

Caregivers: their impact on treatment choice and the patient journey

The importance of the role that caregivers play in the healthcare landscape cannot be overstated.

Caregivers are playing an even greater role in the patient journey, and the rise in cancer and other chronic diseases means there are now more caregivers than ever.

This was the focal point of a recent webinar hosted by Kathy Relias (Head of Commercial Strategic Development and Client Service, US), Pam Rubio-Soletto (Director) and Paolina Milana (publisher and author of *The Caregiver Chronicles*).

The webinar shared valuable insights on caregiver experiences, their emotions, unmet caregiver needs, and how biopharma manufacturers can make more of an impact on this audience.



Recognizing the vital role of caregivers

Caregivers play an indispensable role in the healthcare journey. Whether family members, friends or other loved ones, caregivers often find themselves thrust into the responsibility of managing a patient's illness and treatment regimen.

Healthcare professionals and organisations need to recognize caregivers as distinct stakeholders in the patient-care equation. By acknowledging their vital contributions and understanding the unique challenges they face, healthcare providers can better support caregivers and ultimately enhance patient outcomes.



Understanding caregiver experiences

In her book, *The Caregiver Chronicles*, Paolina Milana shared poignant insights gleaned from her personal experiences as a caregiver for family members with paranoid schizophrenia. Milana's journey served as the impetus for her book, which aims to amplify the voices of caregivers and shed light on their often overlooked struggles.

Her experience, and those of many others in similar positions, underscores the prevalence of caregiver burnout and the inadequacy of traditional awareness campaigns in addressing the complex emotional and practical challenges faced by caregivers. We should advocate for a more holistic approach to caregiver support – one that encompasses tangible resources, emotional validation and community solidarity.



Cultural influences on caregiving

Varying cultural norms and traditions can have a significant influence on caregiving dynamics. From the Sicilian tradition of daughters assuming primary caregiving responsibilities to the communal caregiving practices prevalent in African American families, cultural nuances play an important role in shaping caregiver experiences and expectations. It's vital to recognize and respect these cultural differences in healthcare settings as they can profoundly impact the caregiver experience and the quality of patient care.



The toll on caregivers

Caregiving can be hugely demanding, both physically and mentally, and can take a toll on caregivers' mental health and wellbeing. One way this is highlighted is through the complexities of caregiving relationships, particularly in cases where spouses find themselves thrust into the role of primary caregiver.

The emotional toll of witnessing a loved one's illness, navigating role reversals and grappling with uncertainty can lead to feelings of isolation, stress and grief. This emphasizes the importance of providing caregivers with strong support networks, counselling services and respite care to help them navigate the emotional challenges inherent in their role.

Empowering caregivers

All of these factors collectively highlight the need for healthcare organizations to adopt caregiver-centric approaches aimed at empowering and supporting caregivers.

From tailored communication strategies that acknowledge caregivers as valued partners in the care continuum to the implementation of AI-powered tools for caregiver support, there are many opportunities for enhancing caregiver experiences and optimizing patient care.

Advancing caregiver-centric healthcare

Caregivers play a truly multifaceted role in the healthcare ecosystem. By recognizing the vital contributions of caregivers, understanding their unique experiences and challenges, and embracing cultural sensitivity in care delivery, healthcare organizations can take meaningful steps towards advancing caregiver-centric healthcare.



Get in touch



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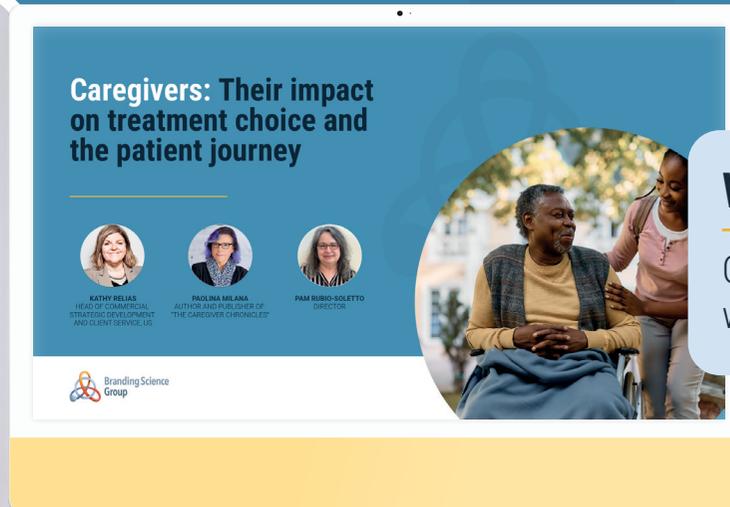
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