

Digital Narrative Intelligence

To understand generative AI in the cancer patient journey

(3-month study)

Client challenge

Generative AI is rapidly becoming part of how patients interpret, cope with, and act on health information, especially during high-stress moments like a new cancer diagnosis.

The central question is no longer whether patients will use tools like ChatGPT, but what those interactions reveal about unmet needs, where AI genuinely helps, and where it may introduce clinical, emotional, or behavioral risk. For healthcare and life sciences organizations, this shift also signals a changing information ecosystem that will reshape patient engagement.

Lumanity point of view

Generative AI is unlikely to disappear from the cancer journey; its role will expand as tools become more accessible and embedded in everyday life. The opportunity is not to compete with AI, but to ensure patients encounter accurate, supportive, and trustworthy guidance in the digital spaces where they are already seeking answers. Doing so requires a new insight capability: understanding real patient narratives as they unfold online and translating those insights into action across communications, resources, and channel strategy.

Lumanity approach

(DNI study design): Lumanity deployed Digital Narrative Intelligence (DNI) to capture, organize, and interpret patient narratives across digital environments and detect emerging patterns in how patients use generative AI during the cancer journey.

Over three months, we analyzed narratives from 100 recently diagnosed cancer patients, focusing on how generative AI tools were used between appointments and during decision-shaping moments. The analysis examined patient “jobs to be done,” where AI supports understanding and readiness for care, and where AI may amplify misinformation, anxiety, or unsafe decision-making – along with the role of community norms and peer correction.



*I know ChatGPT isn't the doctor...
but it's there when no one else is*

Why Lumanity is leading in this space



Patient-centered narrative insight:

we analyze what patients actually do and say in real-world digital environments, not what organizations assume they do.



Commercial and medical strategy translation:

we convert behavioral signals into concrete actions across content, channels, and engagement models.



A realistic risk lens: we identify where AI helps, where it can harm, and how to design guardrails without dismissing the reality of patient use.



Future-proof ecosystem thinking:

we help organizations adapt as the patient journey expands into AI-mediated, community-shaped information environments.

Key findings

How is generative AI entering the journey? Patients were not primarily using AI to replace oncologists. Instead, AI often served as a “between-appointments companion” that helped patients make the time between visits survivable and arrive more prepared for clinical conversations. Across narratives, AI functioned as:

- 1 a translator of dense medical language**
(e.g., pathology, staging terminology, mutations)
- 2 a bridge during waiting periods**
when uncertainty is highest and clinicians are unavailable
- 3 an emotional processing outlet**
where patients could vent and rehearse difficult conversations without judgment, and
- 4 a “question builder” to structure concerns**
research trial options, and prepare for appointments. A consistent pattern was “first-pass understanding, then doctor confirmation,” with many patients explicitly warning others that AI is not a substitute for clinical decision-making.

Bottom line

Generative AI is becoming a persistent “between-appointments companion” for many cancer patients, serving as translator, emotional outlet, and visit-prep coach. Digital Narrative Intelligence gives organizations a practical way to see those behaviors clearly, understand what unmet needs they reflect, and respond responsibly.

The aim isn't to fight AI. It's to ensure patients navigating cancer, especially at their most vulnerable moments, encounter guidance that is accurate, supportive, and trustworthy in the digital spaces where they are already seeking help.

What are the implications for pharma and biotech?

This is both opportunity and responsibility. If patients are turning to AI to translate, cope, and prepare, then those behaviors point to unmet needs that life sciences organizations can address responsibly.



Why Lumanity?

- 30 years of experience supporting launch strategy and organizational launch readiness
- A blend of consulting, industry, and scientific expertise
- Deep experience building launch frameworks, governance, and readiness review approaches across asset types and organizational structures
- Strong track record engaging cross-functional teams and maximizing global-to-local collaboration
- Proven tools, techniques, and processes to deliver tailored, pragmatic launch excellence improvement



***ChatGPT didn't judge me,
I just got to be vulnerable***