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Their word...

Is the industry at a fork in the road?

Can an industry that has traditionally based its business model on researching, developing, and commercializing pills and other therapeutic interventions successfully pivot to adapt to a growing wave of consumer-centric wants and needs that address more than the diagnosis?

In this month's cover story, several industry experts discuss this timely topic, and Shideh Sedgh Bina, founding partner of Insigniam goes so far to state that a company must decide if its purpose is to provide health or to provide medications. She, like others, says this is a conversation that cannot be ignored for much longer.

Sedgh Bina believes if a company decides its mission is to provide health, it needs to move beyond the pill and if it doesn't it will no doubt face competition from other companies looking to move into the space.

That competition will no doubt come from the tech sector, and we are already starting to see implantable devices, wearables, and ingestibles being tied to therapeutics. Developers of these tech-based products are teaming up in greater numbers than ever with pharma companies. Already, we are seeing companies such as J&J, Eli Lilly and Company, Bristol-Myers Squibb, GlaxoSmithKline, Roche, and AstraZeneca collaborating with and acquiring digitally innovative companies.

Michael Fergusson, CEO of Ayogo, predicts that there also will be a whole wave of acquisitions of behavioral health companies. He also sees a shift in what pharma companies are asking for in terms of solutions and digital innovation, they are seeking turnkey solutions rather than undertaking the task of building or designing of the program or app themselves.

According to RockHealth, in the first half of 2017, \$3.5 billion was invested in almost 190 digital health companies, setting a record for the number of companies funded and the total amount invested in digital health.

One of biggest areas that is ripe for beyond-the-pill disruption is that of chronic disease. With about half of adults suffering from one or more chronic diseases, which account for seven of 10 deaths and 86% of healthcare dollars, there is a real need for a conversation that moves the needle beyond pill dispensing. Compounding matters, experts say the average patient can take upward of 13 medications per day. According to Adele Gulfo, an industry veteran, the most difficult of the chronic disease to manage, and most expensive diseases include diabetes, COPD, and heart failure. These chronic diseases place a burden on individuals, their families, and the health system.

She is somewhat optimistic to see some companies starting to focus on identifying the right healthcare solutions, services, and technologies to complement their vast product portfolios and franchises. However, she says, as long as the healthcare system is out of alignment around incentives to support chronic care management, as well as to promote wellness and prevention in general, reimbursement for digital technology tools will struggle in a world of fee-for-service instead of fee-for-value or outcomes-based care.

This leaves the industry at a crossroads, and while the model may not change for some years yet, the pill industry just might become the health industry after all.



DENISE MYSHKO
Managing Editor

Having a diverse patient population in clinical trials is important since medicines affect

people differently based on age, sex, and race.

ROBIN ROBINSON
Senior Editor



To provide value beyond the medicine, the industry is expanding its use of patient support

programs.

KIM RIBBINK
Features Editor



RNAi technologies offer potential to overcome the limitations of traditional drug

therapies to treat a range of diseases.

April 2018 SPECIAL ISSUE Patients

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Taren Grom
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