

Patient Voices: experiences of healthcare access in Asia



Health in Asia is advancing – life expectancy is rising, and healthcare systems are evolving. Yet for many, accessing care remains complex and costly. Patient Voices, a study by Economist Impact supported by Prudential, explores the experiences of patients across four Asian markets. It highlights the challenges they face and offers actionable insights to help shape a more transparent, worry and hassle-free healthcare journey that puts patients at the centre of it.

Before care starts

What people want

Factors that offer the greatest sense of support, confidence and peace of mind when seeking medical care.



Minimal disruptions to daily life when seeking care

35%

Being able to trust the medical advice and diagnosis

25%

Knowing that care is affordable and financially manageable

26%

Receiving clear and easy-to-understand medical information

24%

Being able to seek a second opinion about medical advice

26%

Knowing exactly where to go when I need care

24%

Having someone to support and guide throughout the process

25%

Medical facilities where I receive care being relatively easy to reach

24%

But when people believe these expectations won't be met, many delay care altogether

Around

80%

delay care sometimes or even several times

Why do people delay care?

Often, for reasons linked to family obligations, work responsibilities, emotional factors or cost-related concerns.

Burden to family (financial or care needs)

Family obligations

22%

Prioritising care of children over self

20%

Need to provide financially for family

19%

Sense of duty to work over self-care

Emotional barriers

19%

Enduring hardship is necessary

19%

Social stigma or embarrassment

16%

Avoiding bad news

16%

Previous bad experiences

Systemic distrust

20%

Lack of decision-making support

18%

Cost of care

Financial barriers

15%

Loss of income

14%

Symptoms not that severe

Low perceived need

20%

Starting the care journey

Finding healthcare is a hassle

55%

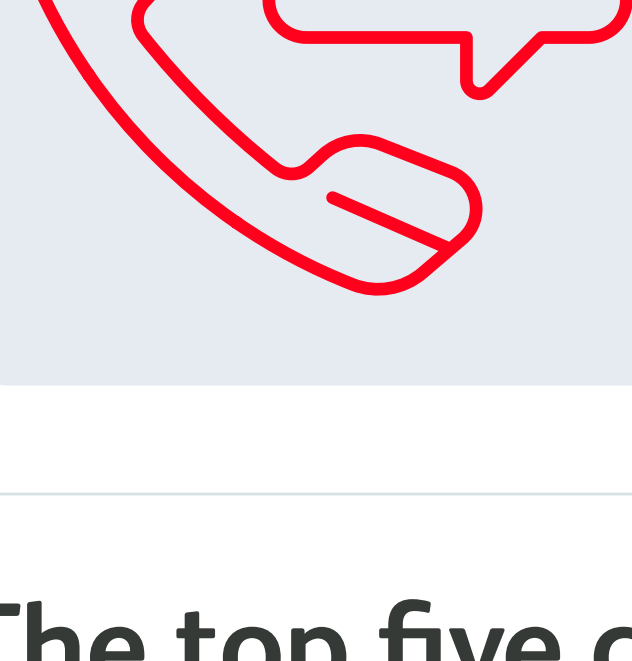
say they don't know where to access care when needed



Public health facility



Private health facility



When they do find healthcare, accessing it is inconvenient and slow

58%

describe difficulties booking a GP appointment and long wait times

The top five challenges faced by people seeking healthcare

20%

1 Unclear about how the cost of my care will be covered (e.g. government programmes, health insurance, vouchers)

20%

2 Healthcare facilities are too hard to reach by existing means of transport

19%

3 Lack of follow-up from healthcare providers

19%

4 Challenging or confusing bureaucracy (e.g. dealing with paperwork, insurance, billing, etc.)

19%

5 Unexpected or hidden costs make paying for medical care difficult.

While being cared for

People need help and guidance through a complex system

Complex paperwork makes healthcare frustrating.

People want help.

25%

need someone to guide them

People are looking for answers

Patients want clear information to guide their decisions.

55%

say they don't have the right information to make treatment decisions

54%

are discouraged from seeking second opinions



Where do people turn when things aren't clear?

38%

rely on digital sources

33%

rely on clinical guidance

12% Health forums or health websites

8% Social media

7% AI platforms

6% Internet searches

5% Health apps

15% From primary care doctors

14% From specialist healthcare professionals

5% From pharmacists

People want to know the costs upfront with no surprises

54%

worry that they won't be able to afford the care that they need

33%

say their costs were more than expected

52%

turn to informal safety nets like family, charity, loans and crowdfunding

26%

say knowing they can afford their healthcare gives them peace of mind

What can be done differently to improve patient experiences

Alleviating delay, confusion, cost shocks and information gaps

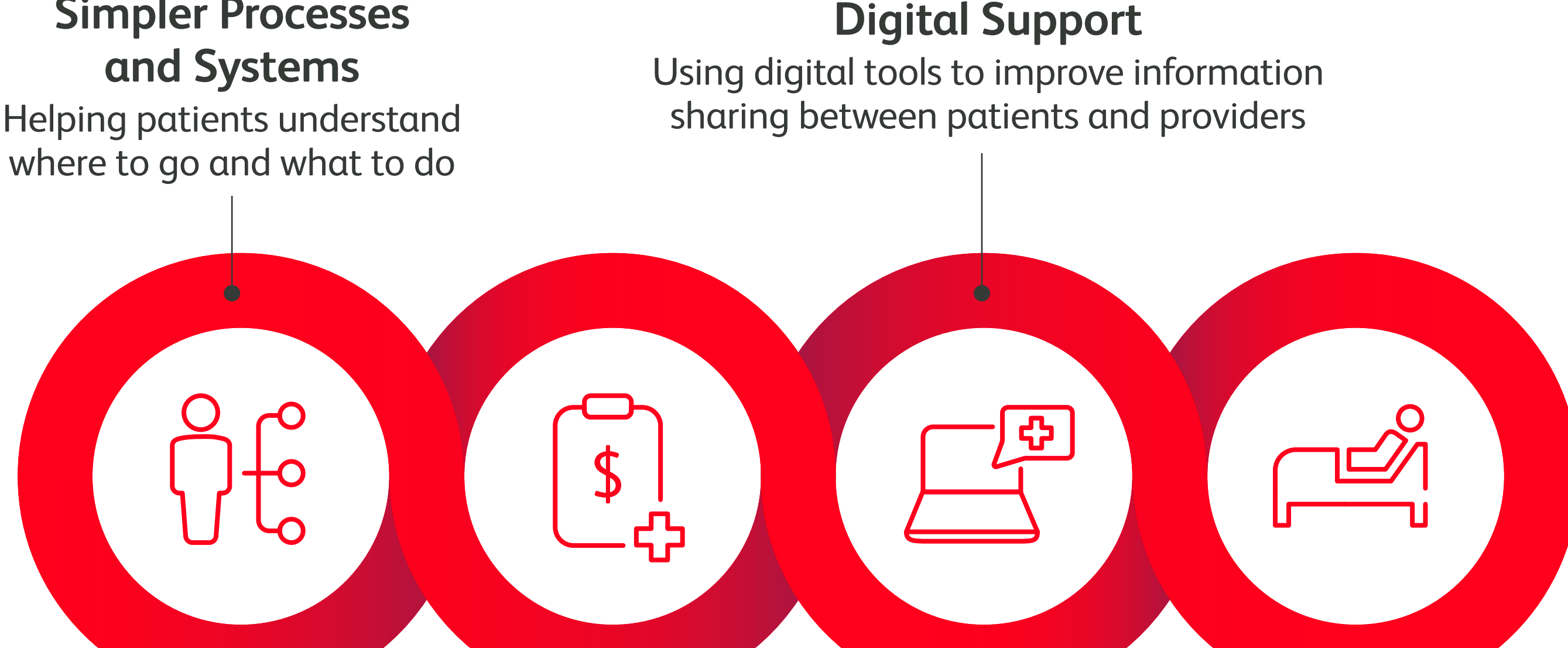
Tackling these barriers to healthcare is essential to meet the rising expectations of Asia's growing and ageing populations.

Simpler Processes and Systems

Helping patients understand where to go and what to do

Digital Support

Using digital tools to improve information sharing between patients and providers



Cost Transparency

Making the price of healthcare clear and predictable for patients

Patient-Centred Care

Making healthcare work for patients - and fit within their busy lives

The full report can be accessed [here](#)