

# The Hospital of the Future Needs to be Patient-Centric

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A man with a beard is wearing a white and black VR headset. He is in a hospital room, with medical equipment and a bed visible in the background. He is making a hand gesture with his right hand. The background is a modern hospital room with glass walls, medical equipment, and a bed.

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## Introduction

A version of the 'Hospital of the Future' (HOF) is already here – a hospital utilising digital systems rather than analog processes, having implemented some level of digital transformation.

The COVID19 pandemic accelerated the use of digital technologies including Virtual Reality (VR), Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain and 5G, but it's also changed the mindset of patients in relation to their health.

The next version of the 'Hospital of the Future' needs to consider how digital technology can be used to enable a more patient-centric experience of healthcare. The HOF needs put the Patient of the Future at the heart of a digital strategy.

## Patient Personas

At a macro level there trends emerging which began during the COVID19 pandemic. These trends will change the ongoing relationship between patient and healthcare provider into the near and medium future.

We have identified several patient personas that present threats and opportunities to the HOF:

### Digitally Native Patients

The 'Facebook Generation' is in their 40s. Since 2005 patients have been able to inform themselves about healthcare and wellness via YouTube. Since 2010 over 116 million Fitbit devices have been sold.

*Digitally native patients expect the same experience from their healthcare providers as they do from Amazon or Instagram. Intuitive and seamless journeys enabled by technology.*

They expect to be able to interact via WhatsApp or some other form of live-chat. They have been taught to expect that organisations don't have opening hours or working weeks.

### **Potential Threats**

These patients will demand a high-quality, digitally enhanced patient experience. From apps to secure data handling to contactless payments to personalised content. These patients will make decisions about their healthcare providers based on their level of digital proficiency.

Hospitals that do not transform quickly will lose patients to competitors who are more digitally advanced. Research from the Banking sector has shown that slow-moving, traditional institutions are losing market share to Neo-banks who have focused on digitally native consumers.

### **Opportunities**

Offering a digital patient experience will differentiate healthcare providers in the eyes of these patients.

Borrowing from the consumer world, one strategy could be to partner with a digital ID wallet like Yoti<sup>1</sup> to make onboarding more seamless and to transfer private data more efficiently.

Adapting to be where patients are, to talk to them on the platforms where they live their digital lives e.g. WhatsApp or delivering trusted, branded content via YouTube, could be more effective than traditional educational programs.

### Globally Mobile Patients

Healthcare used to be local. Patients were subject to a kind of lottery when it came to receiving care. Even patients looking for care in the private sector were limited to local or regional options.

The hospital of the future is not guaranteed patronage by local patients. For some of these patients, there is the option to fly around the world for physical treatment. Before the pandemic 'Healthcare Tourism' was growing at over 21-32% per annum.

The pandemic also saw accelerated adoption of telehealth. As this technology becomes better and leverages trends like augmented, mixed and virtual reality, the HOF will be able to deliver care from anywhere to anywhere.

### **Potential Threats**

These patients can get their healthcare from anywhere they choose. This is especially true in a market like Singapore with a high proportion of globally mobile people. Hospitals need to recognise that their patient experience is being compared to global competitors, not just local providers.

### **Opportunities**

The Hospitals of the Future that can build a trusted brand will export their services to patients around the world. Like University brands that provide online courses, hospitals that can develop a brand reputation that is world recognised can attract patients who are looking beyond their local region or borders for care and treatment.

Hospitals that develop remote patient experiences through augmented or virtual reality can increase their market share around the world.

### Wellness Centered Patients

Enabled by instant access to in-depth medical information, these patients expect their healthcare providers to provide the most up-to-date information, treatments and advice.

These patients expect their healthcare providers to be proactive and to provide access to preventative care.

### **Potential Threats**

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<sup>1</sup> Yoti Digital Identity platform - <https://www.yoti.com/>

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These patients will require investment in training and research. Providing a good patient experience can be challenging if there are disconnects between the attitudes and knowledge of patients and care givers. Other conflicts can arise when insurance is added into the patient journey. Personalisation is key to providing a great patient experience for this group.

### **Opportunities**

This group of patients is more likely to share their experiences with others. Where hospitals can gain the trust of these patients and provide empathetic, fact-based, culturally sensitive care they will develop loyalty among this group.

## **Creating a Total Experience for the Hospital of the Future**

The COVID19 pandemic accelerated the use of technologies including Virtual Reality (VR), Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain and 5G, but it's also changed the mindset of patients in relation to their health.

As competition for patients and medical talent increases, there is a competitive advantage to be gained by focusing on Total Experience. PX is closely tied to the experience and mindset of Doctors and Nurses and staff who interact directly with patients, but PX is also closely tied to the decisions of policy makers, compliance officers, accountants and even IT.

Total experience considers how the policies, procedures and systems of a hospital impacts employees, patients, commercial outcomes and technology decisions.

### The Employee Experience of the Hospital of the Future

Many healthcare organizations have been designed around doctors, though in recent years some medical professionals have been marginalized by administrators and accountants focused on financial outcomes.

Elsewhere, primary care workers are burnt out and undervalued. The experience of workers has been taken for granted. The COVID-19 pandemic has also caused global shifts in the availability of workers from other countries resulting in acute staff shortages.

The patient experience is largely driven by the human interactions. The whole organisation needs to understand the patient charter and what the impact of their decisions has on the overall patient journey.

Digital technology can be deployed to enable front-line staff to deliver a better experience. From reducing paperwork and administrative burden to providing dashboard style real-time information to help with decision making.

### The Business of the Hospital of the Future

The threat of litigation and the complex value-chains relating to medical insurance have distracted hospitals from their primary purpose – delivering patient outcomes.

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The 'Hospitals of the Future' that puts Total Experience at the center of every decision that they make – including technology decisions - will attract better talent, be more efficient (save money) and enjoy brand benefits. And of course, deliver outstanding patient outcomes.

We have discussed the threats to healthcare providers if they do not consider the patient of the future. Business is threatened by global brands who can deliver their trusted care remotely into any market. Business is threatened by negative reviews by patients and old-fashioned processes that were designed before digital solutions existed.

We have also discussed the opportunities for the Hospital of the Future to use patient experience as a differentiator, to attract medical tourism and export care remotely. Efficiencies may also be gained through telehealth.

The Hospital of the Future might have an entirely different business model<sup>2</sup> based on NFTs and Tokenomics!

### The Technology of the Hospital of the Future

Due to the suddenness of the pandemic, many digital technologies were rolled out in haste without any real strategy or consideration for patients or practitioners<sup>3</sup>. In some cases, this led to innovation and in some cases, it led to exposing weaknesses elsewhere in the system.

In a highly regulated market like healthcare, rules that were developed in different times, restricted by analog processes and technology have not been updated. For example - rules to protect patient data and privacy were written when such data was kept on paper in filing cabinets.

If we consider the Patients of the Future and their end-to-end healthcare journey, we can identify some technologies that will be central to the experience. These range from the delivery of information and content to messaging platforms to the sharing of private information to the use of virtual reality headsets for the alleviation of pain<sup>4</sup>.

In a Total Experience mindset, technology can also enable employees to deliver better outcomes. IoT based analysis of traffic movement throughout a hospital, blockchain based asset tracking or simple APIs that allow for private data to be shared for onboarding.

The following technologies will be central to the delivery of total experience in the hospital of the future:

- Internet of Things (IoT), from wearables to monitoring.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aqitude.com/digital-disruption-workshop/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.aqitude.com/disruption-doesnt-have-to-be-digital/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://researchtrustmalta.eu/research-projects/virtual-reality-in-healthcare/>

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- Machine Learning & AI, from advanced diagnosis to virtual doctors and driverless vehicles.
- Blockchain, from asset tracking to records management and business models
- Mixed Reality, from training and simulations to metaverse hospitals and virtual companions<sup>5</sup>

## Creating a Patient-Centric Mindset

Aquitude have combined a set of assessments, audits, workshops and strategies to position healthcare providers for the future and provide patient-centric foundations for the hospital of the future.

### Patient Experience Excellence Accelerator Program

- **PX Pulse** - Patient Experience Typology Assessment - An exclusive, proprietary assessment designed to benchmark attitudes towards patient-centricity and employee experience across the organisation.
- **Leader Led Commitment** - Leadership Visioning Workshop - Designed to lock in leadership commitment and provide a solid foundation for a Total Experience strategy. Helps decision makers scope what their 'Hospital of the Future' looks like.
- **Total Experience Best Practise Workshop** - Presentation of Patient Experience Typology Assessment results and alignment of teams around patient experience vision.
- **Total Experience Strategy, Goal Setting & Measurement** - Building the outputs of the assessments, audits and workshops into actionable strategies for improvement.

### PX Pulse - The Patient Experience Typology Framework

Exclusive, proprietary assessment designed to benchmark attitudes towards patient-centricity and employee experience across the organisation.

A forward-looking indicator and predictor of behaviour. Understanding how people will react helps to identify strengths and weaknesses and create patient centric targets and OKRs. The benefits of the PX Typology Assessment include:

**Data Driven Benchmarking** - A quantitative method to measure attitudes towards patient centricity. Mapping attitudes of all teams and departments across the organisation to 7 strategic pillars. Enabling the comparison of individuals, teams and locations. Enabling targets to be set against measurable metrics.

**A Catalyst for Discussion** - The assessment is designed to provoke discussion around attitudes towards Total Experience, to allow a deep-dive into how and why decisions are made and what is driving those decisions.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.pilotedia.com/2022/03/ep-5-personalisation-digital-dogs/>

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### Leader-Led Commitment

Delivering culture change and a true Total Experience Framework must come from strong, well-informed leadership. Every C-Level decision maker has an impact on the experience of patients, team members and stakeholders in the community.

**Patient Experience Typology Assessment** - The leadership team is benchmarked alongside the rest of the organization. Mapping senior decision maker's attitudes towards patient centricity and employee experience feeds into scoping and readiness calculations.

**Leadership PX Status and Visioning Workshop** - 1 Day Presentation of trends and best practice for building the 'Hospital of the Future' including recent research into patient expectations and behavior.

### Patient Driven Vision

Bringing together the results of the Patient Experience Typology Assessment and the commitment of the leadership team into a plan for innovation and improvement.

Presentation of Assessment Results & Best Practise Workshop (2 Days) - with cross- functional teams and PX Ambassadors

- Audits, Analysis and Strategy Development - PX Gap Analysis: ideal vs reality
- Devising the optimal Patient-Driven Vision and Charter
- Supported by the Patient – Driven Values which underpin a patient-centred culture.
- Defining the Physical and Emotional states of the Patient through-out their journey(s) with the organisation

### Total Experience Strategy Development

Distillation of qualitative and quantitative data into action plans with measurable targets.

#### **Total Experience Strategies and Plans:**

- New or revised PX Vision and Charter
- Accountability Matrix
- Team / Organization PX Action Plan with cascading and shared OKRs
- Employee Experience Strategy (New or Revised)

### **User Cases From a Not-to-Distant Future**

The hospital of the future needs to prepare for user cases that have seemed like science-fiction, but in reality are not too far away. The cases below serve to illustrate the nexus between technology and Total Experience Management, to serve as a catalyst for discussion around what is required to deliver effective healthcare in the future:



### Lee An

Lee An is a 45-year-old mother of 2. She is feeling depressed and harassed. She has been putting on weight and feels like she is unable to cope with the demands of her daily life. She awaits her doctor to proactively call to follow up on an alarm triggered by her wearable glucose monitor. Her blood sugar levels have increased. Her thyroid readings are also cause for concern.

During a virtual consultation, her AI doctor requests multiple lab tests. These happen with a prick of her finger onto a home-based device which collates the information and dispatches it to the hospital privately and securely. Escalated from an AI to a human doctor, Lee An's tele-consultation explains the issues behind her perimenopausal hormonal changes. An NFT smart-contract which serves as a prescription is triggered and the requisite drugs are delivered to her door.

### Boon Ng

Is an 80 year-old man with mobility issues and terrible back pain. His quality of life has diminished as he has become bed-bound from this pain, so he spends most of his time in the Metaverse. There is no need to exit this virtual reality to see a doctor. It is deemed that his pain needs to be managed more effectively, which a change in the pain management programme on his virtual reality goggles. Distraction theory. His relief is instant. He is able to resume his virtual physiotherapy sessions, increasing his mobility.

### The Lim Family

Following a car accident, the Lim family members are each placed into a driverless ambulance drone. The paramedics, who don't need to drive, can dedicate their time instead to use the equipment in the vehicle to build a medical picture. Medical information is wirelessly sent by 5G and reviewed by the AI powered hospital diagnostic system to recommend any immediate action. They are simultaneously onboarded, insurance details checked. They are automatically allocated beds and other resources including nurses, doctors and equipment required to deal with their acute trauma before they arrive to the Accident and Emergency entrance.

## Conclusion

The 'Hospital for the Future' has a significant interplay between Total Experience and Technology. One is part of the other. The ability to deliver healthcare cost-effectively yet offer a great Patient Experience, will require a razor-sharp focus by healthcare institutions on managing Employee Experience, Patient Experience and Technology.

Being able to hand-hold patients and employees through the transition between the 'analogue' world of today's healthcare to the digitally driven, virtual and globally-minded healthcare services expected by the Patients of the Future will prove to be a genuine competitive differentiator for healthcare institutions.

## About Aqitude Health

Part of Aqitude Group LTD, a specialist experience and engagement consultancy, Aqitude Health has advised clients globally on talent, communications and marketing and digital technology.

Our services include:

- Patient Experience Strategy, consulting and training
- Operational excellence including clinic management & profitability
- Communication & Empathy programs & training
- Strategic marketing & Brand building
- Healthcare Digital Transformation & solutions

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