Pioneer's Perspective

DTxDM EAST

Sept 25-26 | Boston, MA

Industry Expert Interview:

SANOFI VENTURES

Ruchita Sinha

Ruchita is Sr. Director of Investments at Sanofi Ventures, where she invests in biopharma and digital health opportunities. She holds an MBA from the University of Chicago, an MS in Cellular and Molecular Biology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a BS in Biochemistry from Mount Holyoke College. Ruchita has more than 15 years of healthcare experience in pharma, biotech, medical devices, and digital health.

The Digital Therapeutics & Digital Medicine industry is attracting more attention now than ever before - why do you think that is?

There were a number of developments in the past 18 months that have drawn a lot of attention to this space. First, Pear Therapeutics got FDA approval for their lead program in substance abuse and then announced a strategic agreement with Novartis Sandoz. Also, both Pear and Akili announced $50M+ financing rounds from top healthcare and biotech investors. The de-risking of the regulatory path via Pear's FDA approval has encouraged entrepreneurs, investors, and pharma companies to focus on the Digital Therapeutics space.

What are investors looking for from digital therapeutics and digital medicine companies during early discussions?

To a large extent, the discussions with DT/DM companies are very similar to those with biotech companies. It is very focused on the underlying science and existing data to indicate that proposed therapy will deliver appropriate efficacy and patient outcomes. Investors are looking for strong science and early data, in addition to validation of market need and thoughts on proposed business model.

Where do you see this industry in five years' time?

I expect DT/DM to be treated like traditional therapeutics in 5 years. There will be multiple FDA approved therapeutics on the market that will be reimbursed just like traditional therapeutics. DT/DM companies will have commercial partnerships with biopharma and/or health plans/self-insured employers based on their relevant business model. Physicians will be used to prescribing DT just like any other new therapeutic.

What conversations need to happen now, for the field to move forward?

Reimbursement is a big question that needs to happen to help move the industry forward – the industry will need to get clarity on whether payers will reimburse DT/DM like traditional therapeutics if they are able to show similar levels of efficacy and safety. There also needs to be continued discussions around whether DT/DM will need a dedicated regulatory pathway.

It's inspiring and important, to create greater diversity in the field of biotech. What advice would you give to people considering making a career in your sector?

The DT/DM world sits at the intersection of biology and technology, so there is a strong need for people from different professional, age, ethnic, and gender backgrounds.

The industry will benefit greatly from the diverse skill sets and perspectives that people from different backgrounds bring. Anyone interested in making a career in this sector should find mentors that they can work with to broaden their networks and set themselves up for success.

What do you plan to take away from the DTxDM East Summit?

Learnings from stakeholders in different parts of the industry, insights from deep discussions on key trends and issues, and lots of connections.

Ruchita will be sharing more of her perspectives at the DTxDM East Summit 2018 on Sept 25th-26th in Boston, MA. Ruchita will be joining Cris de Luca (Johnson & Johnson Innovation), Sasha Said (Leerink Transformation Partners) and John Spinale (Jazz Venture Partners) for an 'investment perspective" panel on Day 2.

You can find out more about DTxDM East, see who will be speaking and view the agenda by visiting www.dtxdmeast.com