

6 Global Trends Critical to Patients During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Expert panel of patient advocacy leaders on COVID-19, its impact on patients and moving forward

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The ongoing **COVID-19** pandemic has created unprecedented challenges around the world. It has significantly impacted health systems and health care. Merck recently hosted an expert panel of patient advocacy leaders from around the world to discuss shifts in health care and the impact on patients during the next phases of the pandemic. Special Report: COVID-19 and the Patient Perspective summarizes the panel conversation.

Read the report

Moderated by Merck's executive director of global patient advocacy, Michelle Vichnin, MD, the panel highlighted six global trends:

Defining and characterizing the "new normal"

New is the operative word. Panelists note that everyone is learning something new, and resilience and agility are key as we respond to realities that are changing every day. And, this includes a new relationship with technology, which will likely deepen in the wake of COVID-19 and other crises, according to a recent survey.

Understanding the future of patient care

The pandemic has forced health care systems to quickly adapt. Changes and trends in patient care include the adoption of telemedicine/telehealth and mobile delivery of care, increased use of technology for patient data and innovation in digital capabilities to monitor, diagnose and promote health.

Challenges of COVID-19: focus on mental health

In addition to the loss of life and impact on physical health, COVID-19 has taken a toll on people's mental health. Groups particularly affected include health and other frontline workers, students, people living alone and those with pre-existing mental health conditions.

Addressing health care disparities and health equity

The pandemic has highlighted gaps in current health care systems and care models. It's forcing us, as a society, to grapple with health care disparities and aim for greater health equity. Panelists discussed some ways to improve those inequities, including addressing social determinants of health and building health literacy.

Embracing patients and patient advocates as part of the solution

Because of what we've learned through the pandemic, there are opportunities for a renewed focus on health and prevention. This includes greater involvement of patients in all aspects of health care - from clinical trials to product development.

Partnering for success

Collaboration across all sectors will be critical for addressing the enormous challenges that lie ahead and investment in health care should be prioritized.

Read the **report**.

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