



Enhancing user experience

Picture-based support manuals
Reaching illiterate patients
Patient-created communications

The challenge

In India alone, 70 million people struggle with diabetes – with around half that number remaining undiagnosed. One million people die every year for lack of treatment. For the makers of an insulin injector pen, there's an added challenge: illiteracy.

Many Indians living in rural areas simply can't decipher the information in manuals that show people how to use an insulin pen, preventing them from getting the treatment they need. The company needed to reach these illiterate people – often those in the greatest need.

Our approach

We assembled a local team of “health pioneers” in an online community – 250 Indian healthcare professionals, designers, educators, caregivers, and patients. The goal was to create a new user manual for the insulin pen, to specifically target illiterate diabetes patients in rural India.

We created a text-free set of instructions – to give people lots of information on the disease, from prevention to diagnosis.

The patients in the community offered crucial insights – and they did so almost immediately. They suggested that the brand provide a big-picture explanation of diabetes (because many people didn't know about the disease itself) and various steps to take to manage the disease. Patients also highlighted that technical illustrations were confusing, and that images of real people and simple cartoons were easier to follow.

The result

When a group of Indian diabetes patients received several designs, they rated the community-designed manuals “most relevant,” compared to others that were crafted by design professionals.

The company has distributed the manuals in hospitals and patient care centers across India.

Because of their patient-centric and visual nature, the new manuals have the potential to improve the quality of life for thousands of illiterate diabetes patients, and even save lives.