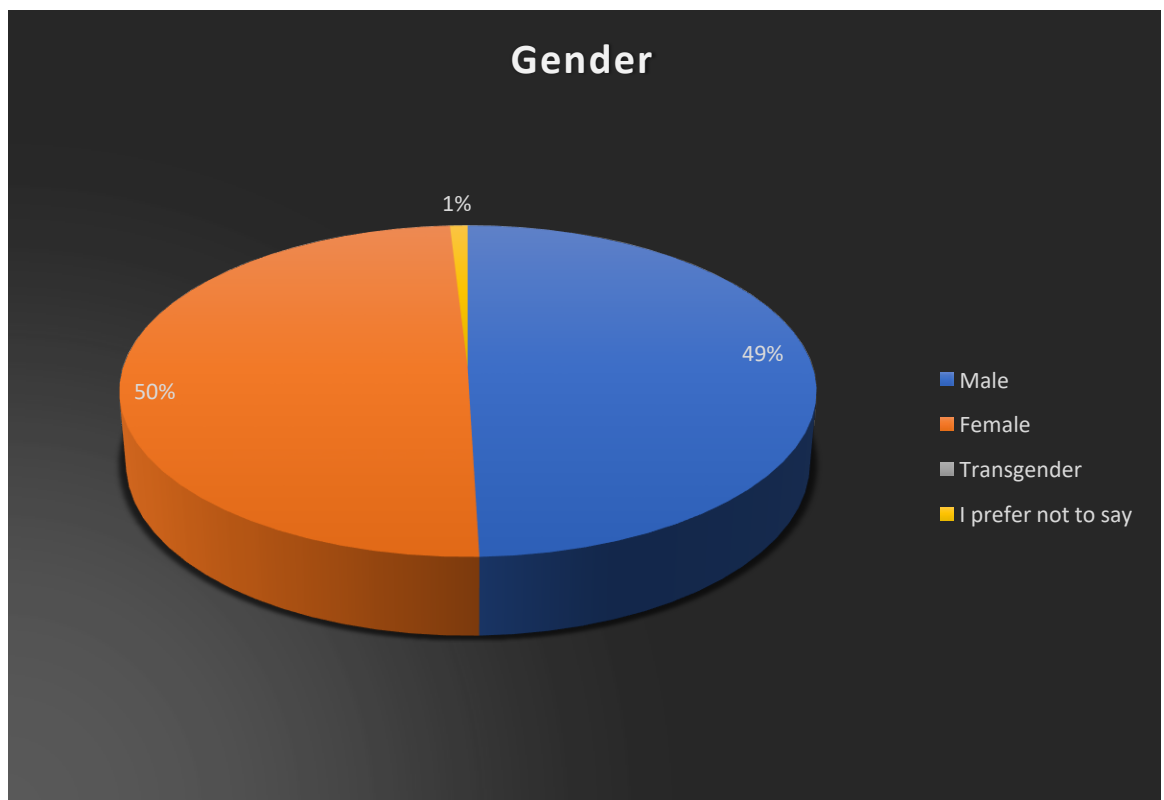
4. **RESULTS**

The study had 107 respondents from PAN India location.

Q1. Gender

Options	Number of respondents
Male	53
Female	53
Transgender	0
I prefer not to say	1
Total	107

Table 4.1 Gender

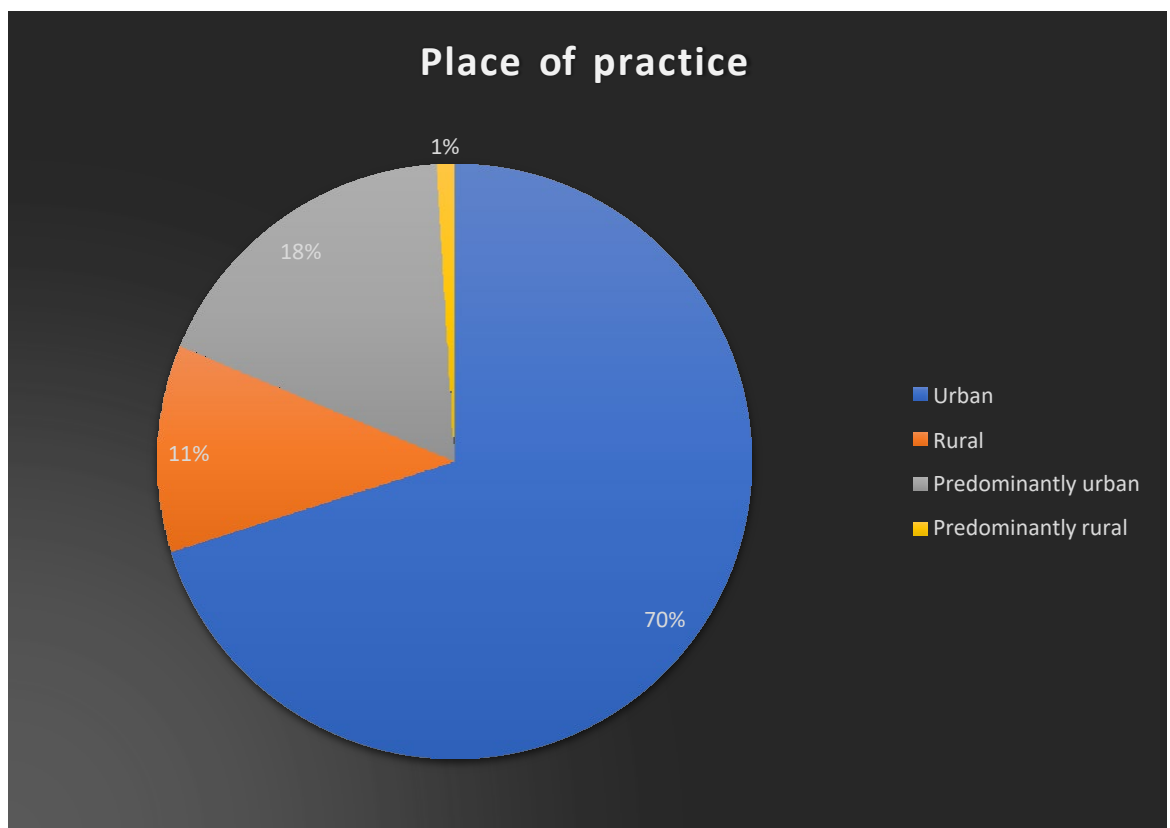


Graph 4.1 Gender distribution

Q2. Place of practice

Options	Number of respondents
Urban	75
Rural	12
Predominantly urban	19
Predominantly rural	1
Total	107

Table 4.2 Place of Practice

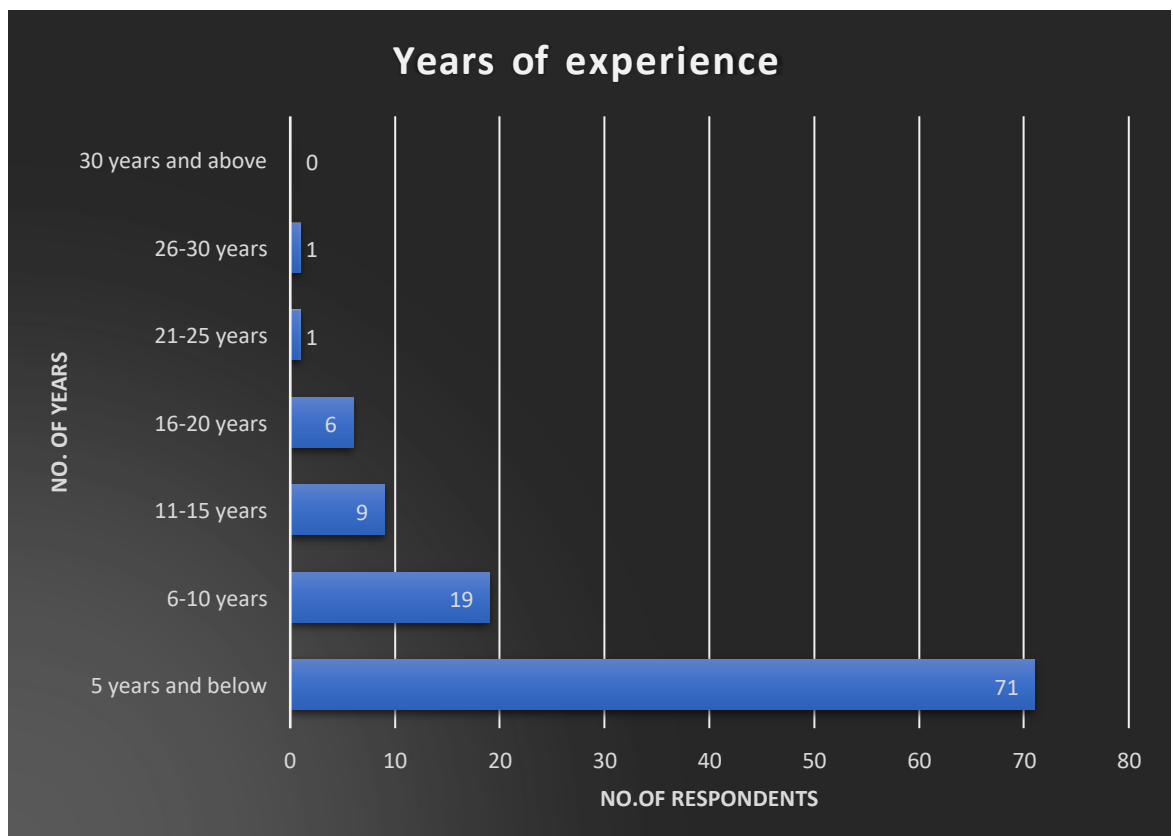


Graph 4.2 Place of practice of Dentists

Q3. Years of experience

Options	Number of respondents
5 years and below	71
6-10 years	19
11-15 years	9
16-20 years	6
21-25 years	1
26-30 years	1
30 years and above	0
Total	107

Table 4.3 Years of experience



Graph 4.3 Years of experience of dentists

Q4. Do you get enough time to explain the Orthodontic treatment and the importance of adherence to the treatment regimen?

Options	Number of respondents
Yes	89
No	18
Total	107

Table 4.4 Dentists response to Q4

	Yes	No
Male	48	5
Female	40	13
I prefer not to say	1	0

Table 4.5 Gender Vs response

	Yes	No
Urban	63	12
Rural	11	1
Predominantly urban	14	5
Predominantly rural	1	0

Table 4.6 Place of practice Vs response

	Yes	No
5 years and below	58	13
6-10 years	16	3
11-15 years	8	1
16-20 years	5	1
21-25 years	1	0
26-30 years	1	0
30 years and above	0	0

Table 4.7 Years of practice Vs response

	No	Yes	Grand Total
Predominantly rural		1	1
5 years and below		1	1
Female		1	1
Predominantly urban	5	14	19
5 years and below	4	9	13
Female	3	5	8
Male	1	4	5
11-15 years	1	3	4
Female		1	1
Male	1	2	3
5-10 years		2	2
Female		1	1
Male		1	1
Rural	1	11	12
5 years and below	1	7	8
Female	1	4	5
Male		3	3
11-15 years		1	1
Female		1	1
5-10 years		3	3
Female		1	1
Male		2	2
Urban	12	63	75
5 years and below	8	41	49
Female	6	22	28
Male	2	19	21
11-15 years		4	4
Female		2	2
Male		2	2
16-20 years	1	5	6
Female	1		1
Male		5	5
21-25 years		1	1
Male		1	1
26-30 years		1	1
Male		1	1
5-10 years	3	11	14
Female	2	2	4
I prefer not to say		1	1
Male	1	8	9
Grand Total	18	89	107

Table 4.8 Gender Vs Years of experience with the responses

Q5. Do you think pharma companies can help you to overcome the issues as in the time and hand holding patients during the duration of the therapy?

Options	Number of respondents
Yes	66
No	41
Total	107

Table 4.9 Responses to Q5

	Female	I prefer not to say	Male	Grand Total
No	20	1	20	41
Yes	33		33	66
Grand Total	53	1	53	107

Table 4.10 Gender Vs responses

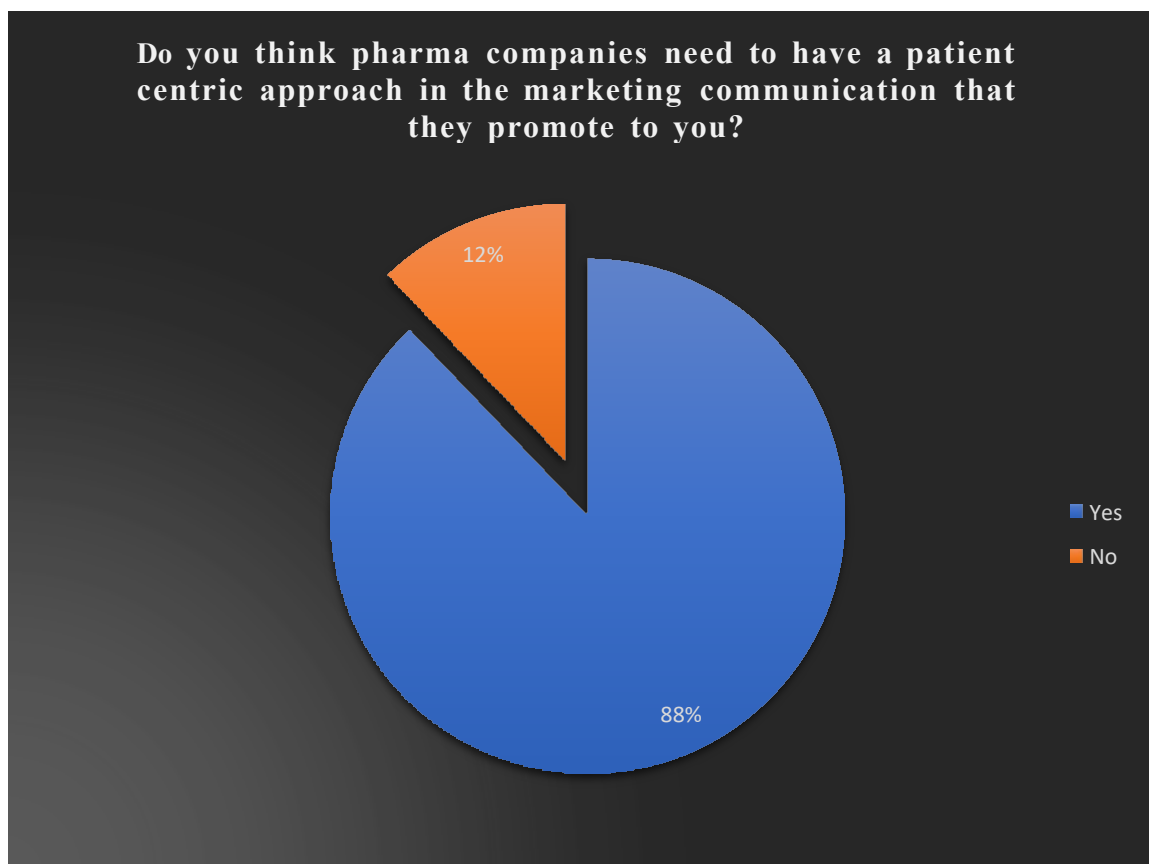
	Predominantly rural	Predominantly urban	Rural	Urban	Grand Total
0-4 years	1	13	8	49	71
No	1	6	2	19	28
Yes		7	6	30	43
11-15 years		4	1	4	9
No		2			2
Yes		2	1	4	7
16-20 years				6	6
No				2	2
Yes				4	4
21-25 years				1	1
No				1	1
26-30 years				1	1
Yes				1	1
5-10 years		2	3	14	19
No			2	6	8
Yes		2	1	8	11
Grand Total	1	19	12	75	107

Table 4.11 Years of experience Vs Place of practice with the responses

Q6. Do you think pharma companies need to have a patient centric approach in the marketing communication that they promote to you?

Options	Number of respondents
Yes	94
No	13
Total	107

Table 4.12 Responses to Q6



Graph 4.4 Responses for whether pharma companies need to have a patient centric approach in the marketing communication that they promote to dentists

Q7. Do you think patient centricity by companies operating in orthodontic care, can increase the outcome of the Orthodontic treatment?

Options	Number of respondents
Yes	61
No	9
May be	37
Total	107

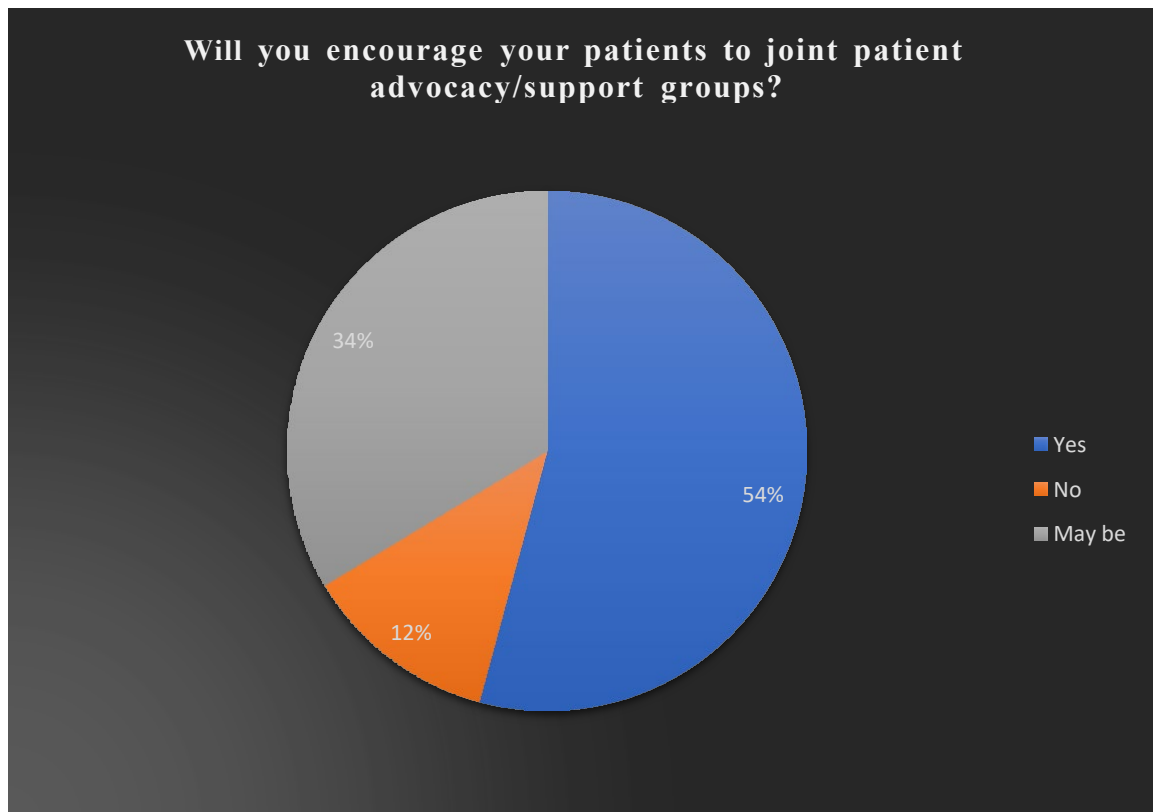
Table 4.13 Responses to Q7

Table 4.14	Maybe	No	Yes	Grand Total
Predominantly rural			1	1
Female			1	1
5 years and below			1	1
Predominantly urban	8	2	9	19
Female	4		6	10
5 years and below	4		4	8
11-15 years			1	1
5-10 years			1	1
Male	4	2	3	9
5 years and below	2	2	1	5
11-15 years	1		2	3
5-10 years	1			1
Rural	5		7	12
Female	3		4	7
5 years and below	3		2	5
11-15 years			1	1
5-10 years			1	1
Male	2		3	5
5 years and below	2		1	3
5-10 years			2	2
Urban	24	7	44	75
Female	13	3	19	35
5 years and below	11	2	15	28
11-15 years			2	2
16-20 years			1	1
5-10 years	2	1	1	4
I prefer not to say		1		1
5-10 years		1		1
Male	11	3	25	39
5 years and below	5	2	14	21
11-15 years			2	2
016-20 years	3		2	5
21-25 years		1		1
26-30 years			1	1
5-10 years	3		6	9
Grand Total	37	9	61	107

Q8. Will you encourage your patients to joint patient advocacy/support groups?

Options	Number of respondents
Yes	58
No	13
May be	36
Total	107

Table 4.15 Responses to Q8



Graph 4.5 Responses on question that whether dentists will encourage their patients to join patient advocacy/support groups

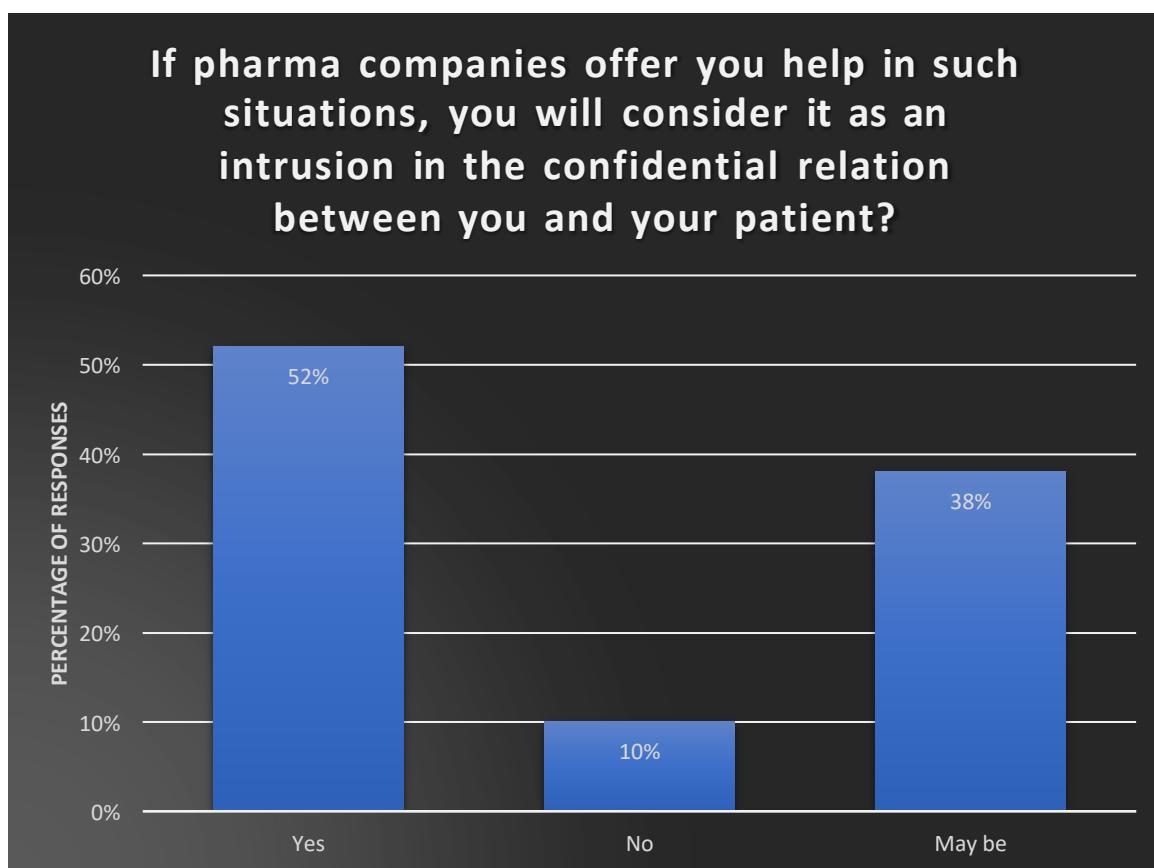
	Maybe	No	Yes	Grand Total
Predominantly rural		1		1
5 years and below		1		1
Female		1		1
Predominantly urban	7	3	9	19
5 years and below	6	2	5	13
Female	3	1	4	8
Male	3	1	1	5
11-15 years	1	1	2	4
Female		1		1
Male	1		2	3
5-10 years			2	2
Female			1	1
Male			1	1
Rural	3		9	12
5 years and below	2		6	8
Female	1		4	5
Male	1		2	3
11-15 years			1	1
Female			1	1
5-10 years	1		2	3
Female			1	1
Male	1		1	2
Urban	26	9	40	75
5 years and below	19	4	26	49
Female	14	2	12	28
Male	5	2	14	21
11-15 years	2		2	4
Female	2			2
Male			2	2
16-20 years	3		3	6
Female	1			1
Male	2		3	5
21-25 years		1		1
Male		1		1
26-30 years			1	1
Male			1	1
5-10 years	2	4	8	14
Female	1	2	1	4
I prefer not to say		1		1
Male	1	1	7	9
Grand Total	36	13	58	107

Table 4.16 Gender Vs years of experience for encouragement by Dentists to join the patient advocacy / support groups

Q9. If pharma companies offer you help in such situations, you will consider it as an intrusion in the confidential relation between you and your patient?

Options	Number of respondents
Yes	56
No	11
May be	40
Total	107

Table 4.17 Responses to Q9

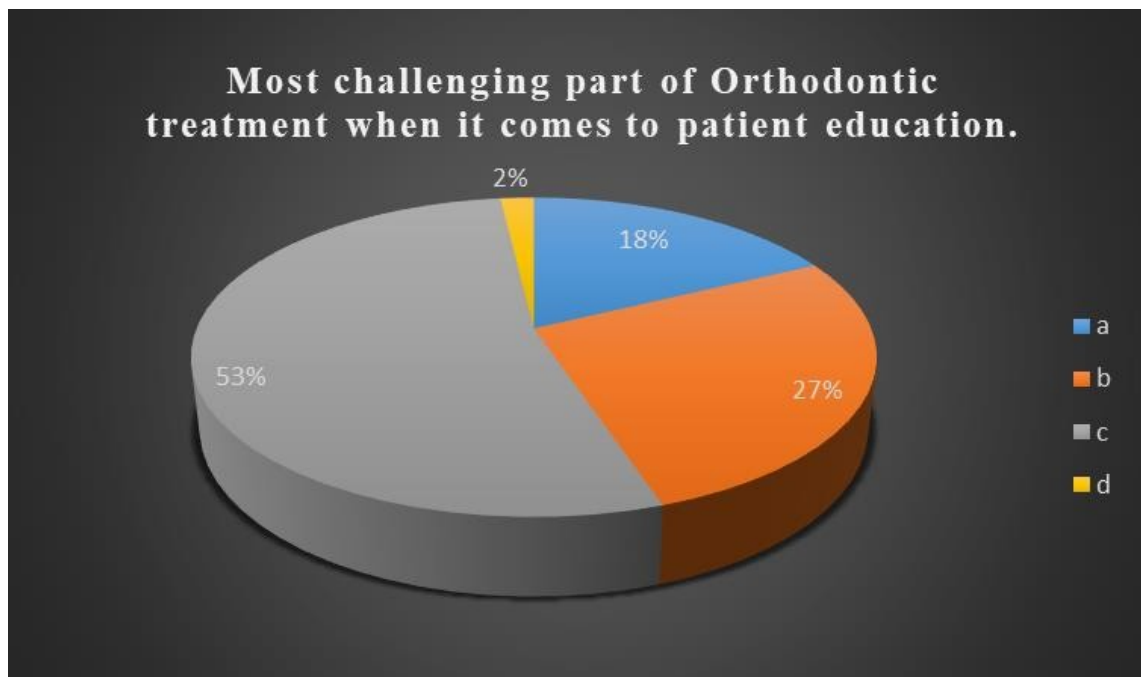


Graph 4.6 Responses on whether dentists would consider the practices has intrusion in the relation between them and their patients

Q10. What do you think is the most challenging part of Orthodontic treatment when it comes to patient education?

Options	Number of respondents
Explain in detail the treatment regimen (a)	19
Adherence to treatment regimen (b)	29
Education about proper oral hygiene practices while in treatment and the consequences when the same is not followed. (c)	57
Others (d)	2
Total	107

Table 4.18 Responses on the challenging part of Orthodontic treatment when it comes to patient education



Graph 4.7 Representation of the responses of the most challenging part of the Orthodontic treatment when it comes to patient education

Q11. If opted 'others' for previous question, please specify

2 respondents opted for others.

The responses were as follows

- The biggest problem in the treatment is its duration of the treatment.
- Time, patient cooperation and self-realization.

5. DISCUSSION

The study had 107 respondents with equal male and female representation. The respondents were predominantly practicing in urban areas. About 66% of the Dentists in the study have experience of less than 5 years. Urban female Dentists with experience of less than 5 years feel majorly that they do not get enough time to explain about the treatment to the patients. While 62% of the respondents believe that pharmaceutical companies can help them to overcome the time related issues by handholding the patients, the urban Dentists have a 50-50 say about the same. Further, when asked about whether they would appreciate pharma companies having patient centric approach in their marketing communications, a whopping majority of 88% showed a green signal. 61 and 37 out of 107 respondents opted for 'Yes' and 'May be' respectively when asked about whether patient centric approaches can help in improving the outcome of the treatment. About 88% of the Dentists opted for Yes/May be for recommending their patients to join patient advocacy/support groups. Although, 52% of them felt that these approaches would intrude the relationship between them and their patients. Finally, when asked to choose the most challenging part of Orthodontic treatment, 53% chose the option that stated 'Education about proper oral hygiene practices while in treatment and the consequences when the same is not followed' succeeded by the option 'Adherence of treatment regimen'. 2 Dentists chose 'others' option and stated that the time involved in the treatment and patient cooperation are the most challenging aspects of the Orthodontic treatment.

Strengths of the study

- While there are lot of researches happening around patient centric marketing in general health sector, this is one of the very few studies that talks about patient centric marketing in Dentistry, Orthodontics in particular.
- The respondents mix consists of Orthodontists, clinic owning Dentists and junior Dentists as all these people are important stakeholders as far as engagement of patients at different stages of the treatments are concerned.

Limitations of the study

- Lack of qualitative research as an adjuvant to the conducted quantitative research.
- The respondents are majorly are having experience of less than 5 years.
- In-depth separate research with Junior dentists, clinic owning Dentists and Orthodontists to be able to analyze the attitude more effectively.

6. CONCLUSION

Patient centricity is the process of crafting the services around the patient. This in turn helps the companies to gain the trust of the stakeholders and differentiate themselves, especially when the market is flooded with generic products. While in general health sector, the companies have started to leverage the patient centricity in their marketing communication, the approach is still rudimentary in dentistry. Orthodontics is a branch of dentistry that aligns the teeth and engages the patient for about 1.5 – 2 years at an average for the treatment., which makes it ideal for patient centric approaches. To get into patient centric marketing, we have to first know about the challenges the patients are facing and the existing attitude of dentists to these approaches. These patient centric approaches on the long run enables the organization to come up with new R&D ideas and the advantage is that as its from understanding patients' the marketing of these products becomes relevant and easier.

The study has found that young Dentists practicing in urban areas especially females feel that they don't have enough time to explain the patients about the treatment regimen prior to the start of the Orthodontic therapy. Majority of the dentists believe that the companies operating in the space can help to overcome these time related issues by handholding the patients and welcome the companies to use in their marketing communications. However, dentists are little skeptical whether these may improve the outcomes of the treatment. While 88% of the dentists said that they will advise their patients to join the patient advocacy/ support groups, roughly a fair majority of dentists fear that these practices would intrude the relation between them and their patient. Even when the patient centric approaches are welcomed by the dentists' community, it is equally important for the companies to alleviate the fear and gain the trust of the dentists, as they are the key stakeholders whose participation will largely contribute to the success of the patient centric practices.

While asked about the most challenging part of the treatment, majority of the respondents said that it's difficult to educate about following of proper oral hygiene while in treatment and facilitating patients to adhere to the treatment regimen. This is where companies can use the space for initiating their patient centric approaches by starting to educate about the importance of maintenance of oral hygiene and help by educating the patients about how exactly should they maintain their oral hygiene while in treatment.

Recommendations

- Qualitative research with all the stakeholders of patient centricity which can help companies to spot the problem and head towards patient centric practices in Orthodontics.
- Secondary research in areas like patient centric marketing in general health sector and oral hygiene practices of patients while in orthodontic treatment can help to leverage the strategy, execution and marketing the patient centric approaches by the companies operating in this space.
- Pre and post patient centric intervention studies should be carried in patients undergoing Orthodontic treatments, as this will encourage Dentists to appreciate, support and acknowledge the patient centric practices by pharmaceutical companies.

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14. <https://innovara.com/uncategorized/patient-centricity-challenges-and-solutions/>

8. ANNEXURES

Questionnaire

Dear Doctor,

Greetings of the day!

Hope you are doing fine.

I am Dr Anupriya Ravichandran, a second-year student of MBA- Pharmaceutical Management of IIHMR University, Jaipur, conducting a study titled “Patient centric marketing in Orthodontics”. This study is for my academic purpose and your decision to participate in the study is voluntary. At no point in this survey, you will be asked about the details of your direct identification. Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential.

If you have any questions regarding the study, kindly contact anupriya.j19@iihmr.in.

By completing the study, you are consenting to participate in the study.

Thanking you in anticipation for participating in the study.

1. Gender

- Male
- Female

2. Place of practice

- Urban
- Rural
- Predominantly urban
- Predominantly rural

3. Years of practice

- 5 years and below
- 5-10 years
- 11-15 years

- 16-20 years
 - 21-25 years
 - 26-30 years
 - 30 years and above
4. Do you get enough time to explain the Orthodontic treatment and the importance of adherence to the treatment regimen?
 - Yes
 - No
 5. Do you think pharma companies can help you to overcome the issues as in the time and hand holding patients during the duration of the therapy?
 - Yes
 - No
 6. Do you think pharma companies need to have a patient centric approach in the marketing promotions that they propose to you?
 - Yes
 - No
 7. Do you think patient centricity by companies operating in orthodontic care, can increase the outcome of the Orthodontic treatment?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 8. Will you encourage your patients to joint patient advocacy/support groups?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 9. If pharma companies offer you help in such situations, you will consider it as an intrusion in the confidential relation between you and your patient?
 - Yes

- No
- Maybe

10. What do you think is the most challenging part of Orthodontic treatment?

- Explain in detail the treatment regimen
- Adherence to treatment regimen
- Education about proper oral hygiene practices while in treatment and the consequences when the same is not followed.
- Others, please specify

11. If opted 'others' for previous question, please specify

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