


Chapter 3


Changing Expectations of Healthcare Consumers and Implications

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ABSTRACT

The healthcare industry is undergoing a profound transformation, driven by shifting consumer expectations, technological advancements, and evolving societal norms. Today's healthcare consumers are no longer passive recipients of care; they are informed, empowered, and demand greater transparency, convenience, and personalization in their healthcare experiences. This chapter explores the key drivers behind these changing expectations, including the rise of digital health technologies, the influence of consumerism, and the growing emphasis on patient-centered care. It also examines the implications of these shifts for healthcare providers, payers, and policymakers, offering insights into how the industry can adapt to meet the needs of a new generation of healthcare consumers. This chapter will provide a comprehensive analysis of the factors driving changes in healthcare consumer expectations and offer actionable insights for stakeholders navigating this shifting landscape.

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1. INTRODUCTION: THE NEW ERA OF CONSUMERISM IN HEALTHCARE

The patient is the most basic consumer of health services, in the simplest definition, the person who requests health care services. Changes in the provision of health services have also changed the perspective of service providers. Until the 1980s, health services were dominated by the idea that the state should provide them, but after these years, the market economy started to dominate and the private sector increased its dominance. Thus, service providers started to perceive people who demanded health services as customers instead of patients (Alkibay, 1998). Not only that, but there have also been increasing changes in the need to embrace the patient's personal preferences in healthcare decisions and to move away from outdated, traditional, paternalistic approaches to healthcare delivery (Kogan, Wilber, Mosqueda, 2016). As a result of all these changes, the concept of patient-centered care has gained importance.

Patient-centered care is defined as “*health care that builds a partnership between practitioners, patients and their families (when appropriate) to ensure that decisions respect patients' wishes, needs and preferences and that patients have the education and support they need to make decisions and participate in their own care*” (Institute of Medicine, 2001). According to the perspective emerging from the field of Humanistic Psychology and put forward by Carl Rogers (1951), the three components of patient-centered care are empathy, realism and absolute positivity. These three elements are key to the success of collaboration. Patient-centered care combines the ideas of psychotherapy and aims to understand the patient from the patient's point of view and suggests that the psycho-social elements of the patient should be taken into account in the provision of health care and that considering is an indicator of the humanistic approach of the health care provider (Gökçe & Bulduklu, 2015).

In the definitions of the concept of patient-centred care, the patient's ability to express his/her own preferences, make his/her own decisions, active participation in his/her care and strong cooperation with service provider professionals are underlined. (The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2006; Hillbrand, Hawkins, How, & Stayner, 2006). There are also a number of commonalities in the definitions related to the planning, management and delivery of health care systems and facilities (Figure 1) (Catalyst, 2017).

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