

Closing the Listening Gap to Turn Medical Insights Into Impact

Innovation in the R&D pipeline is enabling biopharmas to develop more complex and precise treatments. However, bringing new drugs to market is increasingly difficult, costly, and competitive. **Up to 90% of drugs** that enter clinical trials never make it to market, underscoring the significant risk across the development lifecycle.

Treating physicians play a key role as the gateway between novel therapies and the patients in need. But a recent **survey** identified a 'listening gap.' While almost all key opinion leaders (KOLs) reported being open to sharing feedback with biopharma companies, they believe that only a fraction of their insights are ever used.

Up to
90%
of drugs that enter clinical trials never make it to market

“

As you prepare for launch, medical insights become especially valuable — helping to shape medical strategy, refine scientific communications, and guide overall impact in the field.

Kristina Kipp, Regional Medical Director, BridgeBio



Medical affairs teams are committed to listening and capturing insights, but the growing volume of data and limited tools make it difficult to keep up. Many insights are lost because legacy systems make the capture cumbersome and time-consuming. When teams do record insights, analysis can be slow. Home-grown AI solutions have helped, for example with summarization and connecting to proprietary, company-specific data sources, but the rapid pace of AI innovation will challenge in-house teams to keep up. Their solutions are often not sophisticated enough to proactively detect critical, emerging themes that directly impact patients. For example, these insights could explain why a trial is not recruiting patients, why a launch is not picking up speed, or why an HCP is not prescribing a medication.

Even when signals are detected, unclear ownership and accountability limit action, especially in efforts to share insights across functions. By strengthening the insights process, medical affairs can help their organizations act faster to get medicines to patients sooner and, ultimately, elevate their value.

Key Factors Contributing to the Insights Gap

Incomplete insight capture

Slow and fragmented analysis

Unclear ownership

Lack of action

The insights gap: The KOL perspective

Biopharma relies on KOLs to understand patient needs, bring real-world experience, and assist with therapy uptake. Their relationships with MSLs are not transactional. They are compliant, trust-based engagements that encourage scientific exchange, support better decision-making, and provide the insights needed to guide drug development and deliver the right treatments to patients.

Veeva surveyed KOLs across the U.S. and Europe to understand whether the insights they provide are having a meaningful impact. The findings show a strong willingness to share insights.

However, KOLs believe only 30% of their insights are ever used and that many never reach the right stakeholders or drive action. This results in missed opportunities for biopharma leaders to shape strategy, respond to emerging trends, and advance science.

98%

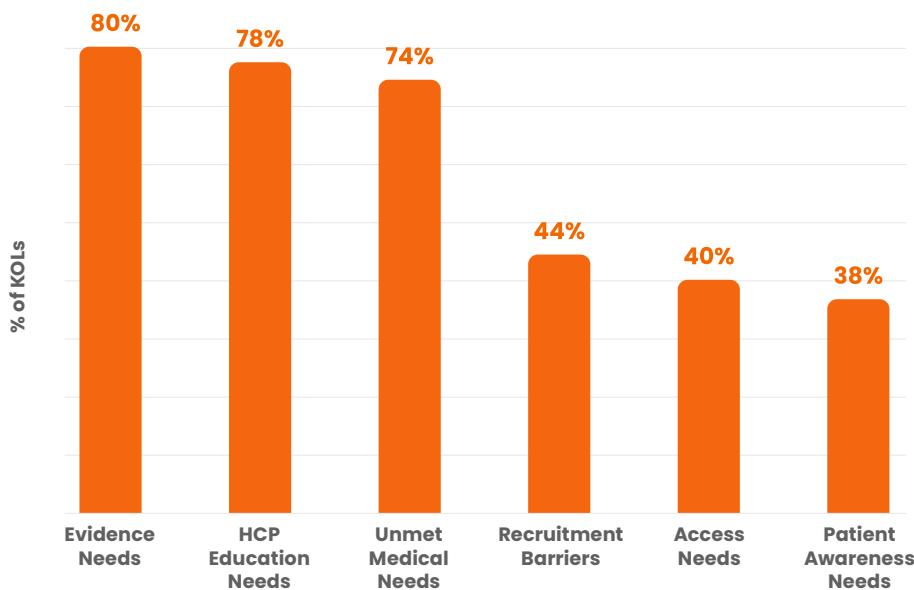
of KOLs are open to sharing insights with biopharmas

30%

of insights get used

Valuable information is getting lost

If biopharmas don't improve their insights process, what information do they risk missing out on? KOLs reported they address the following topics when engaging with medical science liaisons (MSLs):



It's not surprising that the top three categories – evidence needs, education needs, and unmet medical needs – are closely tied. All of the insight categories, however, contribute directly to forming medical strategy, influencing treatment decisions, supporting patients, and shaping policy. Discussions around these topics also surface gaps in data, knowledge, skills, and unmet treatment needs.

Field medical teams also capture insights with cross-functional relevance, including trial-related topics such as recruitment barriers and market access needs. These insights demonstrate the value that medical affairs brings to the entire organization.

KOLs want feedback and ongoing dialogue

KOLs want more than one-way information capture. They seek feedback on the insights they share and want to understand how their input influences decisions.

Many biopharmas, however, limit feedback due to legacy compliance concerns that prevent tying insights back to individual KOLs. For biopharmas to re-evaluate this balance, they must weigh perceived risk against the clear benefit of providing KOLs with a direct feedback loop that strengthens collaboration and trust. Advanced medical insights solutions may support this process by linking insights to KOLs and assisting with follow-on engagement.

“

The insights captured ultimately inform our strategic planning and tactics, which enhance and close gaps in the patient care journey.

Dina Harley, Senior Director,
Strategy Planning & Omnichannel
Engagement, Novo Nordisk

90%

feel comfortable having their name associated with insights

100%

want to receive feedback on insights they share

82%

want to hear about insights other KOLs have shared

The insights gap: The biopharma perspective

Veeva interviewed eight biopharma executives with medical insights expertise across organizations of varying sizes. The interviews reflect a strong reliance on KOL interactions but reveal common challenges in turning those insights into action. While advances in technology accelerate the insights-gathering process — the most advanced systems even detect emerging themes — execution gaps remain when it comes to change management and accountability.

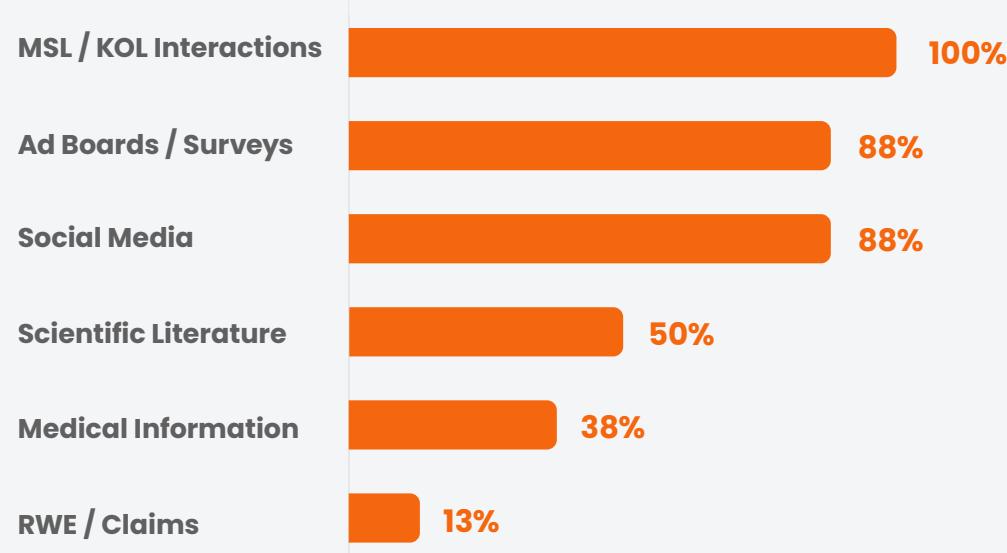
As a result, insights may be identified but not consistently acted upon, which limits medical affairs' ability to clearly demonstrate medical impact. These interviews highlight where insights succeed, where they stall, and what must change to drive greater value.

Here are the key findings:

1. Biopharma agrees: KOL interactions drive medical insights

Veeva's interviews with companies collectively show a clear hierarchy in how medical insights shape strategy. MSL interactions with KOLs remain the most trusted and influential source, while other inputs play supporting roles. Teams monitor ad boards, literature, surveys, and social media (cautiously), but mainly use these sources to validate or add context to KOL insights rather than drive strategy on their own.

Sources of Medical Insights



2. Biopharmas expect increased use of AI in the insights process

Many biopharmas leverage AI in home-grown tools or adopt industry solutions, and all expect AI's rapid evolution to unlock new capabilities that further speed up insights analysis.

For example, advanced solutions already use AI with a human-in-the-loop to proactively detect medical themes across thousands of insights in real time, replacing the manual reviews and siloed data that once made such speed impossible. As a result, insight review is moving toward continuous analysis.

Because the pace of AI is increasing exponentially, biopharmas with in-house solutions may need to expand their resources to keep up or invest in industry solutions that have the benefit of scale.

3. The divide between potential and performance

Biopharmas clearly recognize the value of medical insights and have adopted technology to speed up the insights process, yet the interviews reveal a persistent gap between perceived importance and realized impact. After years of significant investment in digital initiatives, executives still rate their insight maturity as only average (four out of seven). Several executives note that before implementing tools to support insight capture and analysis, their rating would have been closer to two out of seven. Several factors limit the ability to uncover insights, even with the help of technology:

Inconsistent insight quality and definitions

Variability across MSL teams reduces confidence and creates downstream challenges.

Manual and fragmented insights-gathering processes

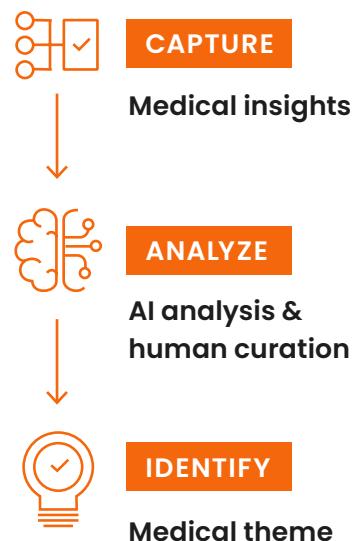
Slow response times limit the ability to adapt strategy.

Limited global visibility

Teams miss cross-regional learnings and globally relevant themes.

Medical themes

are patterns among insights, identified through AI, that reveal emerging topics and help inform medical decision-making.



4 / 7

Rating on medical insights capability

4. Insight identification improves, while action lags

As applications and analytics improve insight identification, gaps in execution and accountability become more visible. Teams surface medical themes more effectively but acting on those insights and measuring impact remain difficult. Biopharma leaders cited three main challenges.

Key Barriers Preventing Medical Insights from Driving Action



1. Lack of ownership to ensure action once insights have been shared.
2. No internal structure to effectively share insights cross-functionally
3. Inability to produce an effective solution

1. Lack of ownership to ensure action once insights have been shared:

Insights reach leadership or cross-functional teams but lack clear ownership, arrive too late, and miss formal follow-through. Field teams receive little feedback on whether action occurs.

2. No internal structure to effectively share insights cross-functionally:

Organizations share insights within medical affairs more easily than across commercial, market access, R&D, and clinical development. This inconsistent sharing and unclear structure limit alignment and action.

3. Inability to produce an effective solution:

Even when teams align on insights, long timelines, limited budgets, and competing priorities slow execution and prevent insights from driving measurable impact. Even with better technology in place, execution does not improve on its own. Organizations need clear processes, defined ownership, and teams equipped to act on insights and track outcomes. Without change management and ongoing capability building, faster insight identification will not translate into measurable impact.

“

We hear from the field all the time: it's like a dark hole. I'm throwing my insights into the CRM, and does anyone even look at them? Is anyone doing anything with them?

Executive Director, Global Field Medical Excellence, Large Biopharma

Linking medical insights to patient impact

The challenges listed above also prevent medical affairs from showing its value to the larger organization and demonstrating its contributions to successful patient outcomes.

Medical insights can help support faster patient access to treatments. Yet gaps in the insight-to-impact lifecycle limit the ability to demonstrate value. Organizations often capture insights and identify themes, but struggle to track actions and outcomes. Without clear accountability, insights stall before they lead to measurable medical impact. These challenges also represent a clear opportunity to strengthen how insights translate into patient impact.



To elevate medical affairs, organizations must move beyond insight capture and link insights directly to action and outcomes. Stronger [models for tracking impact](#) are critical to showing how medical insights influence patient care and business strategy.

[Learn more](#) about best practices and learnings from industry leaders who are advancing this area.

Building a more efficient insights process

By implementing a more efficient way to capture, analyze, and disseminate insights, medical affairs can close the listening gap. Biopharmas can improve their current process or implement a new one with the following recommendations.

Standardize the insights process

Implement one clear, company-wide approach for capturing, reviewing, and prioritizing insights. Start by creating a cross-functional team that involves not only the 'collectors' but also the 'receivers' to ensure a frictionless organizational process. This includes defining what an insight is for your organization. Clarify ownership and accountability by assigning clear responsibility for moving insights from identification to action, with medical affairs leading follow-through.

Technology, including AI, can play a key role in standardizing the insights process, making it easier to share information across different organizations within the company and globally. Whatever the approach, train teams on all aspects – from process to the technology. Frequent check-ins with the cross-functional team to share feedback can help continuously improve the approach.

Close the loop for KOLs

KOLs are comfortable being associated with the insights they share and want feedback on how those insights are used. When the connection between insights and impact remains unclear, trust with these important relationships weakens. Medical insight solutions that give MSLs access to a KOL's historical insights support stronger pre-call planning and ensure each engagement builds on prior conversations rather than starting from scratch.

Enable global sharing

Teams can learn from each other and apply insights beyond a single market when they have a unified view of insights across regions. Break down silos by integrating systems into a single enterprise-wide source of truth including real-time dashboards that give internal teams immediate access to insights. This standardizes insights, connects data, and gives teams full visibility to take action. Involve compliance early to navigate any limitations on broad sharing.

Use AI to scale analysis

Biopharmas apply AI to synthesize insights across sources, identify patterns, and support strategic decisions. Advanced AI-enabled software can accelerate the process of identifying medical themes from months to days. Speed allows biopharmas to adjust strategy quickly – whether identifying critical information that changes the trajectory of a launch, or detecting a key theme on day one of a congress that impacts the approach for day two.

Accelerate the path from insight to action

As technology accelerates insight identification, organizations must evolve how teams act on what they learn. Connecting insights to impact requires clear processes, defined ownership, and teams equipped to take action. Organizations need an insight-to-impact framework that assigns responsibility for acting on medical themes, supports cross-functional collaboration, and tracks how insights influence decisions over time. Updating processes and building capability across teams helps close the loop between insight, action, and outcome, allowing medical affairs to demonstrate value and drive meaningful impact.



Discover how Novo Nordisk closed the gap from insight capture to action by modernizing how insights are analyzed, themed, and shared.

Explore how to accelerate insights from capture to action.

Conclusion

Closing the listening gap requires a company-wide, standardized insights process that fully leverages technology while keeping KOL insights at the center as the primary source. This process must span the full lifecycle, from capture to action, and enable global sharing so organizations can learn across regions. To maximize impact, strengthen AI-driven analysis, establish clear cross-functional accountability, and designate medical affairs leaders to own insight activation and communication. An insight-to-impact framework that tracks how insights drive action and inform strategy will be critical to demonstrating the long-term value that medical affairs can deliver.



Learn from industry experience

Hear from leaders at [BridgeBio](#) and [Novo Nordisk](#) on how they streamline medical insights and drive strategy

About KOL Survey

Demographic Summary: Online survey of 50 KOLs (25 US and 25 EU). The EU sample included 5 KOLs from each of the EU5 countries. August 2025.

KOL status qualified by participating in at least three activities: publishing in scientific journals, involvement in clinical trials, and contributing to guidelines.

About Biopharma Interviews

Veeva conducted interviews with eight biopharma executives with medical insights expertise across a mix of small and large organizations. December 2025.

ABOUT US

Veeva is the global leader in cloud software for the life sciences industry. Committed to innovation, product excellence, and customer success, Veeva serves more than 1,100 customers, ranging from the world's largest biopharma companies to emerging biotechs. As a Public Benefit Corporation, Veeva is committed to balancing the interests of all stakeholders, including customers, employees, shareholders, and the industries it serves.

For more information, visit www.veeva.com

