

Study-Life Balance: Re-envisioning the Patient Experience

A new clinical trial construct leverages patient-centric solutions in response to today's empowered healthcare consumer, who has expectations for an enhanced healthcare experience

Jessica Kim at BBK Worldwide

Efforts to improve the patient experience through an enhanced focus on patient-centred care have been driving healthcare conversations for the past few years. Within clinical research, many have long recognised the impact a positive patient experience can have on clinical trial enrolment and engagement. Study sponsors have embraced patient-centric solutions like travel and reimbursement programmes since they were first introduced into the marketplace, recognising their effectiveness at removing barriers to participation and improving the patient's clinical trial journey.

However, healthcare consumers today are changing. Empowered with new, enhanced technologies, today's healthcare consumers want convenience, access to information, and immediacy. They have been trained by platforms such as Amazon, OpenTable, and Expedia to expect immediate access to information, and have become accustomed to an 'on-demand' model for services.

Research suggests that we can leverage this insight to further enhance the

clinical trial patient experience. For too long, many have argued that the clinical trial patient experience should be approached differently to the healthcare consumer experience, arguing that what works to engage healthcare consumers will not work to engage clinical trial participants. A recent Study Voices survey, however, dispels this myth and revealed unexpected similarities between the two groups.

The survey revealed surprising similarities between healthcare consumers and clinical trial participants – particularly, a shared desire for convenience, immediacy, and access to information. As we apply this insight to the current definition of the clinical trial patient experience, we recognise that it needs to be broadened to reflect these new desires. The definition should be expanded to incorporate a broader swath of the patient's life, rather than strictly looking at the clinical trial patient experience in isolation.

Introducing Study-Life Balance

Study-life balance, a new construct that leverages patient-centric solutions

to help patients more easily integrate clinical trial participation into their daily lives, does just this. It marks the evolution of the patient experience by putting clinical trial participation within the context of the patient's entire life experience. Study-life balance recognises the increasing complexity of everyday life and removes impediments to clinical trial participation by leveraging patient-centric solutions. It also recognises the ways in which patient experiences with tech-driven advancements in other areas of their lives are changing their expectations of the clinical trial experience.

The concept of study-life balance was inspired by today's empowered healthcare consumer who has expectations for an enhanced healthcare journey. Think of the traditional 'wheel of life', a tool for visualising all areas on one's life at once. With spokes for work, home life, social life, hobbies, and general health, you can also insert a spoke for clinical trial participation, recognising the role a positive and satisfying study experience plays in a patient's life. Beyond travel and reimbursement, study-life balance

Study Voices Survey

Purpose

To explore attitudes towards technology, healthcare affordability, physician access, transparency, and quality of care.

Survey Respondents

- 1,341 healthcare consumers
- 1,006 clinical trial participants

Sample Findings

- Both groups used wearable devices (e.g., health tracker) similarly
- Both groups preferred multiple avenues of communications when engaging with their doctors
- 51% of clinical trial participants ranked email communication as very important compared to 44% of healthcare consumers
- 66% of clinical trial participants ranked telephone communication as very important compared to 57% of healthcare consumers
- 38% of clinical trial participants ranked text messaging as very important compared to 40% of healthcare consumers

Summary

Throughout the entire survey, there were no discernible differences between participants in clinical trials and the general public in terms of the ways in which they think about health decisions and how they manage their health.

Strategic Solutions

With study-life balance, there is an enhanced effort to bring convenience and satisfaction to the study experience while fully supporting the patient. As such, the industry is seeing the emergence of several new patient-centric solutions that help achieve this goal.

Clinical trial sponsors have embraced tools and technologies to remove barriers to participation and enhance access to care. Among these are reimbursement solutions, patient-centric apps, study-specific portals, and new messenger apps such as WhatsApp. They transform the patient experience by removing barriers to participation and improving the clinical trial journey.

Precision Support

Precision support provides sponsors with a strategic approach that aligns travel and reimbursement services to individual protocols and the individual needs of participants based on medical status, lifestyle, cultural norms, and geographic location.

Voice Assistants

Voice assistant technology can be integrated into the clinical trial patient journey, providing enhanced

addresses tangible and intangible factors ranging from childcare and lost wages to relocation support and medication delivery services.

By focusing on study-life balance, organisations can enhance the clinical trial patient experience in the broadest way possible. Viewing it this way allows for the inclusion of new products and services that up to now have been overlooked or neglected. For example, while we recognise that a study participant may need transportation to and from a study visit, we haven't historically recognised that childcare or lost wages are among the real-life strains experienced by a study participant.

Study-life balance takes a comprehensive view of the patient's life and introduces solutions to relieve the pressure points. For instance, imagine that a family is relocating from a remote region in Turkey to a city in a foreign country for an extended period in order for a family member to participate in a clinical study. The adjustment may seem

overwhelming – new culture and language are just two of the many challenges. The study-life balance construct recognises new needs that may exist and identifies solutions to create a more balanced and harmonious experience.

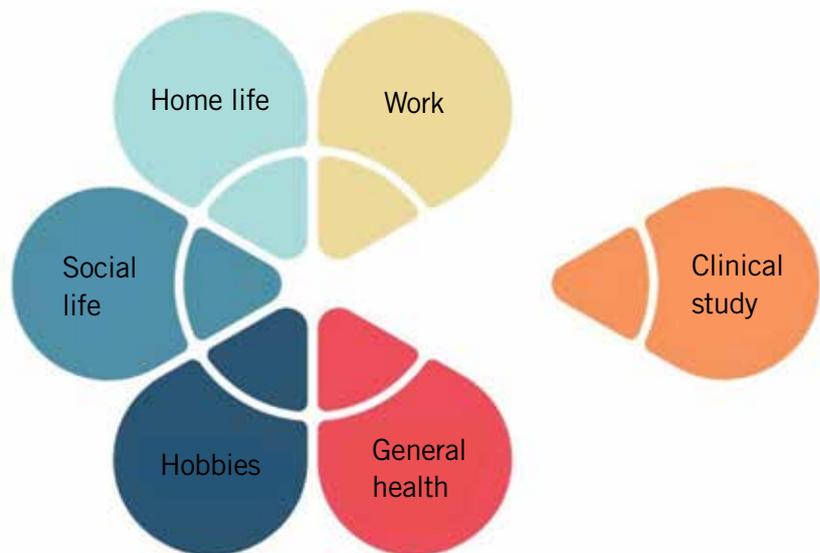


Figure 1: Study-life balance



The key for all these solutions is ensuring a flexible and scalable approach



convenience for patients and reducing study burden. Common voice assistants such as Alexa and Google Assistant can be used for recording health assessments, reminding patients about appointments, facilitating diary entries, reminding patients to take their medication, coordinating travel for study appointments, and answering study-related questions.

Virtual Holograms

Sponsors on the cutting-edge of innovation can leverage virtual holograms placed in a waiting room or a central location at the study site to engage with patients and introduce them to the study opportunity. They can also be used to check patients in for their appointments.

Meal Services

Meal services can remove the burden many caregivers experience in planning and preparing meals for loved ones. Sponsors can engage a service to prepare and deliver fresh and ready-to-eat meals to the patient and caregiver. For convenience, orders can be placed in advance at the study site and delivered to the patient's home or even to the study site for lengthy appointments.

Study Apps

Patients want relevant content that is both educational and personal. Study apps fill this need, empowering study participants with features that inform and engage. Tools such as appointment reminders, visit overviews, educational resources, and videos can help organise the study experience for them.

Wearables

Patients want timely access to information. Their desire to monitor their own health has driven the demand

for wearable devices such as Fitbit and Apple Watch. Since data can be collected remotely, wearables offer patients the convenience they seek while also potentially reducing the number of required site visits.

Study-Specific Patient Portals

Patient portals can serve as a direct access point for study information and increase patient comprehension, compliance, and engagement. Study participants can be empowered with valuable content while also being provided with opportunities for two-way communication (e.g., through instant messaging and email) between patients and study staff for enhanced engagement. Video and virtual study visits can also be supported through portal engagement.

Call Centre Enhancements

Tech-driven functionalities, such as two-way text messaging and FaceTime calls, are being incorporated into many call centres' operations in the effort to increase speed and efficiency responding to patients, especially during the key moments when patients first express interest in a clinical trial. New enhancements address patients' desire for convenience and immediacy with expanded communication channels that allow patients to engage with the study more quickly.

At-Home Study Visits

At-home study visits bring the study to the patient. Often, a nurse or a member of the study staff will travel to the patient's home to conduct routine blood draws or administer the study drug. They may leverage a mobile device in the process to record the patient's health status and a summary of the visit. For patients who live far from the study site, or have mobility

issues, at-home study visits make participation more convenient.

Medication Delivery Services

For at-home visits, sponsors can arrange for the transportation of the study drug to patients using a specialised home delivery service.

The key for all these solutions is ensuring a flexible and scalable approach. Two patients participating in the same study may have entirely different needs. One patient may live near the site and require a simple car ride, while another patient may be traveling from another city and need a hotel room or long-term housing. Perhaps, over the course of participation in a neurodegenerative disease study, a patient's mobility declines; they may not need wheelchair accessible services in the beginning but over time their needs can change. Tiered, or scalable, programmes respond to a wide range of needs, offering flexible solutions from simple to complex.

By approaching the patient experience within the context of study-life balance, clinical trial sponsors can proactively remove barriers to participation, equalising participation opportunities and increasing access to care.



Jessica Kim is the Director of Research and Digital Strategy for **BBK Worldwide**. Through the assessment of key industry data and trends, Jessica spearheads the development of new engagement strategies to relieve pressure points and enhance the clinical trial patient and site experience. Under her leadership, BBK Worldwide has introduced the new construct of study-life balance to the marketplace along with a comprehensive range of strategies to meet patient needs.

jkim@bbkworldwide.com