Needfinding

Understanding Voice-First Daily Companion

Malisha Lutchmeea

Min Jung

Meet the team!

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Mauritius

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Symbolic Systems (HCI) & Art
Queens, NY

Problem Domain

Problem

- 50% of Americans on prescription medications **don't take them correctly,** leading to 125,000 preventable deaths and over $100 billion in healthcare costs annually

Why is this important ?

- Patients face daily anxiety not knowing if they've already taken their medication, leading to **skipped doses or double-dosing**
- **Gap**: Existing solutions like pill organizers and basic reminder apps don't address the real-time confusion patients face: "Did I already take this?" or "Was this supposed to be with food?"

Proposed Solution

- **Voice-enabled medication tracking companion** with proactive support
- Uses **conversational AI for quick queries**
  - Patients ask "Did I already take my pills today?" and get immediate answers without second-guessing
- **Voice + visual notifications** guide patients through complex schedules
  - Ex. morning thyroid pill before coffee, evening blood pressure pill with dinner

Interview Methodology

Recruiting Process

- Recruited via **finding people in-context** and **cold-emailing**
- Prioritized **diverse group of background** (pre-med student, stay-at-home pregnant mother, remote working lawyer, pharmacist)

Domain Expert and Extreme User

- **Pharmacist**: legally licensed professional to counsel patients on how to fit medication and health routines into their daily lives
- **Pre-med student**: strong reliance on voice tech to manage demanding school work

Procedure

- Conducted **4 non-compensated** interviews **in-person** in a cafe in university avenue
  - each member alternated between being an interviewer and note taker
  - used recording/transcribing tool on iPhone

Interview Questions

Background Information

Ex) name, age, gender, current status of employment, household members

Daily Routine

Ex) Can you walk me through a typical weekday morning and evening routine?

Current Usage of Voice-AI Assistants

Ex) Do you use any voice assistants (e.g. Alexa, Siri, Google Assistant)?

Health Condition and Medication

Ex) Do you take any medications, vitamins, or supplements? If so, how do you manage them?

Pregnant mother Tia

- 30 years old
- Female
- Nail tech
- Lives with husband and a young daughter

Says

"We do have a calendar... I always refer to that daily." "Even the calendar on my phone, I have alerts set."

David

About her daily routine: "Normally it starts by her waking us up. I usually get breakfast started by 8, 8:30."

David

"I'm not someone that's super into, like, AI and stuff, but I do use, like, reminders on my phone."

David

"Something I wish I don't have to think about? Dinner. Dinner could be done for me on a daily basis."

David

"Nighttime would be a little chaotic for me... I'm carrying two babies... my body's constantly going... by the nighttime, I'm pretty maxed out."

David

"No, not really... I don't think I ever really got into that." (on voice assistants)

David

"She has a gummy vitamin. So daily, she's like, 'Oh, can I have my vitamin?' So it reminds me, oh, I have to take mine."

David

"Probably dinner." (when asked what she'd want a personal assistant for)

David

"I do enjoy making dinner, but it's just figuring out what to make, and if we have everything for it."

David

"There were a couple times I forgot to, like, brush her teeth."

David

Thinks

Considers herself in good health despite pregnancy

David

Believes physical reminders are more effective than digital ones

David

Thinks small inconveniences (like cleaning up after the puppy or forgetting groceries) can derail her whole day.

David

Thinks dinner planning is the hardest part of the day

David

Thinks it would be easier if someone could walk her through recipes step by step.

David

Believes it's safer to skip vitamins or medications if she's unsure she already took them.

David

Does

Cares for daughter and puppy

David

Uses physical calendar as well as digital reminders

David

Walks the dog when it's not too hot outside

David

Takes vitamins daily, remembers to take them when daughter asks for gummies

David

Sometimes forgets to do skincare, bible reading, or daughter's routine tasks

David

Prepares breakfast around 8–8:30.

Cooks dinner in the evening

David

Uses grocery list and recurring alerts on her phone

David

Sometimes goes to the gym, though pregnancy changes this routine

David

Feels

Exhausted at night

David

Feels drained physically and mentally due to pregnancy

David

Stressed or overwhelmed about having to make dinner decisions, despite enjoying cooking itself

David

frustrated when small inconveniences interrupt her day

David

Feels chaotic when routines don't go smoothly

David

Uninterested in AI

David

Says

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Reflection

Key Insights

- **Decision fatigue** is a bigger barrier than action, especially in regards to dinner
- **Evenings** are a bottleneck in terms of mental energy and ability to complete routines and tasks
- Reminders **tied to people or visuals** are more effective than a simple digital notification
- She wants **guidance**, not just prompts.

Key Needs

- A system that...
  - alleviates decision fatigue by automating repeated decisions and **limiting options**
  - makes **night-time tasks more feasible** and rewarding
  - incorporates **visual aspects** in reminders for intuitive and straightforward guidance

Pre-med student Natalie M.

- 21-years-old
- Female
- Full-time student at Stanford
- lives in a dorm with a roommate
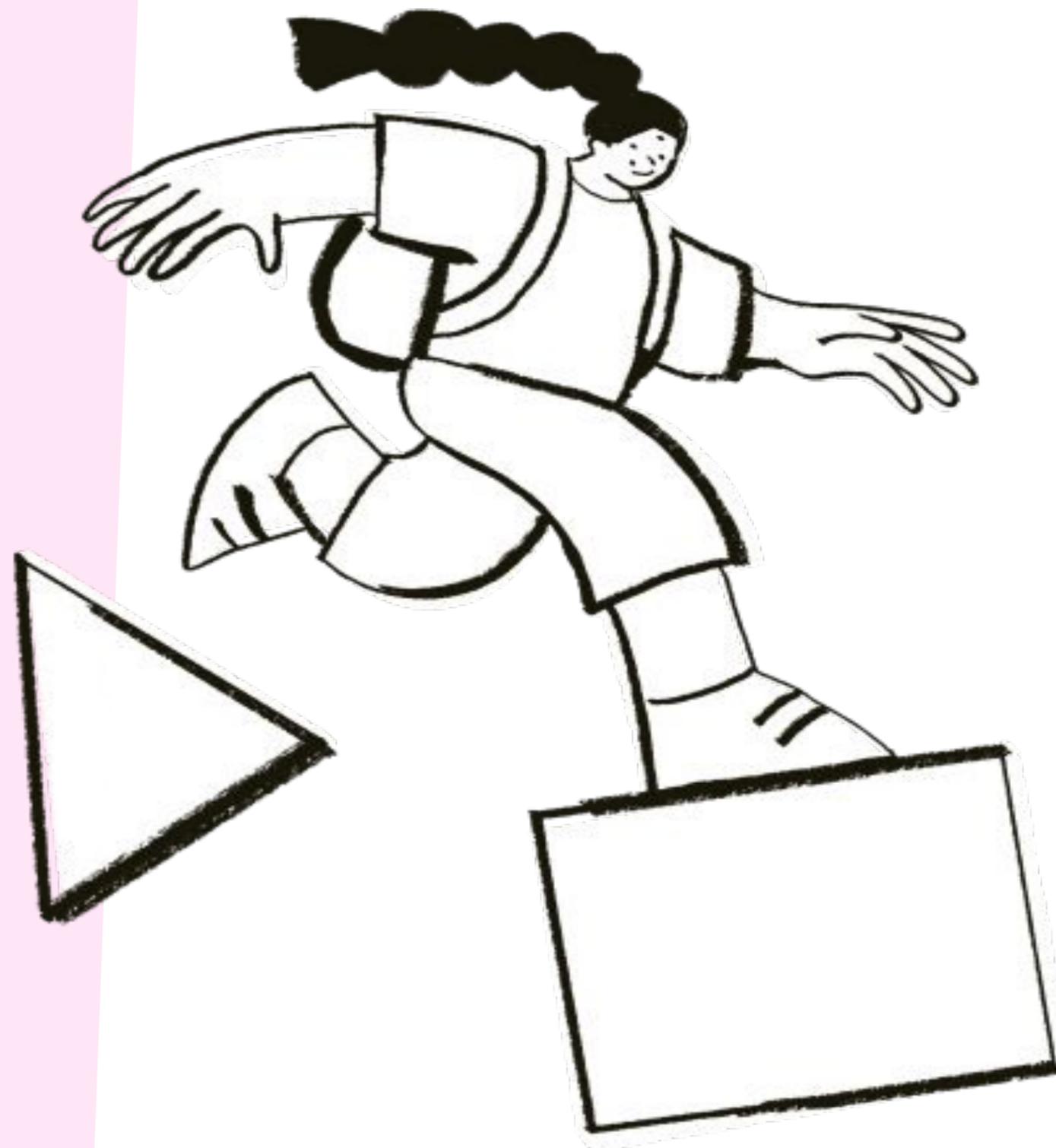
Says

Takes supplements and vitamins only "when I remember"

minj050403@gmail.com

Wishes for a personal assistant to "write down my schedule for me every day"

minj050403@gmail.com

For critical prescription medication, she exclusively uses her phone's basic alarm app set for 9 PM daily

minj050403@gmail.com

Typically doesn't notice a need for a refill until the supply is "very low," leaving her with only three or four days left

minj050403@gmail.com

Prefers "digital, because my phone is just always on me." in terms of effective reminders

minj050403@gmail.com

Tried to create her own high-tech solution to solve a social scheduling problem

minj050403@gmail.com

"The most frustrated I get is usually when they (AI voice assistants), like, don't understand, like, what I'm saying fluently"

minj050403@gmail.com

Finds it "harder to stay on track" with the specific time requirement because sometimes "life gets in the way"

minj050403@gmail.com

"...if you could use AI somehow to, like, schedule appointments for you, I feel like that would be really helpful"

minj050403@gmail.com

"Scheduling with friends [is what I wish I didn't have to think about]"

minj050403@gmail.com

Wonders if other busy students are struggling with this kind of time commitment, or if it's just her

minj050403@gmail.com

Strong belief about optimizing time; to use AI to focus her energy on her pre-med studies

minj050403@gmail.com

"If a future medication app were too complicated, I'd probably just go back to my simple phone alarm"

minj050403@gmail.com

Convenience and accessibility are key to effective reminders

minj050403@gmail.com

Believes that there must be a better, smarter way to handle all these logistical, recurring tasks like scheduling and refills

minj050403@gmail.com

Automating her spreadsheet to Google Calendar wasn't worth the time when an event is "so infrequent"

minj050403@gmail.com

It's okay to be flexible sometimes -- the most important thing is regulating her hormones and keeping up the routine

minj050403@gmail.com

"I feel like I'm more 'on top of things' than someone who just forgets to take the pill entirely"

minj050403@gmail.com

Daily mundane tasks actually take up a lot of mental space and creates stress at times

minj050403@gmail.com

Thinks checking the physical count is the only reliable proof; can't rely on her own memory to confirm if she took the pil

minj050403@gmail.com

Does

Relies on a manual process of "check[ing] the bottle or the package" and counting the pills to confirm a dose was taken.

minj050403@gmail.com

Takes Lexipro before she goes to bed because it can increase chance of headache

minj050403@gmail.com

Follows a busy, structured daily schedule as a pre-med student at Stanford (classes, research labs, clinical shadowing at local hospitals, coursework)

minj050403@gmail.com

Has to adjust her medication time zone manually when traveling to maintain her schedule

minj050403@gmail.com

Takes her birth control at a fixed time (9 PM) for hormonal regulation.

minj050403@gmail.com

Uses Alexa very frequently at home for timers, checking times, and setting alarms/schedule

minj050403@gmail.com

Uses Siri and Alexa when it's "convenient" or she feels "lazier."

minj050403@gmail.com

Is a frequent user of smart technology and is comfortable with new apps

minj050403@gmail.com

Sometimes leaves her medication at home when out with friends, which causes her to take it late.

minj050403@gmail.com

Also uses physical reminders like writing things down on her calendar or placing objects on the desk

minj050403@gmail.com

Slightly feels frustrated by keep forgetting to be on time for medication when things get busy during school year

minj050403@gmail.com

gets stressed very frequently due to many responsibilities she has on and off campus

minj050403@gmail.com

Feels hassled by the strict adherence to a medication schedule; "it's like, harder to stay on track with the like distinct time"

minj050403@gmail.com

A strong perfectionist but gets burnt out easily

Excited about the potential for AI to automate her repeated daily routines and appointment booking.

minj050403@gmail.com

Frustrated when voice assistants interfere with app usage by mishearing her words as commands

Independent and self-reliant most of the times when she successfully manages a complex schedule

minj050403@gmail.com

Feeling stressed makes her extremely forgetful or de-prioritize health

minj050403@gmail.com

At ease when gets reminded that AI voice assistants are always there to answer her questions (e.g., how do I use this burner?)

minj050403@gmail.com

Relieved that there hasn't been any big problem with her reminder system

minj050403@gmail.com

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minj050403@gmail.com

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minj050403@gmail.com

Emphasizes it would be "super helpful" if she could use AI to "schedule appointments for you" (e.g., with her doctor).

minj050403@gmail.com

Convenience and accessibility are key to effective reminders -- "my phone is always with me, so digital is probably the most reliable form of reminder."

minj050403@gmail.com

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minj050403@gmail.com

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minj050403@gmail.com

Reflection

Key Insights

- The problem isn't forgetting the time but the **physical mismatch** between the user's location (e.g., out with friends) and the medication's location (at home)
- She does not trust digital system for confirmation but relies on the **manual, physical counting of pills**, which can be error-prone
- **Receptive to using AI** to eliminate administrative tasks that she views as tedious and non-essential.

Key Needs

- A system that...
  - confirms the dose was physically taken
  - monitor **remaining medication** supply and prompt for a refill in advance
  - remind to pack her medication before leaving for extracurricular activities
  - automate her **patterned** daily and weekly school/work/doctor's appointment schedule
  - **consolidate** her different reminder types (physical, digital, voice)

Attorney Adelle

- 39-years-old
- Female
- Full-time, remote-working lawyer
- Lives alone

Says

The first action of the day is often work-related, even before personal care or a meal

minj050403@gmail.com

When completing a task she relies on external pressure rather than internal motivation

minj050403@gmail.com

"Sometimes other people chasing me [helps me stay on track]"

minj050403@gmail.com

"I use Notion, I have a to-do list where I kind of relentlessly stack rank and I move things over when it's done"

minj050403@gmail.com

Dedicates significant effort in creating a detailed personal spreadsheet to track friends' life events

minj050403@gmail.com

Highly values maintaining strong social connections

minj050403@gmail.com

"I had a hard time using Notion to like set up an intake form for example... I just kind of wish I had a human who could walk me through it"

minj050403@gmail.com

Tried to create her own high-tech solution to solve a social scheduling problem

minj050403@gmail.com

"I hate talking to things... I prefer the written word in general"

minj050403@gmail.com

"Scheduling with friends [is what I wish I didn't have to think about]"

minj050403@gmail.com

Thinks

Even a tech-savvy user needs a simpler setup process or personal guidance for complex tool configurations

minj050403@gmail.com

The physical reminder in the real world is more effective for a simple habit than a digital alert that can be dismissed

minj050403@gmail.com

Thinks voice assistants and voice notes are extremely "inefficient and speak too slowly"

minj050403@gmail.com

Relationship maintenance is like a project requiring dedicated effort and organization

minj050403@gmail.com

The physical pillbox is preferable to a digital tracker for a simple, recurring medication

minj050403@gmail.com

Automating her spreadsheet to Google Calendar wasn't worth the time when an event is "so infrequent"

minj050403@gmail.com

Views AI as a powerful but often clumsy tool that requires humane context

minj050403@gmail.com

For physical tasks, a visual/video component is a must-have

minj050403@gmail.com

Values flow state and uninterrupted focus, even during non-work hours

minj050403@gmail.com

The need for tracking is tied to complexity and volume, not the need for tracking itself

minj050403@gmail.com

Does

Asks ChatGPT to walk her through tasks when she's cooking for herself

minj050403@gmail.com

Regularly goes out to dinner with friends or makes it at hom

minj050403@gmail.com

Actively seeking tools/methods to enforce a boundary that her remote work/ lifestyle naturally causes

minj050403@gmail.com

Her remote work schedule is flexible and long; her team's completely opposite time zone.

minj050403@gmail.com

Consumes fish roe, a type of supplement, but doesn't use a digital tool to remember it

minj050403@gmail.com

Goes to YouTube for visual guidance like when changing the air in a tire

minj050403@gmail.com

Uses a physical pillbox only when she is on a high volume of supplements

minj050403@gmail.com

Uses a complex mix of digital tools for organization: Notion, Google Drive, Google Calendar, and Notes app

minj050403@gmail.com

Has a simple, fixed routine for plant care

minj050403@gmail.com

Spending time with her girl friends is one of the most happiest moments in her life

minj050403@gmail.com

Feels

Feels a need to write things down not for a reminder, but to "not have to pull over it all the time"

minj050403@gmail.com

Confident in her ability to handle a high workload and complex organization

minj050403@gmail.com

Highly frustrated by being unable to filter doctors based on one critical factor: "no one's taking new patients"

minj050403@gmail.com

A strong desire for having things planned out and feels anxious when it's not

minj050403@gmail.com

Feels a sense of accomplishment/ satisfaction --"dopamine hit" -- when moving tasks to "done"

minj050403@gmail.com

Feels uncertain when dealing with complex, non-routine tasks (health insurance portal)

minj050403@gmail.com

Stressed and overwhelmed by the "digital overload" in the morning

minj050403@gmail.com

Hopeful that a better tool exists for finding doctors with capacity

minj050403@gmail.com

Frustrated by the scheduling "negotiation" with friends

minj050403@gmail.com

Relieved when she mentally writes out complex definitions or rules

minj050403@gmail.com

Says

The first action of the day is often work-related, even before personal care or a meal.

minj050403@gmail.com

Relies on external pressure rather than solely internal motivation for ta...

"Sometimes other people chasing me [helps me stay on track]."

"I use Notion, I have a to-do list where I kind of relentlessly stack rank and I move things over when s done."

minj050403@gmail.com

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minj050403@gmail.com

Uses a complex mix of digital tools for organization (Notion, Google Drive, Google Calendar, Notes function, digital stickies).

minj050403@gmail.com

Stressed and overwhelmed by the "digital overload" in the morning.

minj050403@gmail.com

Does

Asks ChatGPT to walk her through tasks (cooking, procedures).

minj050403@gmail.com

Regularly goes out to dinner with friends or makes it at hom; Despite the digital overload, she actively seeks out and maintains a social life.

minj050403@gmail.com

Act too to e bou rem lifes ero

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minj050403@gmail.com

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minj050403@gmail.com

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minj050403@gmail.com

track friends' life events (birthdays, deaths).

minj050403@gmail.com

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minj050403@gmail.com

A strong desire for control over separating her personal and professional lives.

minj050403@gmail.com

Vulnerable and uncertain when dealing with complex, non-routine tasks (health insurance portal).

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minj050403@gmail.com

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Reflection

Key Insights

- Her professional organization skills are applied to her social life; she highly values **maintaining strong social connections.**
- She is a **text-dominant user**, valuing speed and conciseness. Voice interaction is a major point of friction.
- Values **organization and efficiency**; the "stack rank" suggests a need to prioritize the most impactful tasks.

Key Needs

- A system that...
  - buffers her from **digital overload** in the morning
  - creates **digital work-life boundaries** without requiring her to manually juggle different browsers
  - provides **step-by-step** visual and text guidance for **infrequent** procedural tasks

Pharmacist Linda

- 42-year old
- Female
- Pharmacist at Vaden Health Center
- Manages student's prescriptions

them again for refills

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

using those medications

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

don't pick up their prescriptions if it's expensive

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

other generic alternatives, suggesting cost barriers typically are under reported

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

following up with a healthcare professional despite its potential inaccuracy.

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

adherence on their health

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Some only use their medications when they feel the need to, and they stop when they feel better. I had a student tell me they only need a refill of their ADHD medications around finals

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

I can see it on some people's face that they've tuned out when I start describing how to consume their medications and the correct dosage

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

I have noticed some people adding the medications' instructions onto their phone

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Some people appear distracted during medication explanations at pickup, likely due to time pressure and public setting, meaning critical information doesn't stick.

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Students view chronic medications as optional once symptoms resolve.

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Pharmacists could help with long-term medication support after the initial pick up of medications but are too busy filling prescriptions.

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Does

Dispenses about 50-80 prescriptions daily at Vaden Health Center. Provides brief medication counseling at pickup counter, typically lasting 2-3 minutes per person

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Notices people who pick up initial prescriptions but never return for refills

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Observes students abandoning prescriptions due to cost concerns. A lot of unclaimed medications pile up when the co-pay is high

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Students are often distracted, rushing to class, and clearly not absorbing all the important information about timing or side effects.

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Patients add the daily time to take their medications regularly on their calendar or set an alarm reminding them, especially if I emphasize how crucial it is to take right dosage at the same time

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Confusion about co-pays and insurance claims is prominent

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Feels

Frustrating to watch some medication failures happen repeatedly. There's the same patterns of non-adherence leading to emergency pickups and failed treatments occurring

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Wishes there was more time at the pickup counter to provide more detailed explanations and answer all the questions some people have, but it's often really busy

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Concern about individuals stopping their medications, doubling doses by mistake , or mixing drugs especially if they end up confusing which one to take at what time

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Believes there should be other tools to provide ongoing support to patients after they pick up their prescriptions

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Need for everything to be centralized for patients so that they're not overwhelmed by everything they have to manage

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

People who have no caregivers and manage everything alone often are at a disadvantage and struggle more with missed doses

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Says

Students pick up their prescriptions but I rarely see them again for refills

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Some students ask if it's okay to consume alcohol using those medications

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Sometimes, cost can be a barrier for students and they don't pick up their prescriptions if it's expensive

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Some only use their medications when they feel the need to, and they stop when they feel better. I had student tell me they only need a refill of their ADHD medications around finals

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Thinks

Some people abandon expensive prescriptions rather than asking about other generic alternatives, suggesting cost barriers typically are under reported

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Some people prefer consulting with Google for side effects without following up with a healthcare professional despite its potential inaccuracy.

Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

Believes that students underestimate the consequences of non-adherence on their health

I can see it on some people's face that they've tuned out when I start describing how to consume their medications and the correct dosage

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Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

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Malisha Devi Lutchmeea

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Reflection

Key Insights

- Pharmacists dispense medications with brief counseling but **cannot follow up with students** after they leave
- Brief counseling occurs with patients during **rushed interactions** and proper medication instructions don't always stick when patients are **overwhelmed by information overload at the pickup counter**

Key Needs

- A system that…
  - Provides **ongoing support after patients leave** the pharmacy counter after picking up their prescriptions
  - Allows patients to **track their medications** routine more efficiently
  - Delivers **instructions** on how to take medications gradually over time rather than all at pickup

KEY TAKEAWAYS

They need **clear guidance that tells them exactly what to do**, especially during evenings when decision fatigue makes it mentally exhausting to figure out medication routines on their own

Users have **different preferences for confirming** they've taken their medication (some distrust digital tracking and prefer manually counting pills while others find their phone most reliable)

Users want a **clear separation** between work and life, as well as managing health-related daily responsibilities

Next Steps

1 2 additional interviews for further insight

3 Create POVs based on empathy map insights

2 Specify problem domain within reminder for health conditions

4 Explore HMWs, new solutions, and current technologies based on empathy map needs

Thank you for listening!