

The scalable approach to the Chiropractic patient journey

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摘要: 許多被傳統醫學制度拒絕的病患尋求脊醫替代傳統治療。從患者的角度了解患者的治病旅程可以幫助脊醫解決和滿足患者需求、參與患者對患者自己的護理以及改善他們的護理模式可以改變生活質量和增進治療結果。本研究旨在通過不同支柱創造患者體驗提供理論框架。研究也嘗試提出改善患者旅程的影響因素。最後，該研究建議不同來創造更好的患者治病旅程。

Abstract: Chiropractors have been treating people who had been turned down by standard medical practitioners and who sought chiropractic care as an alternative therapy. Understanding the patient journey from the patient's point of view can help chiropractors improve their care models by addressing unmet patient needs, increasing patient participation in their care, and progressing toward better outcomes and quality of life. This study intends to give a theoretical framework for creating the patient experience by highlighting common pillars. It also tries to examine influential factors for how to improve the patient journey. Lastly, the study makes recommendations on what can be done to create a better patient journey.

索引詞: 脊骨神經醫學; 香港; 脊醫患者治病旅程

Indexing Terms: chiropractic; Hong Kong; chiropractic patient journey

Introduction

Chiropractors have been managing patients who have been given up by medical practitioners from the traditional systems, and patients sought for chiropractic care as an alternative therapy. (1) The chiropractor often faces the disease as a last line of defense, where there are no other healthcare professionals to call for help. The person with the most knowledge about the disease is often the patient sitting in our waiting room seeking help.

Many people turn to their chiropractors for help with chronic ailments and health maintenance. Patients can sit in a supportive and structured clinical setting and the clinician translate the information successively supplanted by personal effective dialogue with great patients satisfaction. (2) Along patients' healthcare journey, they face numerous obstacles with their families. Their healthcare journey is marked by a cloud of uncertainty, a scarcity of effective treatments, and a slew of dead ends, from diagnosis through therapy and follow-up. Many patients are in this circumstance and end up with diagnosis with psychological disorders. There are many developed guidelines from national data recommending for the chiropractic profession, but there is no strategy that has successfully

... This paper describes a Concierge-driven approach to the patient journey through an increasingly complex health-care system in which chiropractors form a critical interface across 80 clinics with over 170 full-time doctors covering 23 disciplines ...'



combined a patient's experience and demands of living with unconventional conditions into the development of chiropractic care.

As a chiropractor, listening to a single patient's history is essential and valuable, but it will not provide the answer for the solution that most people who are not responding to traditional medical treatments are facing. To enhance chiropractic care for patients with unconventional conditions, clinicians must use all available knowledge, both from professionals and patients, to improve care for every single patient in the community.

Patient satisfaction has been shown to be the single most critical factor in determining the quality of healthcare, (3) and it has been reviewed as an indicator of patient's survival rates. (4) Patient involvement in the design, evaluation, and designation of healthcare services has been shown in research to improve the relevance and quality of the services, as well as their ability to meet patient needs. (5) Many clinicians are considering their patients more as customers and constantly working to improve the communications and impression during the first consultation. The patient journey is important in healthcare as it allows the clinicians and other industry stakeholders to understand the patient's perspective and to explore new solutions to enhance all touch points of the patient journey.

To tackle the complexity of patients' chief complaints and disease, the scalable approach to end-to-end patient journeys must be implemented, which focuses on patient-centric value streams in value-based management, technology innovation and data update, technology adaptation, latest operation model, and agile execution. Some chiropractic patients perceived their patient journeys in the delay in diagnosis, lack of effective and pleasant care, and experienced limited preventative education for the patients and families. To overcome the hurdles every patient faces, patient journeys should generate and empower new strategies of healthcare workflow in order to drive fundamental change and maximum transformation. EC Healthcare (www.echealthcare.com) has developed a concierge approach for patient input into the system.

Most chiropractors in Hong Kong believe they are in a thriving industry and earn an average of 240,000-450,000 USD per year. (6) EC Healthcare is the largest non-hospital healthcare service provider and chiropractic group in Hong Kong. (7) The 80 clinics and service centres comprise a service floor area of more than 49,000 square metres and employ close to 174 full-time doctors across 23 medical disciplines. The *Personal Healthcare Management System* (PHM) in the chiropractic department was implemented since 2016 and has taken care of over 200,000 chiropractic patients. The concierge-style personal healthcare managers put themselves in the shoes of the patients to keep in mind how patients would like their families to be treated. With a focus on preventive and precision medicine, EC Healthcare has transformed traditional transactional medicine by offering a unique patient experience along with simple healthcare services. The PHM connects patients with 2000 experts inside the EC ecosystem, harnessing the collective healthcare expertise and experience, enhancing patient data collection, and facilitating the knowledge with patients. By developing strong relationships with patients, clinicians, and investors had made the chiropractic clinics in a 60% growth/year in the past 3 years.

A great patient journey strategy must include both patient journey mapping and exercise design. The design focuses on five key pillars of the transformation approach (Figure 1).

Value-Based Management

Management with Objectives and Key Results (OKR) measurement and governance is required to improve the patient journey. It is a collaborative goal-setting process that teams and individuals use to establish challenging, ambitious goals with measurable outcomes (Figure 2). OKRs were created by Andy Grove at Intel, as a method for tracking progress, establishing alignment, and fostering engagement around quantifiable goals. (8) The traditional policies,

operation procedures, and human-patterns create execution inefficiency to reduce patients satisfaction and experience. The patient journey enhancement requires experts to study the updated clinical and policy guidelines, identify evidence-based procedures, better clinical documentation, technology, and facilitate quality care to patients. The management is required to share the vision and benefits of assessment with the team, which quantify the readiness and potential impact of a patient's care.

Figure 1: Designing the patient journey

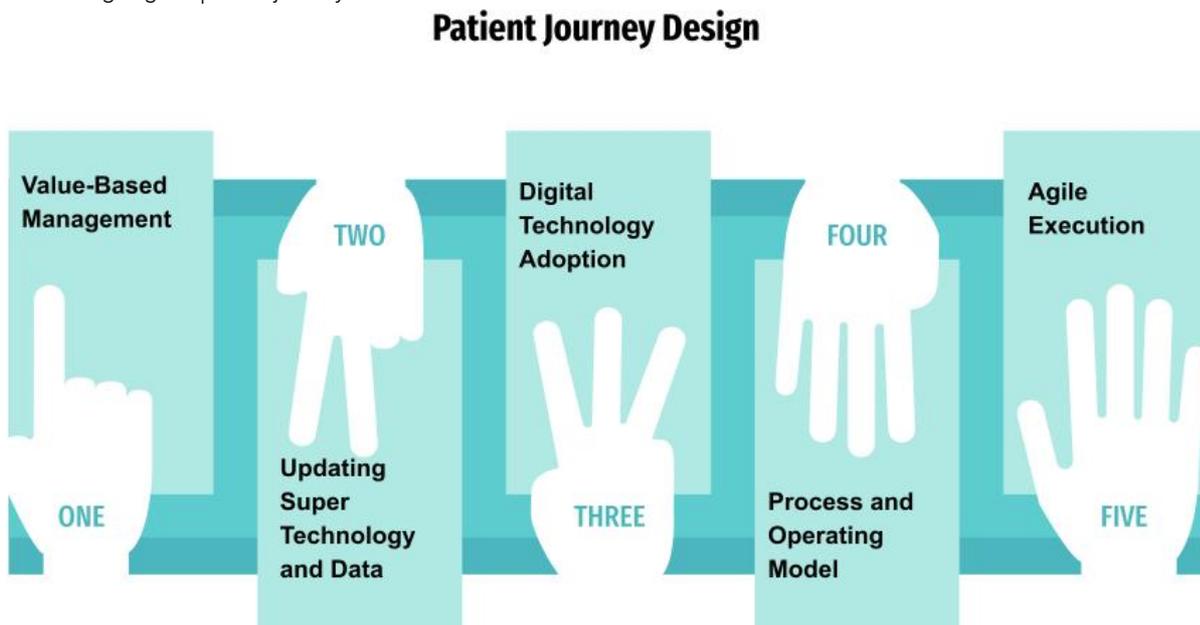
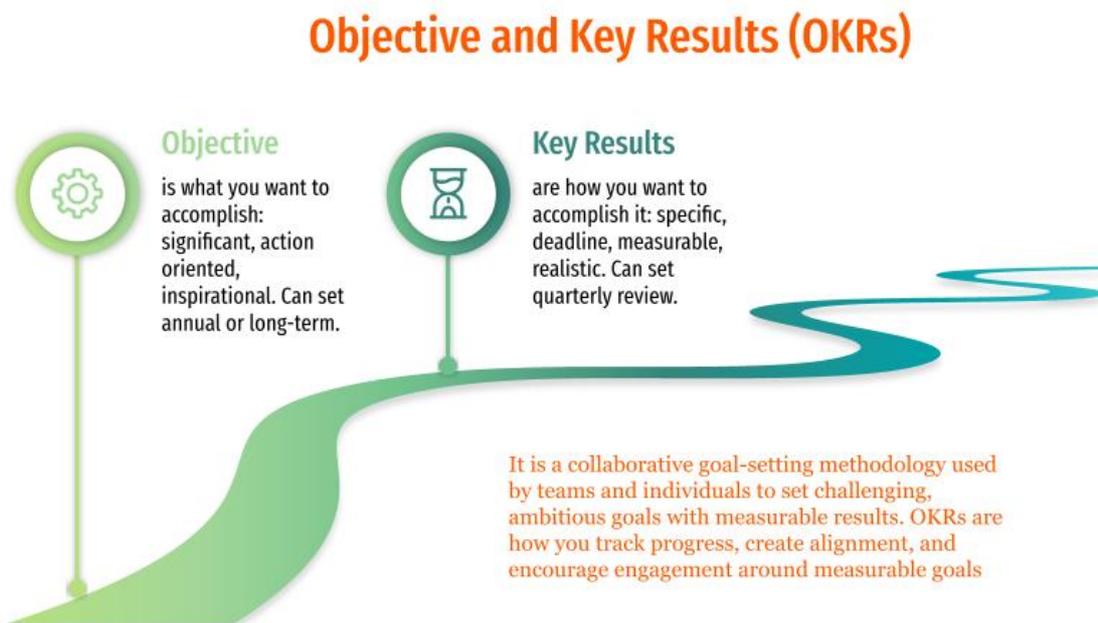


Figure 2: Objective and Key Results (OKRs)



Updating Super Technology and Data

The use of technology can assist patients in locating the most appropriate doctor, improving outcomes, and providing a more pleasant experience at a lower cost. Telehealth enables doctors to connect with patients wherever they are, allowing the space to evolve and solutions to converge. (9) The voice of patients and an ongoing process of customer testing can be accomplished by the patient representatives updating a mapping questionnaire's data on each unconventional condition. The PHM concierge identifies the technological database of the common syndromes, and matches the specific needs to an individual's complaints. They connect the healthcare expert with foreseen screening techniques, diagnosis procedures, and healthcare treatment, which is in alignment with the patient's psychological and medical necessity. The PHM also ensures the updated technology and data, and direct patient communication, are directly transformed across the EC ecosystem as an integration of later analytics programs. The design of patient journey is human-centred, zero-based approach and a clear view of patients, supporting staff, clinicians, and other medical constituents.

Digital Technology Adoption. Digital health access has a significant influence on the evolution of the healthcare ecosystem and availability of information improves the knowledge gap between healthcare providers and patients. (10) Healthcare practitioners and clinic owners expressed interest in the use of big data analytics to improve the efficiency of clinical protocol. (11) Treatment protocols are likely to become more data-driven and collaborative, enabling previously unimaginable innovation in technique and treatment improvement.

The adoption of emerging digital technologies is important for the patient journey. They include a number of technology adoption such as robotic process, digitised automation, machine learning, robotic healthcare, and total omnichannel solutions. Multiple factors can cause difficulty in implementing digital technology for transformation of effective patient journeys. At EC Healthcare, to stimulate the smart culture of technology transfer, the adoption design workshop is delivered to both clinicians and patients to facilitate the improvement of the patient journey.

A rapid digitization process with problem-solving and journey-driven approach can resolve the operation's pain points and duplicate operation best practice. Clinicians can build a hyper-targeted experience that addresses the unique needs of each patient and delivers more successful patient outcomes. Clinicians can create a hyper-targeted experience that addresses each patient's individual needs and leads to better patient outcomes by knowing the patient journey. Improved patient experiences can also save money for providers, for as by reducing the time it takes to diagnose a patient.

Process and Operating Model

For the development of an effective patient journey strategy, the new design of internal operation embraces transformed clinical structures and advancement to old policies and operations. Each lead enquiry is divided into algorithms of stages that are consistent to a specific disorder and category. Each stage in the algorithm is defined under three levels:

- ▶ clinical symptoms
- ▶ challenge and necessity demanded by the patient, and
- ▶ their common goal for health.

After the ChatBot system collects and analyses the data, patients, PMH, and their clinicians are able to explore and discuss the patient's needs, formulate the solutions to achieve optimal functions and health. The new design involved with AI Chatbot and PMH are able to match quickly with the patient's need during the journey.

Agile Execution

Patient testimony reflects the needs of patients in an accessible visual overview and the supporting care by a detailed information algorithm, the design capabilities and speed of PHM solution to patients needs define the enhancement of patient journey. Operational adoption of agile ways, and collaborative multidisciplinary team should deliver a high-value journey strategy. After the patient journey is recognised by both patients and the clinician, the patient's experience could join the team as an expert patient representative, who wants to collaborate with local clinicians, share their diaries of their personal stories. The clinical diaries can act as educational materials with the PHM; and advance the treatment procedures with clinicians.

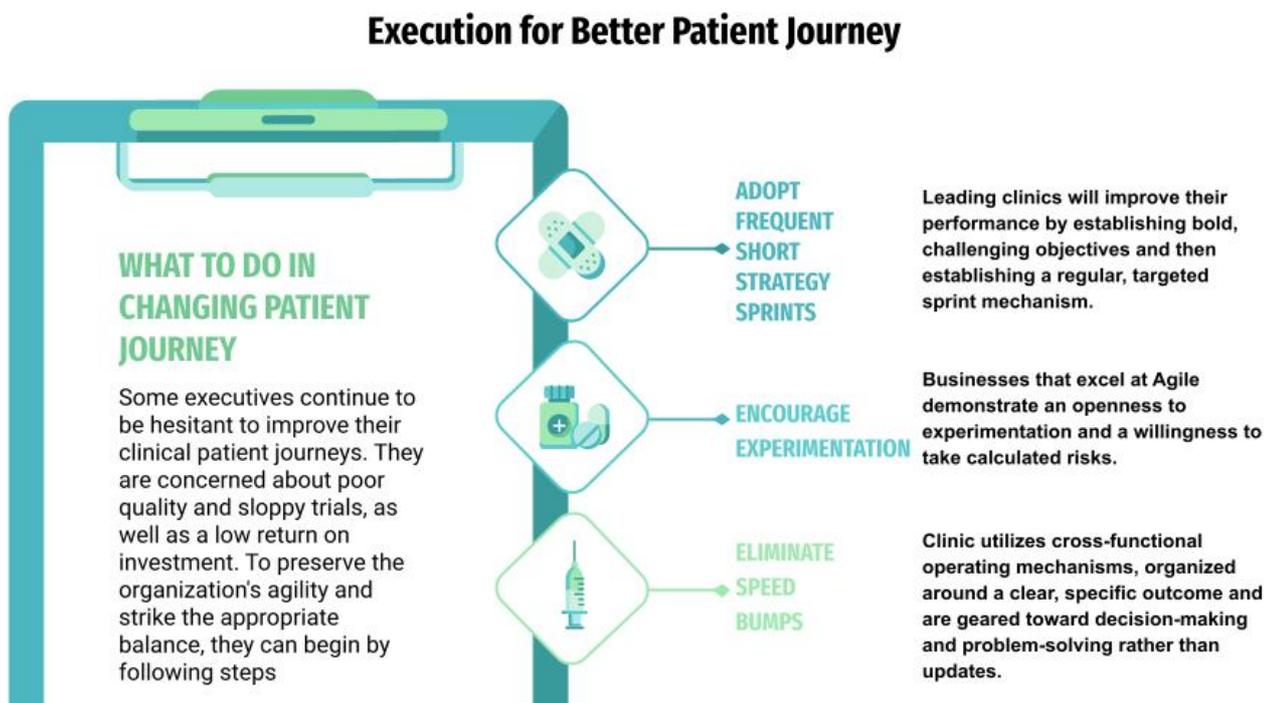
With an internal IT system, clinicians who come across clinical obstacles can discuss with other healthcare professionals at the EC Healthcare platform, while patients are also 24 hours in contact with the PHM and their expert patient representatives. With an agile management, EC Healthcare had published over 40 peer-reviewed cases in different unconventional chiropractic conditions, and the Patient Journeys became valuable knowledge transfer to the healthcare community.

However, improvisational agility is precarious. When the crisis passes, people revert to more traditional, waterfall approaches to innovation. By reverting to business as usual, they forfeit the opportunity to continue accelerating to market and staying ahead of the competition. And when the next crisis strikes, the organisation must repeat the agonising process of agile transformation of its operations and people's mindsets. Some healthcare executives are taking the opportunity of Covid to build on the groundwork laid over the last 18 months and strategically apply agile to other parts of the business not directly affected by the crisis. And they have discovered that the payoff in terms of results and performance is enormous.

Steps to Achieve Better Patient Journey

Healthcare leaders acted heroically with new ways of working to improve patient journeys for some time. Despite the leader's spectacular success during the pandemic, some executives continue to be hesitant to improve their clinical patient journeys. They are concerned about poor quality and sloppy trials, as well as a low return on investment. To preserve the organisation's agility and strike the appropriate balance, they can begin by following steps (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Execution



Adopt frequent, short strategy sprints

Leading clinics will improve their performance by establishing bold, challenging objectives and then establishing a regular, targeted sprint mechanism that keeps pace with market change. Agile teams assess market changes and lessons learned from previous sprints during these sprints, and then adjust their long-term forecast and strategic priorities as necessary.

Encourage experimentation

Businesses that excel at *Agile* demonstrate an openness to experimentation and a willingness to take calculated risks. Additionally, they call into question and alter industry standards. When patients were unable to visit clinical trial sites or doctors' appointments early in the pandemic, one biopharmaceutical company quickly adapted to keep clinical trials running by implementing telehealth visits and sending medications directly to patients' homes. Through these quick wins under duress, the organisation learned the value of problem solving creatively and pushing industry boundaries.

Eliminate speed bumps

The majority of innovation teams follow the 15% rule, spending 15% of their time on innovation; (12) the remainder of their time is spent waiting for decisions from others. Clinics that operate at a high rate of speed frequently utilise cross-functional operating mechanisms. These mechanisms are organised around a clear, specific outcome and are geared toward decision-making and problem-solving rather than updates.

Potential Actions for Management to Consider

By 2025, Asia will have 456 million seniors aged 65 or over, accounting for 10% of the total population. Patients are wanting more quick access to healthcare and an increase in safety. (13) *Mckinsey Consulting* had delivered a patient journey study for the healthcare industry. (14) We have concluded a number of steps to alleviate potential pain points in patients' experiences following a care experience:

- 1) Personalise and improve care engagement. Different patient segments have different expectations of care. Clinic managers should research their patients' preferences and design transitions-of-care initiatives to their specific requirements. Management should consider member communication channel preferences when determining which channel to utilise, when, and with which messaging, for example, to maximise the success of outreach.
- 2) Deliver solutions to support the whole patients. Patients with mental health or substance addiction disorders have considerably greater unintended high-cost follow-up care after an acute event, according to *Mckinsey* research (34% compared with 24% overall). (14) Clinics can potentially prevent needless post-acute exacerbations by providing holistic benefits that better coordinate physical, social, and behavioural healthcare. Clinicians and PHM can also improve member identification and prioritising methods that go beyond physical health and adapt interaction to the requirements of individual patients. To satisfy such needs, this type of follow-up could result in the delivery of more comprehensive, integrated end-to-end care.
- 3) Allow patients to make better decisions by providing them with transparent, easily understandable education. Unplanned care was cited by 41% of respondents in the *Mckinsey* survey as a result of a lack of clarity in the information and instructions supplied. (14) Patients nowadays may expect an easy-to-use mobile app that allows them to contact their chiropractors with questions or an interoperable system that allows a rehabilitation center to read a patient's discharge records in the future. Clinics can change the attitude by simplifying and putting crucial information at the hands of patients.

- 4) Offer a follow-up package system when needed. The *Mckinsey* research also identified a lack of adequate post-discharge care as a driver of unexpected high-cost follow-up treatment. (14) Follow-up and wellness package system is encouraged in the traditional chiropractic procedures, however, some chiropractic law-makers established new laws to prohibit the common wellness practice. For example, in 2017, few political chiropractors ignored the major opinions (15) and modified the code of practice for Hong Kong chiropractors, which made chiropractic as the only profession having high restriction in clinic websites and offering wellness packages in Hong Kong. (16) Therefore chiropractors hired other healthcare professionals to achieve a multidisciplinary package to achieve wellness healthcare. In addition, package systems integrating with telemedicine have the potential to assist patients in overcoming access obstacles. For example, when clinically appropriate, some patients may be able to get virtual physical therapy appointments and schedule planned follow-up virtual visits and specialists without having to leave their home.
- 5) Create an adaptable patient pod. Utilise advanced analytics and patient data to reach out to patients in a timely manner, using patient triggers to optimise the timing, content, offer, and design of each engagement and journey.

Conclusion

A patient's experience during the episodes of care, from admission to clinical release, is referred to as the patient journey. Growing trends in healthcare consumerization and value-based care programs have prompted a renewed focus on patient experience after Covid pandemic. When the chiropractors are confronted with the diagnosis by using PHM and package system, patient journey will be constantly advanced through the updates of data knowledge from the healthcare professionals and experienced patient experts in the community.

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