



Patients' Understanding of Biological Medicines

Survey Findings

A decade has passed since Congress adopted the Biologics Price Competition and Innovation Act, opening the door for follow-on biological medicines known as biosimilars. By March 2020, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration had approved more than 25 biosimilars, with many more in the development pipeline.

But while development of new treatments has soared, patients' understanding lags. In an online survey of more than 135 patients and advocates, the Biologics Prescribers Collaborative discovered:

- Patients don't fully understand the biosimilars pathway, though those who do have a favorable opinion of it.
- Patients may harbor misconceptions and a misunderstanding of biosimilars.
- Patients want more information about biological medicines, specifically from their health care provider.
- Patients want details about their out-of-pocket costs for treatment and value biosimilars primarily as an opportunity for cost savings.

This report summarizes key findings and proposes next steps for improving patients' understanding of the nature, value and approval process for biological medicines.

PATIENTS' LACK OF AWARENESS

Survey results reveal that patients lack a robust understanding of biosimilars, the regulatory pathway that allows the Food and Drug Administration to approve them, and the distinctions among innovator biologics, biosimilars and interchangeable biosimilars.

Nearly four out of 10 respondents answered "don't know" when asked if they agreed or disagreed with statements such as:



41%

The certainty of the pathway **gives companies the confidence to develop additional biosimilars** to compete with innovator medicines.

37%

The pathway **is bringing, or will bring, price competition** and more affordable therapeutic options to the clinic.

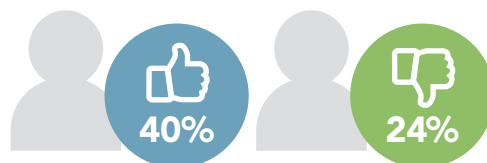
41%

The pathway has produced clear standards for FDA approval that **inspire confidence in patients** that, when a biosimilar is prescribed, it will prove both safe and effective.

Of patients who did feel informed enough to share an opinion, however, favorable impressions outweighed unfavorable by nearly two to one.



Patients are benefitting, or will benefit, from the price reductions resulting from biosimilar competition.



The pathway is bringing, or will bring, price competition and more affordable therapeutic options to the clinic.

Opinions of how much the average patient knows about the basics of biological drugs were low. **Most respondents disagreed with statements such as:**



50% Patients are aware that biosimilar treatment options exist.

63% Patients understand how biosimilars differ from biologics.

54% Patients understand the concept of interchangeability.

THE BIOSIMILARS EDUCATION GAP

Survey respondents indicated that patients are eager for more information. In particular, patients are looking for details from their health care providers, though other sources may also play a role. Respondents also had clear preferences about the type of information they would like.

When it comes to treatment, survey responses indicated that **patients want to know:**



Open-ended responses indicated that respondents want to know about potential side effects. Other open-ended responses emphasized risk, with one respondent noting the importance of where biosimilars are manufactured and another citing concerns about counterfeit products. **These responses suggest that a lack of understanding about biosimilars may encourage misconceptions or uncertainty about the therapies.**

While patients overwhelmingly indicated the desire to learn about biosimilars and treatment options from their health care provider, they were also open to augmenting those conversations with:



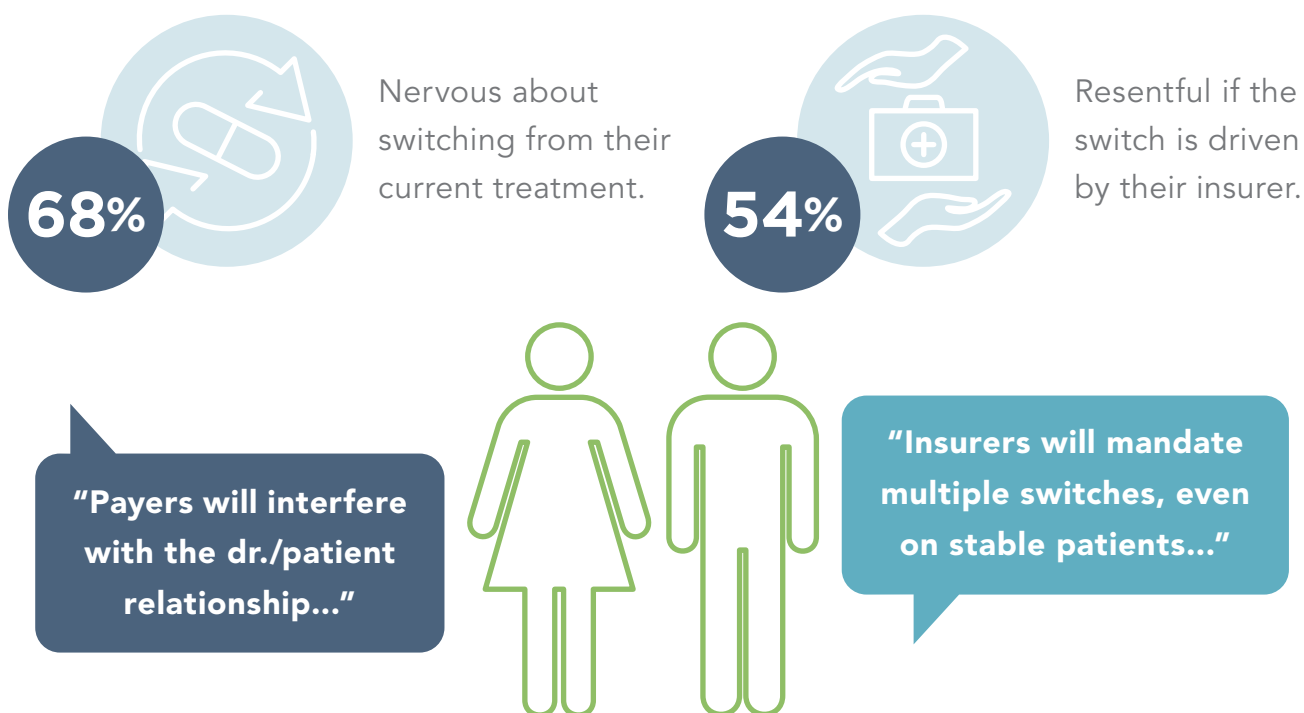
62% News articles and online resources.

56% Information provided by their pharmacist.

COST SAVINGS & TREATMENT DECISIONS

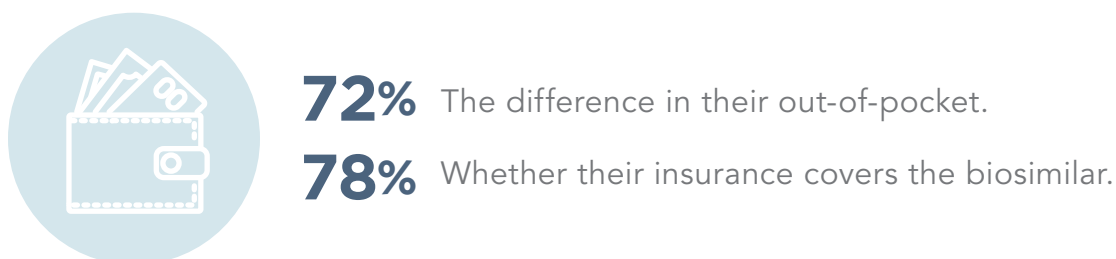
Survey responses revealed clear-cut opinions about the role that insurers should play in patients' choice of treatments, as well as about the potential for biosimilars to help patients cut costs.

Thirty-seven percent of respondents agreed that patients are "open to new treatment options." But respondents conveyed strong opinions about the role of insurance in their treatment decisions, particularly if they were already stable on a therapy. Responses suggested that patients feel:



In response to the question, "What, if any, are your concerns?" patients expressed anxiety about insurers' role. Concerns included the desire that "the focus remains on the right medicine for the right patient."

Responses also suggested that patients' interest in biosimilars was largely rooted in the potential for lower costs. When asked what information patients want regarding biosimilars and treatment options, respondents cited:

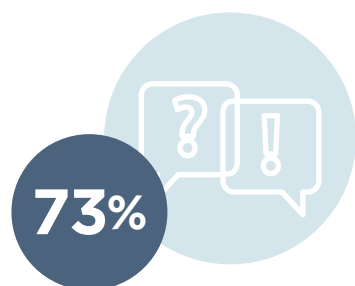


NEXT STEPS

These survey results underscore opportunities for health care providers and advocates to build patients' understanding of biosimilars.

More information on the fundamentals of all biological medicines could be useful. So, too, could more background on the rigor of the approval pathway. Responses also suggest that better defining the distinctions among biologics, biosimilars and interchangeable biosimilars could help boost patients' understanding.

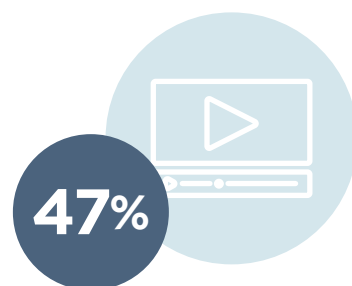
Survey responses indicate that patients are receptive to information specifically in the form of:



**IN-PERSON
CONVERSATIONS**



**WRITTEN
MATERIALS**



**VIDEOS VIEWABLE
ONLINE**

Health care providers might also interpret the survey findings as a reminder to not assume an understanding of biological medicines when discussing treatment options. Level-setting may need to be the first step in any conversation with patients.

As the survey makes clear, patients are open to learning more about biosimilars. **By embracing opportunities to educate, advocates and health care providers alike can bolster patients' understanding of all biological medicines, including how biosimilars continue to expand the range of life-changing treatment options.**

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

Male (35%) | Female (64%)
<18 (0%) | 18-29 (0%) | 30-44 (15%) | 45-60 (35%) | 60+ (50%)

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