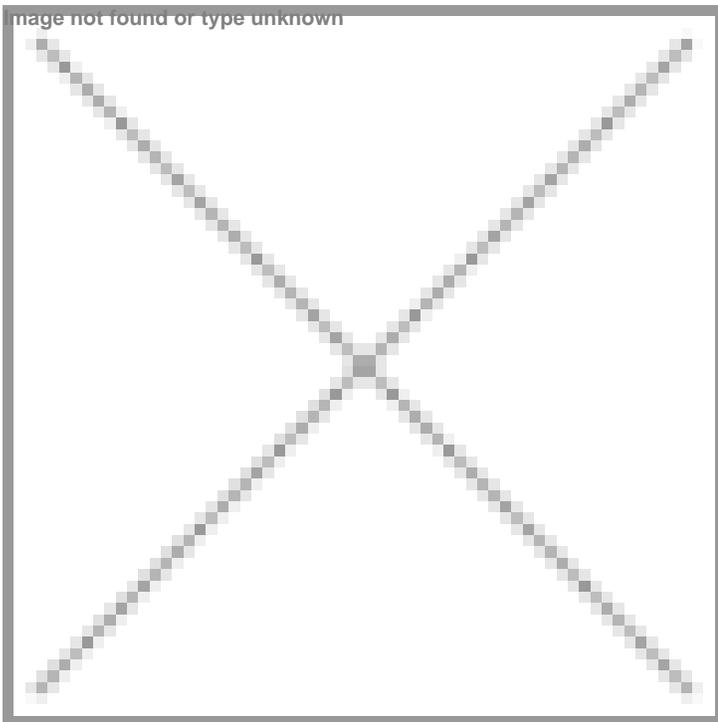# Founders must balance innovation with regulatory compliance, understand patient behaviour, and collaborate with existing healthcare networks to scale effectively: Experts

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Discussion highlighted that accelerating MedTech adoption requires more than technological innovation

Overcoming barriers and accelerating MedTech adoption requires a combination of deep problem understanding, strong clinical collaboration, strategic partnerships, and long-term resilience. Healthcare innovation operates within a complex ecosystem involving clinicians, hospitals, regulators, technology providers, and patients.

For MedTech startups, the challenge is not only to build advanced technologies but also to ensure that these solutions fit within real-world clinical workflows, address genuine healthcare needs, and reach patients through sustainable go-to-market strategies. Founders must balance innovation with regulatory compliance, understand patient behaviour, and collaborate with existing healthcare networks to scale effectively.

During the panel discussion on "Breaking the Barrier: Accelerating MedTech Adoption", organised by The Nadathur S Raghavan Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (NSRCEL) at Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) in partnership with DailyRounds and Marrow, as a part of MedTech day 2026 in Bangalore moderated by Anubhav Jain, Sr. Startup Investor Manager, AWS industry leaders including Chandrasekhar K, Founder & CEO, Forus Health; Bharat Gera, Founder, Human Centric Healthcare Ecosystem and Raghvendra Shenoy, ex- MD, Johnson & Johnson shared their perspectives on how founders can successfully navigate these challenges.

A key discussion point was the balance between expert guidance and founder intuition. Anubhav Jain highlighted how medical experts sometimes evaluate solutions strictly from a clinical perspective, while founders may uncover behavioural insights that experts overlook. Illustrating this point with an example about disease detection through sputum samples, he noted that although doctors considered such testing too late for clinical detection, patients were far more willing to provide sputum samples than undergo scans. Reflecting on this dynamic, he advised entrepreneurs to remain open to unconventional thinking: "Sometimes just out-of-the-box thinking and not listening to the experts gives better results… listen, sometimes don't listen, but again you own the risk." The message emphasized that founders should challenge assumptions while still remaining accountable for the outcomes of their innovations.

Offering a contrasting yet complementary view, Raghvendra Shenoy stressed the importance of clinical validation and expert advisory boards. Drawing from decades of experience in medical device commercialization, he emphasized that technological innovation must ultimately solve real clinical problems. As he explained, "In my entire career in med devices, I've never launched anything without taking consent from an advisory board of experts." According to Shenoy, clinicians help startups refine features, validate usability, and ensure that products integrate smoothly into hospital workflows. He also encouraged founders to gain first-hand exposure to healthcare environments, asking the audience, "How many MedTech founders have gone into the operating room and stood next to the surgeon?" Such direct observation, he argued, helps entrepreneurs design solutions that genuinely improve clinical outcomes.

The panel also discussed regulatory challenges and opportunities within India's healthcare landscape. While regulatory approvals can be time-consuming, the speakers noted that the ecosystem is gradually becoming more supportive of innovation. Shenoy encouraged founders not to be discouraged by compliance requirements but to incorporate regulatory timelines into their planning. At the same time, he highlighted the scale of opportunity in India's healthcare sector, noting that the country's large population and significant disease burden create strong demand for medical innovations. He remarked that while this reality presents a major public health challenge, it also offers vast opportunities for entrepreneurs to build impactful solutions.

Another theme was the growing role of artificial intelligence and digital health platforms in expanding access to healthcare. The panel cited examples of startups using AI to manage remote intensive care units and deliver diagnostic support to smaller hospitals. In one case, ECG devices installed in small nursing homes allowed patient data to be transmitted to a central hub where cardiologists analyse the results and provide feedback within minutes. Such models demonstrate how technology can extend specialist expertise to tier-2 and tier-3 cities, enabling faster diagnosis and better patient outcomes even in resource-limited settings.

A significant portion of the discussion focused on go-to-market strategies, which the panellists described as one of the most critical challenges for MedTech startups. Chandrasekhar K explained that successful adoption often begins with building credibility among specialists before expanding to broader healthcare providers. Speaking about his experience in ophthalmology technology, he observed, "When you go down the pyramid, the market keeps expanding." He noted that while specialists provide credibility, the real scale often lies among general physicians and primary healthcare providers. However, reaching these segments requires substantial investment in customer acquisition.

To address this challenge, Chandrasekhar encouraged startups to collaborate with organizations that already have access to large patient bases, such as preventive health platforms or healthcare service providers. This approach allows startups to leverage existing distribution channels instead of building them from scratch. As he explained, "Customer acquisition is already done by them—you only go and provide the service." Such partnerships can significantly accelerate adoption while reducing marketing costs.

The panel also explored the importance of healthcare ecosystems in scaling MedTech innovations. Bharat Gera emphasized that startups rarely succeed in isolation and must instead position themselves within broader healthcare networks. He described healthcare as an interconnected ecosystem involving hospitals, technology platforms, distributors, and service providers. According to him, understanding this ecosystem is essential for building sustainable business models. As he stated, "In healthcare you have to think in terms of a go-to ecosystem." Startups, he explained, typically function as

specialized value creators within larger systems orchestrated by established organisations or platforms.

Toward the end of the discussion, the panelists offered practical advice for MedTech founders. Bharat Gera highlighted the importance of mindset, noting that healthcare innovation often involves long development cycles and slow market adoption. He summarized this challenge by saying, "Optimism combined with patience and resilience—if you're prepared to do these three things, you could survive in this healthcare ecosystem."

Similarly, Shenoy emphasised the importance of working closely with customers and building multidisciplinary teams that combine engineering, clinical expertise, and business strategy. He reminded founders that MedTech ventures typically require long-term commitment and careful planning, particularly when dealing with capital equipment and hospital procurement systems.

Finally, Chandrasekhar K stressed the need for founders to deeply understand the problems they are trying to solve. Reflecting on his own journey building ophthalmology solutions, he described spending years observing medical camps, speaking with doctors and patients, and analysing healthcare behaviours before developing products. As he noted, "The most important thing is the problem statement you want to solve." He also urged entrepreneurs to pay attention to details such as product packaging and user documentation, explaining that presentation and usability strongly influence how healthcare professionals perceive new technologies.

Overall, the discussion highlighted that accelerating MedTech adoption requires more than technological innovation. It demands a deep understanding of healthcare challenges, collaboration with clinicians, strategic ecosystem partnerships, and resilience to navigate long development cycles. For founders entering this field, these insights provide a roadmap for transforming innovative ideas into impactful healthcare solutions.