



'Crouch, Touch, Engage'

How to discuss the price of medicines and variations in patient access.

There have been incredible advances in medical innovation. Diseases that were once thought to be untreatable, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis and many cancers, can now be cured or managed with medicine. Advances in gene, cell and immunotherapies promise even greater medical advances in the coming years, but even within the EU, The European Commission estimate that almost 70 million people do not have access to the medicines they need. This contributes to significant variations in life- expectancy and quality of life.

The high price of new medicines and a staged approach to launch, tends to favour rich nations over the poor. The pharmaceutical industry claims their medicines provide demonstrably good value for money and that it is perverse Member State pricing and reimbursement processes that drive delays in patient access. Deep seated prejudices and lack of trust prevents constructive discussions on how to improve the situation for patients.

Through the process of 'crouch, touch, engage,' rugby has found a way to systematically engage opposition players to form a scrum in such a way that the game can be managed without claims of foul play. Similar to rugby, it is essential to find a method by which those responsible for pricing and patient access to medicines; national 'payer' communities, pharmaceutical company representatives and patient advocates, can engage in a controlled manner, to learn from each other's perspectives and explore new approaches to improving the situation for all concerned. This controlled process was developed by:

1. **Building a simulation platform:** Using the principles of 'gamification,' working with expert stakeholders to develop a simplified but realistic pricing and market access simulation exercise, based on a fictitious company, product and healthcare systems.
2. **Engagement Workshops:** Simulation workshops were held in a number of forums including trade association, patient organization and parliamentary meetings as well as conferences such as the European Health Forum Gastein. Using gamification, this approach diffused tension and helped stimulate discussion, allowing participants to 'stand in the shoes' of other stakeholders. This encouraged exploration of alternative approaches to improving patient access to medicines.
3. **Policy proposals:** The gamification process encouraged multi-stakeholder engagement and was successful in communicating the complexity of medicine pricing and patient access from the perspective of all stakeholders. This facilitated the creation of a number of co-created policy proposals and established the company as a thought-leader and trusted partner, willing to engage in controversial topics constructively.

By developing and facilitating the simulation exercises, the company was able to build trust and establish a willingness to engage in highly sensitive and controversial topics. This open approach, backed up by a genuine commitment to collaborative negotiation and a willingness to share ideas, contributed to reduced price erosion, greater patient access and helped build a trustful relationship, compared to competitors.



Kevin Loth
Managing Director
WDLBio Ltd.
+44 7900980823
WDLBio.com
Kloth@WDLBio.com
 