The power of patient insights in modern healthcare

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User and patient insights

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The state of patient experience

Healthcare is in the middle of a transition, driven by advancements in med–tech and the care expectations of patients and their families.

In a 2023 survey conducted by Ipsos KnowledgePanel®, 95% of Americans rated patient experience as extremely or very important to their care. Despite this, large- and small-scale healthcare organizations still struggle to address barriers and gaps in care, affecting patient outcomes worldwide.

Delivering a quality patient experience is more than a good bedside manner—it's a blend of dedicated medical professionals, technological advancements, and a deep, data-driven understanding of patient feedback.

 At face value, the healthcare industry exists to improve health outcomes for the patients who require care.

But, to get the best results, healthcare organizations and providers must also deliver an exceptional patient experience along every touchpoint of the care journey, which is only possible by clearly understanding patients' specific needs, expectations, and barriers to care.

Understanding your patient data at scale—their experience as they navigate the care system, choose health plans, interact with staff, receive referrals, access online care portals, and the length of their wait times —are critical insights into improving their health outcomes.

In a 2013 systematic review of evidence connecting patient experience, clinical safety and effectiveness, patient experience was found to be one of the hallmarks of quality healthcare. Patient experience research helps address care gaps, improves adherence to clinical and medication recommendations, reduces missed diagnoses, and improves overall patient and provider well-being.

Barriers to better patient understanding

But, while it's clear over a decade later that research is overwhelmingly beneficial, there are significant barriers to creating a single source of truth for patient understanding, regardless of the size of the healthcare organization:

1. **Lack of support or direction:** Research efforts may stagnate without the entire team's support and buy-in. If leadership or stakeholders don't prioritize patient experience research, teams may struggle with unclear goals, limited resources, and poor alignment, resulting in slow progress or abandonment of projects.

2. **Time constraints:** Patient experience research can take months or even years of consistent work to yield meaningful insights. Without a long-term commitment, teams may find it difficult to sustain the research, leading to incomplete data, delayed decision-making, and missed opportunities to improve patient outcomes.

3. **Incorrect tools:** Using non-HIPAA-compliant tools for user research can increase manual labor and create unnecessary delays due to the need to anonymize the data after collecting it, drastically limiting scalability. Tools like survey platforms, social media analytics, and email marketing services may inadvertently fail to meet privacy standards, risking non-compliance violation fines.

4. **Maintaining patient privacy:** The risk of violating privacy laws can prevent companies from building a scalable research repository. It's not only a legal and ethical issue but an operational, risk management, and technical challenge that demands embedding privacy into daily activities and implementing the proper technical infrastructure.

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The fear of violating patient privacy legislation dissuades companies from building robust, scalable user research efforts. Patient privacy and adherence to HIPAA compliance are at the forefront of all our research efforts. While these regulations are essential for protecting patients, they can also act as a double-edged sword, creating barriers to segmentation analysis and deeper insights. For early-stage startups that prioritize amplifying the patient's voice, HIPAA compliance can also present significant budgetary and operational challenges.

Izzy Obieta, **Avela Health, Director of Product**

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Patient experience is the lifeblood of effective, accessible care

Why patient experience drives accessible care

Patient experience is becoming more of a priority for healthcare organizations and companies. Still, research shows plenty of work ahead to meet patient expectations fully.

According to The Beryl Institute's *State of Patient Experience* report (2021), 64% of American healthcare organizations are investing in patient experience with an emphasis on improving the quality, safety, and availability of care. And, while general understanding and buy-in about the benefits of patient experience research is rising, their more recent survey findings show why this work is so critical to continue.

According to survey findings published in the 2023 Q3 issue of The Beryl Institute - *Ipsos PX Pulse*, 95% of Americans surveyed in June 2023 rated having a good patient experience as 'extremely important' or 'very important' in their care. Still, only 62% rated their most recent care experience as "good" or "very good."

Healthcare orgs that can close this gap between expectations and experience will gain a significant competitive edge.

Only **62%** rated their most recent care experience as "good" or "very good."

The Beryl Institute - *Ipsos PX Pulse*

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Eucalyptus' success with Dovetail for patient-centric care.

Eucalyptus uses Dovetail's AI-powered customer insight hub to scale customer understanding across its five digital clinics.

By speeding up gathering and discovering insights, Eucalyptus ensures that multiple teams—such as product, marketing, and medical—can readily access and use this data to shape their strategies. This centralization helps them continuously improve customer experiences and create targeted solutions for men's health, skincare, and fertility. Collaboration and genuine empathy for the end users (patients and customers) come naturally when everyone has quick access to these insights.

> "
> **The biggest role is actually being a centralized place for all our research that we are conducting.**
>
> Lyena Fi, **Senior Product Manager, Eucalyptus**

Leveraging real–time insights to align with patient needs

Improving patient experience starts with clearly defined research objectives, such as revealing common problems, pain points, and care gaps.

One essential best practice involves completing a patient journey map detailing the care experience as people navigate between different providers and platforms.

Six commonly tracked health outcomes help objectively measure a facility's level of care. Collected through surveys, interviews, stat analysis, and live patient feedback sessions, these six outcomes should play a foundational role in how a healthcare organization identifies potential weak points in its existing patient care journey:

1. **Mortality rates**

2. **Safety of care**

3. **Reducing readmissions**

4. **Patient–reported outcomes**

5. **Care effectiveness**

6. **Wait time reduction**

When collected correctly and regularly, this data, combined with insights into the overall patient experience at the care facility, offers significant advantages beyond patient-first care. By incorporating real–time UX metrics, healthcare organizations can identify operational inefficiencies early—before they escalate into costlier issues.

As one expert explains:

"For healthcare technology, I often combine observation metrics (e.g., time-on-task, rage-click rate) with perception metrics (e.g., usefulness, satisfaction), leveraging the flexibility of synchronous and asynchronous user interactions."

Maegan Pisman, PhD, Behavior Scientist | UX researcher | Product Strategist, imbueity LLC

These insights help organizations detect micro-level issues that, when fixed, lead to more substantial operational improvements.

These efforts extend into strategic business advantages, such as:

- **Lower operational costs:** Using customer insights to enhance patient experience can decrease operational costs and avoid unexpected expenses related to patient drop-offs and malpractice errors.

- **Improved reputation:** A better patient experience leads to higher satisfaction, increasing the likelihood of patient referrals. This boosts the facility's reputation for high-quality service and drives word-of-mouth marketing.

- **Better performance:** By tracking the experiences patients are having, you gain insight into how your team is performing. This direct view of performance helps pinpoint areas for improvement—whether it's enhancing patient satisfaction, identifying training opportunities, or retaining skilled staff.

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Using Dovetail, I've captured real-time insights from transcripts and patient quotes, illuminating the pain points our patients experience. By applying the Jobs-to-be-Done framework alongside patient mindsets, I've distilled what our patients truly need from us [...] moving beyond assumptions to address their priorities directly. Sharing these insights has also helped our team reconnect with the purpose behind our work, fostering empathy and reminding us why we're dedicated to making a meaningful difference in patients' lives.

Izzy Obieta, **Avela Health, Director of Product**

HIPAA compliance and management essentials

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Taking patient research beyond surveys

Collecting data safely and securely is high stakes but entirely possible

Prioritizing privacy in patient research

Aside from collecting, categorizing, and analyzing potentially millions of data points, healthcare research is innately complex due to the need to safeguard personal health information and comply with strict patient privacy laws.

Patient privacy goes beyond "the right thing to do" for healthcare companies. It's a legal and ethical requirement. Non-compliance can lead to severe financial penalties.

As such, all patient experience research must prioritize patient privacy to maintain trust and mitigate the risk of reputational and financial damage.

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Avoiding costly breaches: the cost of non-compliance

In 2023, a record 725 large-scale privacy breaches occurred across the U.S., compromising millions of Americans' confidential health data. (That's twice the rate of healthcare data breaches in 2018).

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Civil Rights issued healthcare companies $4.1M in fines for 2023 due to HIPAA Security Rule Violations, Right of Access, and Unauthorized Access and Disclosure.

Essential takeaways:

⚠ Prevent unauthorized access to protected health information (PHI) and sensitive data.

▤ Implement an effective HIPAA compliance program.

🔍 Collect data and analyze patient insights only with HIPAA-compliant tools.

Best practices for HIPAA compliance and patient information

Any data containing personally identifying information (PII) must be safeguarded.

Releasing any of these 18 identifiers outlined in the HIPAA Safe Harbor Act requires consent:

- Patient names
- All geographic subdivisions smaller than State (address, city, county, zip code, etc.)
- All elements of dates (excluding year) related to the person (birthdate, admission/ discharge date, etc.)
- Phone numbers
- Fax numbers

- Email addresses
- Social security numbers
- Medical records numbers
- Health plan beneficiary numbers
- Account numbers
- Certificate/license numbers
- Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers

- Device identifiers and serial numbers
- Web universal resource locators (URLs)
- Internet protocol (IP) address numbers
- Biometric identifiers (fingerprints, voice records, etc.)
- Full face photographic images
- Any unique identifying numbers, characteristics, or codes

Due to the increased risk of data breaches and hacking, working with PII in electronic personal health information (ePHI), such as digital medical records, images, and virtual communication about patient care, storing or transferring data demands heightened vigilance, including:

Administrative safeguards
Regular workforce training, security personnel, information access management, and ongoing evaluation of security practices.

Physical safeguards
Limiting access to facilities, workspace and equipment security, password management, and policies for the transfer, disposal, and removal of ePHI.

Technical safeguards
Assessing transmission security, auditing hardware and software, and personnel authorization for clearance.

To facilitate these safeguards (and to maintain the privacy of all patients and avoid costly fines), healthcare organizations need to have the following things in place to meet HIPAA compliance:

- ✓ Written procedures and policies that establish privacy policies and ethical conduct
- ✓ A HIPAA compliance committee and compliance officer
- ✓ HIPAA training and education opportunities for all employees
- ✓ Organization-wide compliance monitoring and routine audits
- ✓ Transparent lines of communication, both within and outside the organization
- ✓ Disciplinary guidelines for HIPAA violations
- ✓ Tools that help manage right access
- ✓ A crisis response plan for managing privacy breaches
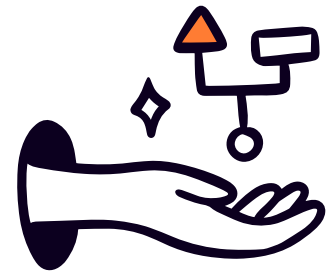
Balancing efficiency and patient safety

Due to the steep cost of mistakes and breaches, healthcare researchers need to play it smart when picking resources to improve their research efforts — which is where HIPAA-compliant tools that use artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning come into play.

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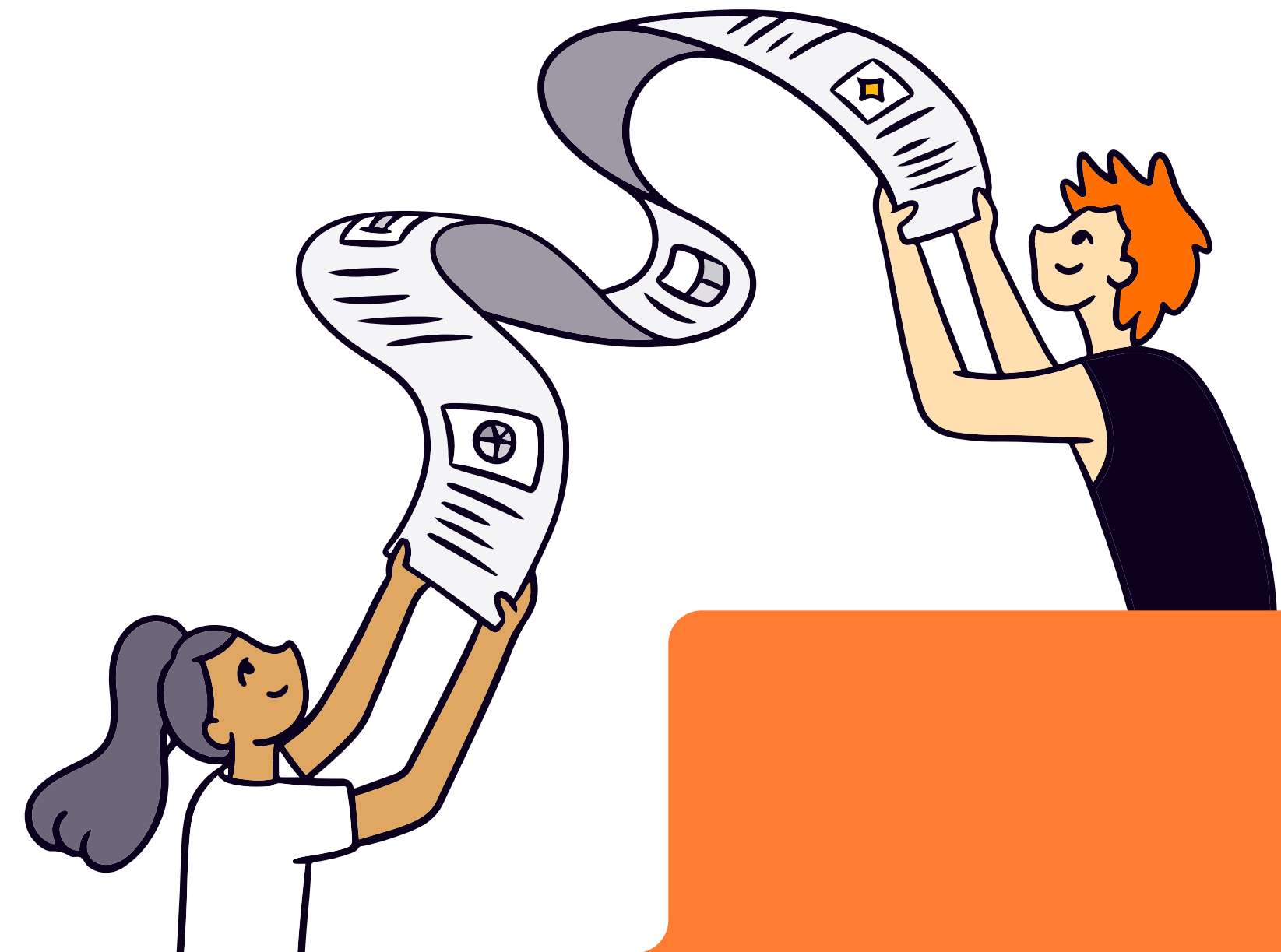
HIPAA and related Protected Health Information (PHI) rules dominate patient privacy. This makes it imperative to anonymize research findings and aggregate or generalize data to prevent inadvertent identification. Ideally, patient identifiers should be coded.

In Dovetail transcripts, this is straightforward, as you can assign code names to speakers and keep the key to these codes securely outside of Dovetail. The platform also allows video and audio to be selectively redacted.

Each company must establish clear policies and security regarding who can access identifiable patient feedback, ensuring that only anonymized and aggregated data appears in more widely available internal reports.

Bill Evans, **Neptune Medical, VP of Industrial Design and UX Research**

The impact of AI in patient research

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Accelerating research and patient insights with AI

Nowadays, AI and machine learning tools are at the fore of most healthcare and user research projects.

Enhancing patient experience and efficiency through AI tools

According to a recent Morgan Stanley survey, 94% of healthcare companies already use AI to iterate on and improve their products and services.

A recent Polaris Market Research study predicts that reliance and use cases for AI tools in medicine will only increase, with healthcare AI expected to become a $431B industry by 2032.

AI is a powerful tool not only for tackling the busy work that comes with long-term, large-scale patient experience research but also for identifying improvement opportunities.

HIPAA-compliant AI tools can create detailed patient experience data reports that:

- **Spot trends and patterns as they emerge:** Uncover patient feedback trends in near real-time to help tackle and resolve issues as quickly as possible.

- **Identify areas of improvement:** Streamline tasks, communication channels, and amenity options to best serve patients and their families.

- **Foster patient-centricity:** Help care teams understand the patient journey and provide tailored training.

However, you can't just use any AI tool to get all these benefits. You need a provider that understands the sensitive nature of healthcare data.

And that's where Dovetail fits into the equation.

Dovetail for healthcare user research

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Deeply understanding your patients' 🎭 needs and experiences leads to improved health outcomes

Dovetail can help with that

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Unlock powerful patient insights with Dovetail

HIPAA ready

By implementing strict access controls, default data export restrictions, and secure agreements, Dovetail makes HIPAA compliance straightforward and effective. Security and regulatory alignment for handling electronic protected health information (ePHI), includes:

Default disabling of CSV and video exports

Exporting CSV files and downloading video files are both disabled by default to prevent unauthorized distribution or misuse of data. This step minimizes the risk of inadvertently sharing sensitive information outside of approved channels.

Restricted public access and sharing

Public access and sharing of insights are also disabled by default. This ensures that only authorized personnel within a closed network can access ePHI, safeguarding data privacy.

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Enforced authentication standards

Single Sign-On (SSO) with email and password authentication disabled by default adds an additional layer of security by ensuring only verified users have access. This helps streamline user verification while complying with HIPAA's technical safeguard requirements.

BAA agreements with sub-processors

All sub-processors handling ePHI sign a Business Associate Agreement (BAA) with the company, ensuring all parties adhere to HIPAA regulations and maintain strict data security measures. This agreement extends HIPAA's legal protections to any third parties involved in data processing.
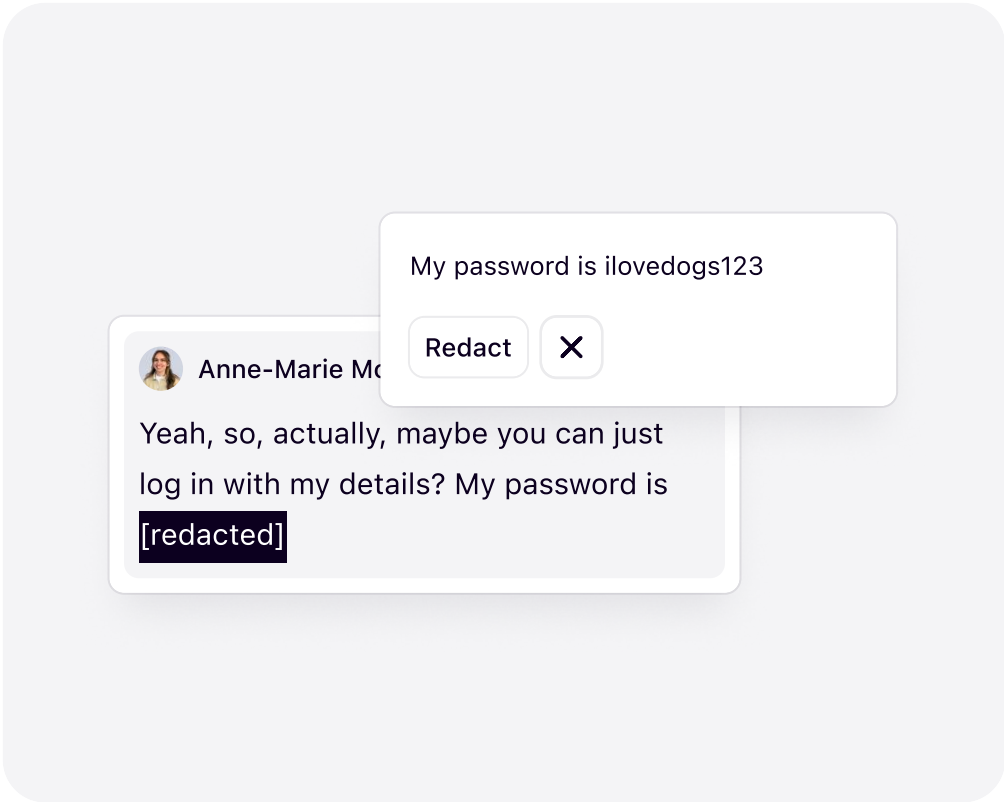
Option for customers to enter a BAA

Customers also have the option to enter into a BAA with Dovetail, ensuring both parties agree to uphold HIPAA's stringent data protection requirements and reinforcing legal accountability on both sides.

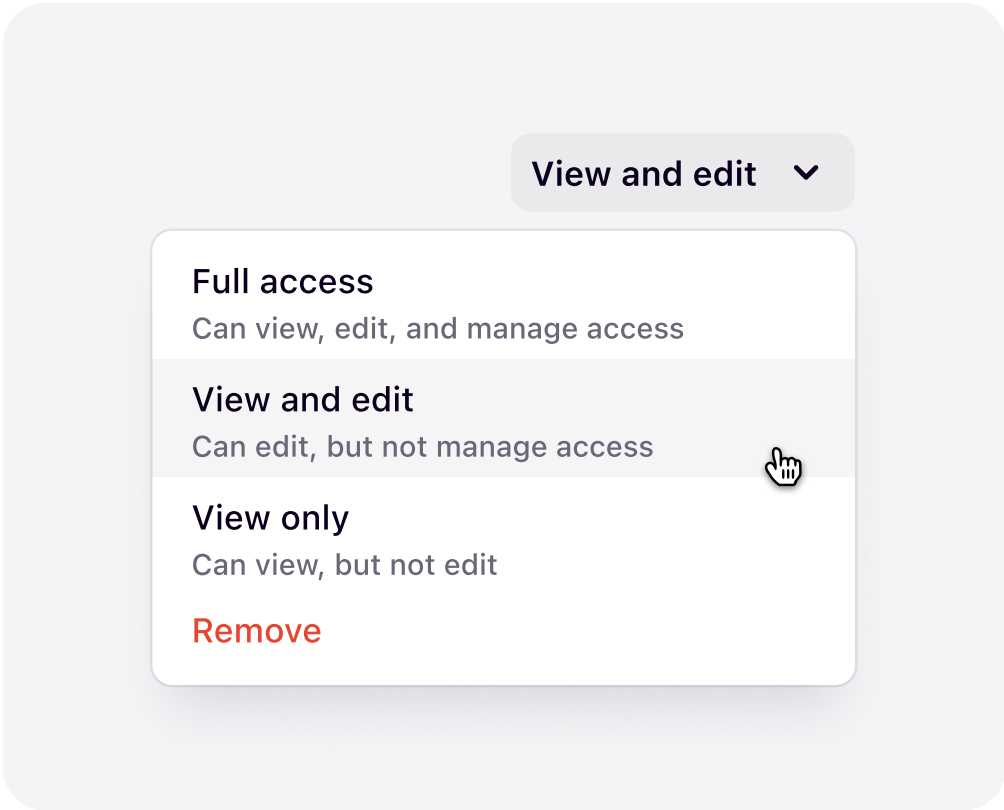# Get the full lowdown on our HIPAA offering here
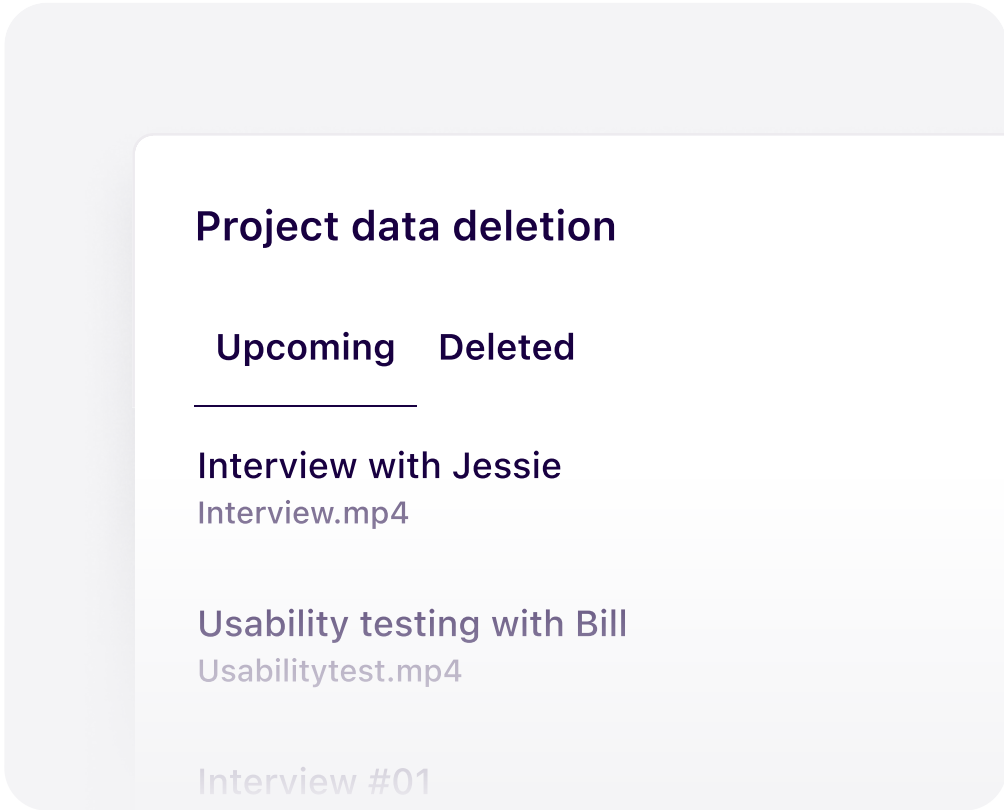
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Where features meet impact

Magic redact

Share patient feedback while protecting sensitive data. Blur or remove sections of patient interviews before sharing highlight reels so stakeholders across the org can hear feedback directly from the source.


Access control

Manage who can access what across all levels, from projects to folders. Lock projects by granting or restricting specific team members' access. Easily manage permissions across teams and departments by setting permissions with user groups.

Custom data retention

Meet your data retention requirements by managing it across the entire Dovetail customer insights hub with the option to customize retention to specific projects. Specify the retention period (for instance, one year), and your raw patient data will automatically be deleted after that time (all while keeping your interview highlight reels).
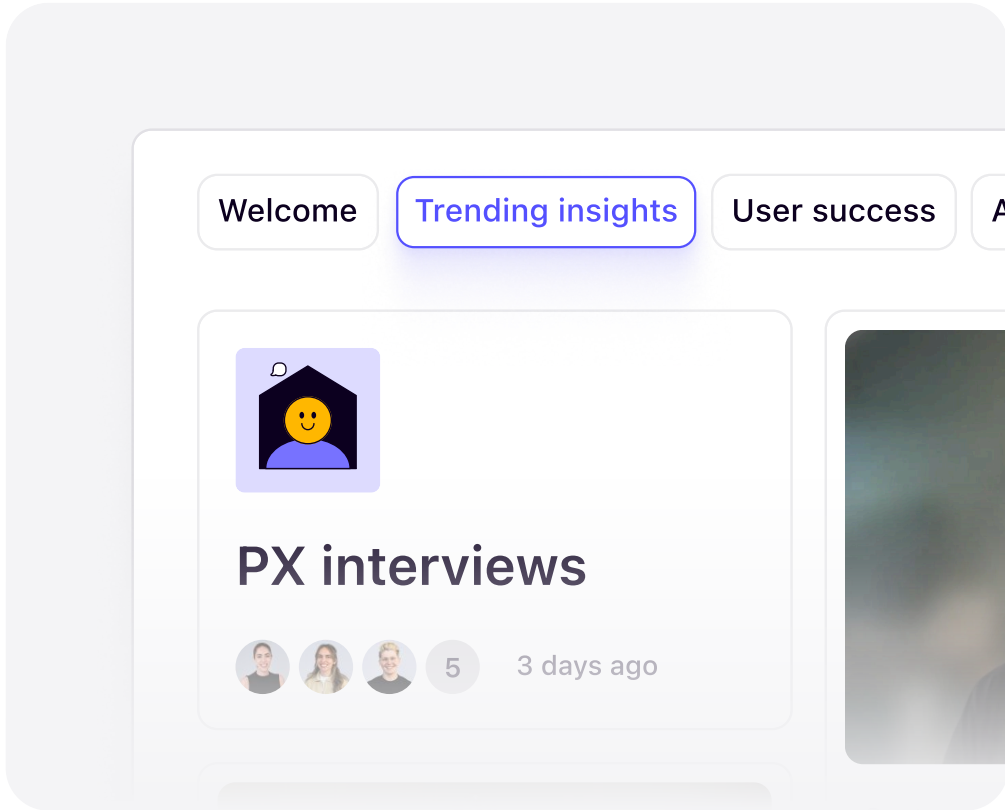
Insights repository

Quickly surface patient insights across various teams and keep that knowledge up to the minute. Share insights with stakeholders to bring everyone closer to the patient experience.

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Dovetail × HealthMatch

Using Dovetail to put customer understanding first for the whole team

Connecting eligible people with the proper clinical trials in their area has always been challenging. Since 2017, HealthMatch has made access to life-changing treatments and medications a reality for over 1.3 million patients.

HealthMatch can now *show* instead of tell their team freshly surfaced insights in a HIPAA-compliant manner, using Dovetail's security features for managing PHI, which include advanced restrictions on sharing, access, and data exporting. AI-powered Magic redact prevents accidentally sharing users' private details.

"

I can just pull out a clip from one of the interviews we had, and instead of describing what we talked about, I can just show the team. They can watch the body language and hear the frustration in their voices, and really build up the empathy for the customer in that situation.

Joel Pinkham, **VP of Growth and Strategic Projects, HealthMatch**

Dovetail × careship

> **Dovetail enables us to make use of research data even while the study is still running. This allows us to turn insights into actionable advice without a time lag. As a startup in a quickly changing market this is a strong competitive advantage.**
>
> Anne Büttner, **UXR, Careship**
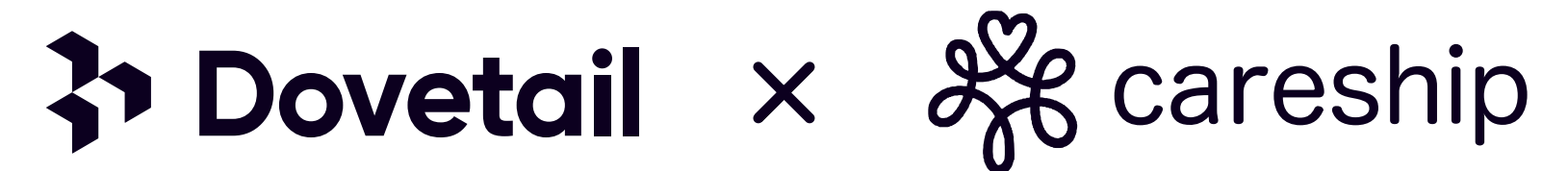
Careship stands out from the crowd by striving to change the way patient care is provided to patients across Europe.

But how does Careship maintain its competitive edge? By encouraging all 100+ employees to engage with user insights. Aiming to become "the largest and most used platform for care booking in Europe," Careship has lofty goals and expectations for company growth.

To make these goals a reality, focusing on user insights is the best path forward—which is why they use Dovetail. Integrating user insights into every stage of product development, Dovetail was the clear choice for Careship employees. Careship encourages all employees to use Dovetail to foster a stronger understanding of customer needs at every company level, from prototyping to usability testing.

After nearly doubling in size over the past six months, Careship is well into transitioning from small to medium-sized business. Powered by actionable and accurate customer insights, all collected, stored, and analyzed in Dovetail, this team meets and exceeds its goals across multiple metrics.

The future of healthcare: discoverable insights that drive outcomes

Modern medicine is nothing short of miraculous.

From improved diagnostics tools to innovative and personalized treatment regimens, healthcare companies and organizations are redefining how patients and their families receive life-changing medical care.

Through this transition, paying attention to user and patient experience has never been more important—and companies and healthcare organizations who understand this are positioning themselves for success.

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> **When forward-thinking healthcare companies invest in a culture that values listening to and acting on customer and user needs, it tends to result in consistent, market-winning products…VOC-centric (Voice of Customer) culture becomes part of a winning brand strategy.**
>
> **Customers who weren't even involved in user research exercises begin to notice that the issues they faced with a first-generation product are resolved in subsequent iterations in ways that resonate with their experiences—making them feel that the brand 'gets them.'**

Bill Evans, **Neptune Medical, VP of Industrial Design and UX Research**

Unlocking the potential of patient research and personalization

User research is the key that unlocks improved patient experience.

By leveraging HIPAA-compliant, time-saving technology, healthcare organizations can streamline and speed up their research approach, resulting in more effective care strategies. Personalization has become a core expectation of effective patient care, and the only way researchers can keep up with this demand is by connecting with and learning from existing patients.

By prioritizing patient research and personalization, healthcare organizations can:

- ⊘ Improve patient experience

- ⊘ Understand the full range of patient needs

- ⊘ Identify barriers to accessible care early

Patient insights are the key to improved health outcomes. According to data from a 2016 Forrester report, *The Six Steps For Justifying Better UX*, every $1 invested in customer understanding can yield a $100 return.[1] This underscores the value of patient insights in driving better outcomes for both patients and healthcare providers.

[1] The Six Steps For Justifying Better UX | Forrester

How Dovetail empowers healthcare organizations

Trusted by healthcare juggernauts like Eucalyptus and Mayo Clinic, Dovetail is your go-to platform for collecting, storing, and sharing insights organization-wide.

By centralizing research data, Dovetail enables healthcare teams to reach informed product decisions, grow their business, and ensure the highest quality patient care.

MAYO CLINIC

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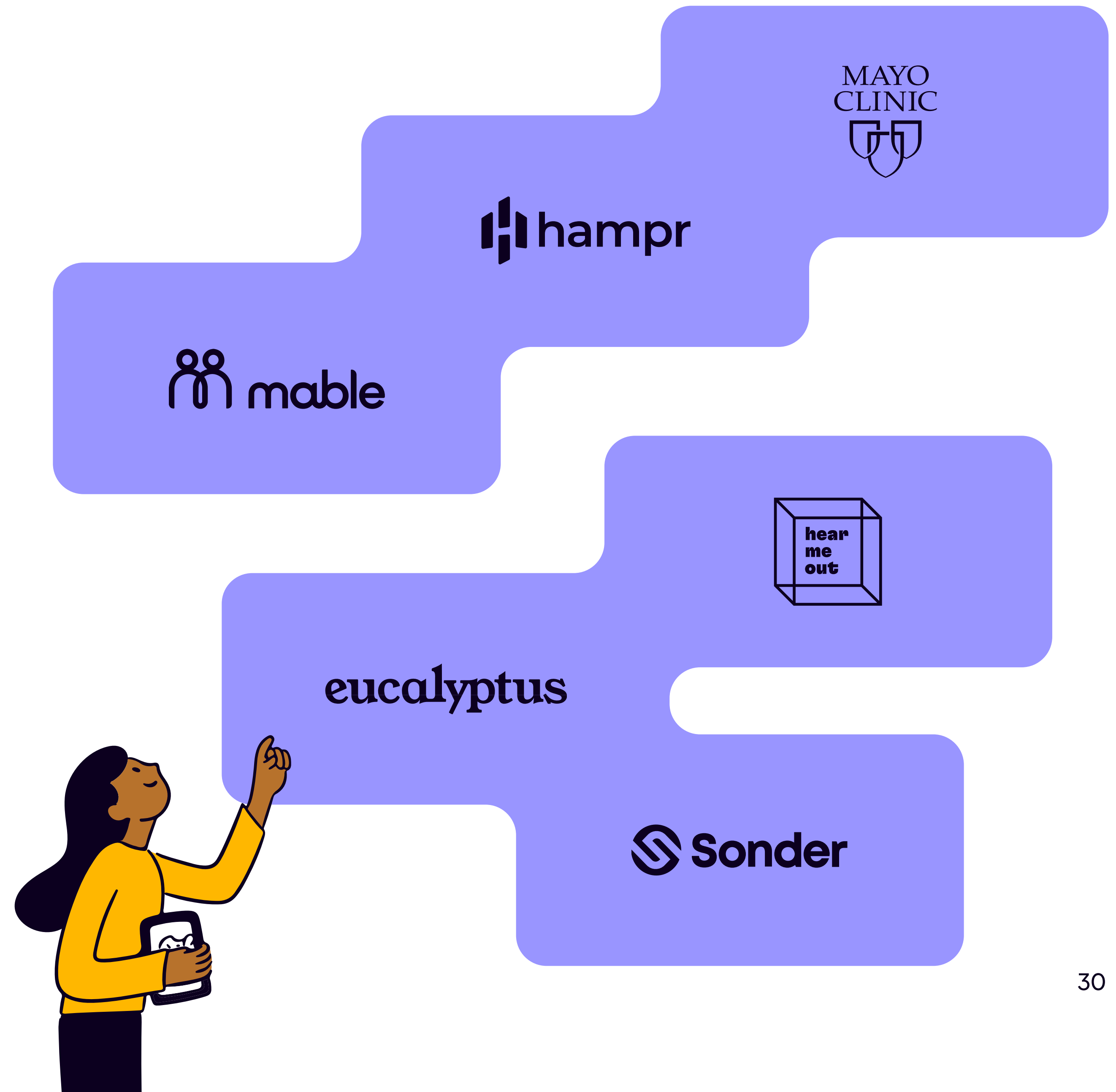
Drive patient-centered healthcare outcomes

Streamline research, uncover insights faster, and scale your patient experience strategy.

Request a demo

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