A 2017 round-up of digital health advances in immunology highlights innovations around clinical trial design, patient compliance, and chronic disease management. It's clear that digital health has had a huge impact on a myriad of healthcare sectors, observes GlobalData , a leading data and analytics company.

One of the major highlights of 2017 was Express Scripts and Propeller Health teaming up to provide Smart Inhalers to patients. A couple of months before that, Adherium received approval for SmartTouch, a monitoring device for AstraZeneca's inhaler, Symbicort.

Lakshmi Dharmarajan, PhD, Healthcare Analyst at GlobalData , comments: "These innovations redefined the treatment of respiratory diseases multi-fold by improving patient compliance, monitoring the disease and minimizing exacerbations, and also by limiting hospitalizations and cutting down medical costs."

Another milestone was the launch of the Facing Forward app by Cutanea Life Sciences as a companion to their Aktipak treatment. Sun Pharma also launched a skin tracker app to enable patients to track progress while using their Absorica medication. These advances promise to improve communication among patients and physicians, leading to enhanced treatment compliance.

A landmark moment for clinical trials was the completion of AOBiome's Phase IIb trial for acne, the first virtual trial in the industry completed entirely through a smartphone app on Science37's platform. It is anticipated that several other virtual trials will follow suit, thereby providing improved patient diversity, reduced enrollment timing and greater patient convenience.

Dharmarajan continues: "Pharmaceutical companies are also investing in programs to enhance communication among patients and caregivers to improve treatment outcomes, especially for chronic diseases. A prime example is UCB's Wellness4U program which was launched to provide support to patients beyond therapeutic intervention. The goal of the program is to ensure that patients lead a healthy lifestyle and minimize risk for other events such as cardiovascular disorders.

“All things considered, digital health is definitely making a vast impact in myriad sectors of healthcare and is here to stay.”