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Jason A. Wolf PhD
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From the Editor

The State of Patient Experience
Jason A. Wolf, PhD, Editor, Patient Experience Journal, President, The Beryl Institute, jason.wolf@theberylinstitute.org

Abstract
As the patient experience movement continues to flourish, there is greater alignment that experience encompasses all we do in healthcare – not simply a customer encounter, but how we engage people in mind, body and spirit, how we integrate the critical aspects of care from quality to safety to service and how we link the very complexities of our healthcare systems globally to provide for easy journeys for those receiving care. In sharing data from the latest study for The Beryl Institute on patient experience, the trends of this growing movement are seen as positive and a set of clear and defined outcomes driven by a positive patient experience are emerging, representing the impact experience now has as a central focus for healthcare globally. The state of patient experience is strong regardless of national identity or systemic constraints – the idea itself resonates at the core of our humanity. If we approach it from that light, both in practice and in research, the possibilities for a better healthcare world are truly boundless.

Keywords
Patient experience movement, patient experience, healthcare, patient and family engagement, state of patient experience, Patient Experience Journal

An Expanding Conversation
As I offered in reflecting on our most recent issue of Patient Experience Journal (PXJ) this past spring:

Positive patient experience is good for healthcare, it is good for the people who comprise it and if we do our work as scholars and practitioners in conjunction, in linking new ideas and solid proven practice, we have the potential to profoundly change the nature of healthcare.

In that time since then, we have seen the patient experience movement continue to flourish. Every day I learn of new ideas emerging to support a positive patient experience. More importantly, I see a coalescing around the idea I believe so central to patient experience success and all it represents. That is that experience encompasses all we do in healthcare – not simply a customer encounter, but how we engage people in mind, body and spirit, how we integrate the critical aspects of care from quality to safety to service and how we link the very complexities of our healthcare systems globally to provide for easy journeys for those receiving care.

I too am seeing a shifting in experience efforts in a few additional ways. The first, in that we are moving beyond trying to address survey results to engage in experience as the more comprehensive idea I framed above. The second, we are showing increasing awareness that the experience of care providers – physicians, nurses, care teams, etc. – must be acknowledged and addressed as part of the experience conversation if we are to achieve the best in outcomes. And the third, there is shift beyond simply suggesting the importance of patient centeredness to seeing definitive actions to partner with patients and families and engage patient and family perspective.

These trends are key as they represent an evolution of the patient experience conversation from being seen as tangential to healthcare priorities as a service effort, to finding a critical strategic role at the heart of all we do in healthcare. One thing is for certain in healthcare today, especially in a market driven by a new consumer mindset with unbounded access to information and instant opportunities for feedback; that all those receiving care have an experience whether strategically planned for or not. If these trends hold true, and the market perspective we see only continues to solidify and broaden, then in healthcare we will no longer have the option to overlook experience and instead will find it at the strategic core of all we do.

The State of Patient Experience
This April, The Beryl Institute released its latest findings on the state of patient experience and shared insights gathered from the now growing global patient experience movement. The study included the voices of 1561 respondents from 21 countries on five continents. It represented input from 773 US hospitals, 174 Non-US healthcare organizations, 116 long-term care facilities and 93 physician practice organizations. It was an industrious undertaking to understand not only the trends we have been seeing in the last five years of patient experience...
efforts in the United States, but also attempted to take a
global and cross-continuum perspective as well. In
analyzing what it offered us in guiding both intention and
focus for action in the days ahead for the patient
experience movement, I offered a central idea fundamental
to what we see transpiring in patient experience today.

_The bottom line is that in no greater way has patient experience_
mattered in healthcare for the factors that drive its success, the_
outcomes it is seen creating and the importance and impact it_
has on the consumer of healthcare, than it does at this very_
moment._

What the data reveal reinforce the ideas I share above and
help frame what we are seeing emerge on the pages of
PXJ. First, patient experience and its integration with
quality and safety remain the top priority for healthcare
leaders around the world. The idea of aligning these efforts
is critical to effective and comprehensive efforts and
positive outcomes. Second, we still have an opportunity
for clarity of purpose – with less than 50% of all
respondents identifying their organization as having a
definition of patient experience. I remain steadfast in
suggesting that without definition an organization lacks the
foundation and in many cases shared purpose on which to
build its efforts.³ Third, leadership and culture matter in
patient experience. Respondents offer that it is on the
backs of leaders that strong experience efforts are built and
on the foundations of vibrant and purposeful culture
through which experience efforts are nurtured and
sustained. Fourth, this intention in focus and foundation is
being accompanied by actions. For example, the data for
US hospitals show an increase from 22% to 42% in the
number of organizations identifying themselves as having
a senior patient experience leader guiding their efforts.
Across the four segments studied, an average of 63% of all
organizations reported having someone in a senior role
responsible for guiding experience efforts.

Perhaps most interesting in the results are some emerging
data points we saw in the 2015 study. One, that there is a
clear and growing investment in engaging patient and
family voice for both input and feedback. Engaging patient
and family voice through patient and family advisory
councils had the largest increase as a metric used in
gauging experience performance, moving up over 20
percentage points from 2013 and it was consistently a top
identified metric across all segments studied. And while
staff training and development remained the top area of
investment for organizations looking to address experience
improvement, patient and family engagement efforts
emerged as a top three item for the first time as an
investment for organizations, most specifically in both the
U.S. and non-U.S. hospital segments. The other was a
clear acknowledgement for the first time that patient
experience is the foundation for overall improvement. In
asking what the top impacted item was in focusing on
patient experience, quality/clinical outcomes came out on
top.

These discoveries, while perhaps not surprising to those of
us following the experience trends, are reinforcing the
strong and positive move the state of patient experience is
making. It represents a reinforcement of ideas at the core
of the movement in focus and direction and reflects a
powerful idea that all voices matter, patients and family
voices should be part of the process and experience drives
the ultimate in outcomes we look to achieve in healthcare.
These are significant statements about what not only has
emerged, but also what will drive patient experience efforts
forward in the years ahead.

**What Lies Ahead**

From this review of the data, the practice of research we
see emerging in the submissions to PXJ are supporting
these trends. In this very volume alone, we cover the span
of critical issues identified as driving the state of patient
experience forward. Themes from patient and family
partnership, to experience of care itself, to processes and
measures, structure and even disease specific interventions
shape the pages of this latest volume. Of interest as well is
that we are seeing an emergence of not just simply talking
about patient and family voice, but the real efforts to
include patients and families in the research itself. For
example in the paper, _Patient leadership: taking patient_
experience to the next level⁴, we hear directly from a patient
leader in reflecting on the project and findings. And in the
paper, _Patient and family partner involvement in staff interviews:_
_Designing, implementing, and evaluating a new hiring process⁵_, a
patient leader directly involved in the work as co-author as
well.

What I also find of interest in that as PXJ has grown in the
last two years in both submissions received and reach
globally, the topics presented on its pages have sharpened.
There perhaps is a paradox in this; that as there has been a
coalescing around the centrality of patient experience in
healthcare, the topics covered identified as impacting
experience overall has broadened. This to me indicates we
are both getting clearer about the essence of patient
experience itself, all the while recognizing that it truly
touches and is touched by all corners of the healthcare
ecosystem. From exploring direct experiences of care in
emergency departments or neonatal care, to process
improvement efforts, to the impact of online portals for
patient communication, from looking at how we address
disease specific states, but recognizing the lessons learned
in many cases are transferable across the healthcare
spectrum. These topics of research reveal and reinforce
the powerful statement again that experience is truly the
integration of quality, safety and service, it is grounded in
partnership, values all voices and has global consequences.
The latter is of equal interest, with half of the articles in
this issue representing voices from around the globe. The lesson this reveals returns us to the state of patient experience itself. The healthcare dialogue is a global one and the patient experience regardless of national identity or systemic constraints resonates at the core of our humanity itself, and if we approach it from that light, both in practice and in research, the possibilities for a better healthcare world are truly boundless.

Moving Forward

As I travel and talk to individuals globally around the essence of patient experience, there is a fundamental understanding about the importance of experience yet there is clearly still a struggle with how to prioritize, resource, act and sustain these efforts. For all that the collective wisdom knows to be true, there too remains a struggle in many cases on how to move forward. These may be no better indicated than in the data, which reveal that around half of all organizations still do not have a formal definition or statement of purpose around what they want their experience to be. I have come to dub this the performance paradox, that those things we know to be simple, clear, and understandable are not always easy, trouble-free and painless.

Yet for those same individuals when I share what I believe the true outcomes of experience are, they agree. This is where I see our opportunities moving ahead. To align around our common belief and then continue to build our research to show that above all else experience drives four critical outcomes, perhaps the most central and essential outcomes for any healthcare organization globally: clinical outcomes, financial outcomes, consumer/brand loyalty and community reputation. What I have found is that in the “business” of healthcare we continue to want to help people first in driving the best in outcomes, but we need financially viable organizations with which to do this. We strive, as seen in so many organizations’ mission statements, to be the provider of choice (loyalty) and thrive on our positions in and contributions to our communities. It may be no simpler, yet in reality subtly complex as that. That is our challenge and opportunity as we move the state of patient experience forward.

As we also move PXJ forward, I hope we can continue to expand and reinforce the dialogue and I invite and encourage submissions from all corners of our world. It is exciting to think where the next idea on experience excellence may emerge. I hope to see more work on the value and impact of patient and family partnership and voice, I encourage more work on the role of and impact of physicians, I stress that we must include understanding of the caregiver – nurse, physician, support staff, etc. – experience and engagement and its relevance to experience overall as well. While just some potential ideas, I find new inquiries and possibility every day as authors find their way to PXJ. I invite you to consider this not only your research home, but also a place in which we can continue to expand the edges of the dialogue together. The state of patient experience is strong and the movement is growing. It is through your great ideas, commitments and actions that we will continue to truly change healthcare for the better, together.

Jason A. Wolf, PhD
Founding Editor
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