



App offers new hope for breast cancer survivors

By MELISSA NAZARETH

THE pilot launch of an app, which streamlines care for patients after they have been discharged from hospital, is offering new hope for breast cancer survivors and their families in Bahrain.

Team Patient is a patient-centred app by Solutionize, a US-based digital health and collaboration software company, that has joined hands with Think Pink: Bahrain Breast Cancer Society, a home-grown, non-profit organisation, to stage the programme.

The idea that inspired the project is that most patients, once discharged, must balance aftercare and daily life with little to no help, which can be overwhelming.

The app makes this process easier, allowing the user to create multiple groups that could include family members and medical professionals who can offer guidance and encouragement. Other features include the ability to set tasks, organise hospital appointments, upload medical records, and type chat with group members, all enabling seamless aftercare in real-time.

The data is owned by the patients so they have the option of what to share and with whom in the sanctity of Team Patient and its team members, which are all chosen by the patients; they could include healthcare network teams, family, friends and caregivers, or even faith-based groups and community-based

organisations, who might want to offer support.

"Through the pilot launch, we want to understand the local needs and sensitivities, and also ensure a service infrastructure that can provide patients discharged to the home or community with a standard of care equivalent to that they receive when inpatients," said Solutionize chief executive Peter Watts, who co-founded the company with president Alelie Llapitan.

"A major goal for this region is to support all breast cancer patients, from diagnosis to the early months after discharge, which is the period of major disruption. The doctors and professionals take care of the cancer and related health. We help manage all the aspects of the journey – record keeping, team support, logistics, co-ordination and adherence," he added.

Solutionize was selected as the 'Patient-centered healthcare company of the year' for 2025 by Healthcare Tech Outlook, a US-based platform.

Breast cancer studies published in the US National Library of Medicine show that improving the patient experience – especially adherence, which is best supported by teams 'in the community' – improves outcomes and reduces risks such as rehospitalisation, Mr Watts highlighted.

Adherence or patient compliance is the degree to which a person correctly follows medical advice especially for medication.



■ A representational image showing community care and support for breast cancer

Breast cancer, a disease in which abnormal breast cells grow out of control and form tumours, is the most common cancer with around 2.3 million new cases every year and 670,000 deaths globally.

"Our patients, as many globally, struggle with understanding their own unique pathway from diagnosis, to treatment and recovery. This is something that we have campaigned for over the last 21 years so, by empowering the patient, we can provide the correct links and have them on board the relevant teams appropriate to and for them," Think Pink founder and president Dr Julie Sprakel, who has a PhD in patient-centred care, noted.

"We have a group of patients in Bahrain who have been on boarded and are trying the platform. Our Arabic speaking board members have been trained to buddy with them for support – their feedback is key. From here we will open it up via an international webinar which will be scheduled (at a later date), and translated into Arabic," she added.

The app was first used by can-

cer patients in 2016; the longest user has been five-plus years, a Leukemia patient with a complex journey involving both medical and mental health issues.

"This is the first overseas initiative for Team Patient. We have big plans for the region stimulated by the emergence of women's health in general, specifically, the predisposition

of Arab women for breast cancer, and Dr Sprakel's interest in partnering beyond Bahrain upon success," Mr Watts said.

There are mid-term plans to integrate the app into the local public health system, in collaboration with the Health Ministry.

Team Patient is also being used in other areas such as substance use, geriatric care,

autism, mental health, general wellness and more.

While there have been many studies over the years indicating that breast cancer is the most common form of malignancy among women worldwide, Arab women are at a higher risk due to late detection and lack of proper treatment.

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Bygone Bahrain



■ NOVEMBER 1974: Information Minister Tariq Almoayed looks around the library ship, the Logos, accompanied by the Captain, George Paget.

A nostalgic trip through the GDN and Gulf Mirror archives



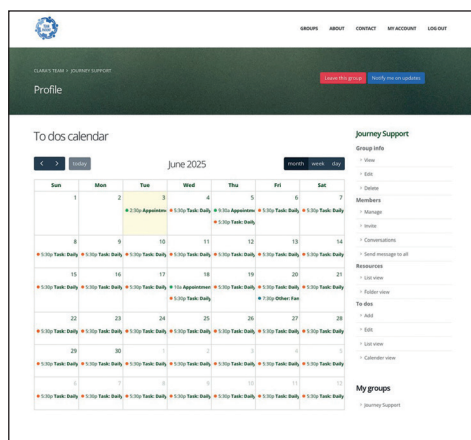
Quick Quiz

1. How many legs does a shrimp have?
2. For what prehistoric art forms are Lascaux and Chauvet in France and Altamira in Spain famous?
3. John Lithgow has been cast

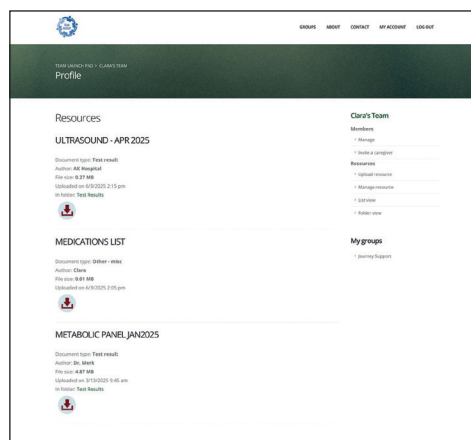
- as which professor for a Harry Potter TV series?
4. What provides the main flavour in an aioli sauce?
5. Dakar is the capital city of which African country?

ANSWERS

1. Ten
2. Cave paintings
3. Albus Dumbledore
4. Garlic
5. Senegal



■ In-app calendar showing appointments and tasks



■ Medical records uploaded on the app recorded chronologically