



Scout

INCREASING DIVERSITY IN CLINICAL TRIALS BY ENSURING ACCESS FOR HARD-TO-REACH PATIENT POPULATIONS

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Clinical trials are the foundation of modern medicine, yet a significant portion of the patient population is underrepresented. Improving clinical trial diversity is not only about equity; it's about ensuring treatment safety and efficacy for everyone. Read on to understand why an eye to inclusion is critical—and how outsourcing patient support helps optimize trial retention through patient experience.

Trial Diversity: Definition & Impact

In the context of clinical research, diversity refers to the inclusion of participants of various lived experiences and characteristics like age, sex, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and race—the combination of which has a significant impact on health outcomes.

Increasing diversity among trial participants is a major focus of today's clinical research, and its benefits are numerous. More diverse trials can:

Improve drug safety and efficacy: By testing drugs on a diverse population, researchers can identify any group-specific reactions or benefits.

Promote healthcare equity: Trial diversity helps ensure that all populations (including underrepresented ones) benefit from clinical research, reducing health disparities.

Enhance quality of research: Diverse clinical trials contribute to scientific validity and reliability since findings can be generalized to a larger population.

Challenges to Optimizing Trial Diversity

Despite these advantages, clinical trial sites often face significant challenges in recruiting a diverse population: cultural and linguistic barriers, mistrust

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in medical research, and logistical issues like transportation and scheduling which limit the participation of underrepresented groups.

Though an in-house approach to coordinating patient travel, transportation, and reimbursement may seem appealing from a budgeting perspective, it's not always ideal or effective. In fact, it can introduce additional strain on an already complex process, potentially compromising the efficiency of the trial and the level of patient care due to the diversion of critical resources away from their primary research and clinical responsibilities.

Partners in Patient Experience

One effective way to remove barriers to participation is utilization of third-party clinical trial patient service providers, who are uniquely equipped to address these challenges with a specialized focus and expertise in patient travel, payment, reimbursement, and logistical support for hard-to-reach patient populations.

Dedicated service providers like Scout are uniquely positioned to enhance recruitment and retention of underrepresented or hard-to-reach patient populations. They often have established relationships with local providers (and in Scout's case, global compliance expertise), allowing them to overcome geographical challenges and reach patients in remote areas. Their bespoke services are designed to accommodate patients' individual circumstances, and their technological capabilities enable communication and coordination with patients even in remote settings.

Real-World Application

In one study, Scout's coordination of specialized quality transportation in hard-to-reach locations made participation more accessible to patients in remote areas. A mobility-impaired patient living in a remote area of Brazil was apprehensive about safety during the long-distance transport to the airport and potential flight connections that would be required to reach the hospital in São Paulo, Brazil.

To meet this patient's logistical needs and emotional concerns, Scout's Patient Liaison team

coordinated with local partners to provide safe, monitored transportation for the 10-hour journey to the airport. Additionally, Scout searched all available airlines and routes to find a direct flight into São Paulo to reduce burden on the patient during travel.

Scout's flexibility to accommodate patient needs, international expertise, and ability to provide services on a patient-by-patient, visit-by-visit basis removed barriers to participation and enabled this patient to access valuable care options. Furthermore, Scout's navigation of these challenges reduced site burden and allowed site staff to devote more time and energy to patient care and research efforts.

Conclusion

Increasing diversity in clinical trials is critical to generating reliable, universally applicable data and developing medical interventions that serve all populations effectively. However, potential barriers such as geographical location and personal circumstances can limit patient participation and thus risk skewing the patient pool. Partnering with service providers like Scout can remove these barriers and prevent patient attrition by making clinical trial participation more accessible.

Strategically outsourcing patient services like travel and payments helps ensure that every potential participant is given a fair opportunity to contribute to clinical trials, leading to greater diversity in patient representation, more inclusive and robust data, and better health outcomes overall.

Discover clinical trial patient services in travel, logistics, and payment designed to help every patient stick with it. Reach out to hello@scoutclinical.com to explore Scout's comprehensive, customizable solutions for your next study.