



Scout

PREVENTING ATTRITION THROUGH PATIENT EXPERIENCE

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PREVENTING ATTRITION THROUGH PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Building a strong foundation for clinical trials takes more than just enrolling enough patients; retention is critical to gathering accurate and reliable data. In the rapidly evolving life sciences landscape, enhancing patient experience has emerged as a key strategy to not only improve health outcomes but also to mitigate the patient attrition that challenges trial success and delays treatment development.

Positive participant experience in clinical trials enhances patient retention rates, thereby leading to more precise and comprehensive results. Read on to explore the impact of patient experience on attrition rates in clinical trials and uncover actionable ways sites and sponsors can improve patient experience, engagement, and retention.

Patient Experience in Clinical Trials

Patient experience in clinical trials represents the total of all interactions participants have with the trial process—from the recruitment phase all the way through to the study’s conclusion. This includes education on the structure and potential benefits of the trial, how patients are treated by staff, the communication they receive on study progress and their role in the trial, the simplicity of protocol assessment completion, convenience of study visit completion, and any side effects they may experience from treatment.

A positive patient experience requires more than effective treatments or therapeutic outcomes. It takes a whole-person approach to patient care: ensuring that every interaction, from enrollment to follow-up, is conducted with respect, empathy, and understanding. This can involve providing clear communication about clinical trial procedures, reducing financial and personal burden, respecting patients’ time and commitments, promptly addressing their concerns, and making them feel valued and heard. In essence, positive patient experience means a patient feels engaged, informed, and comfortable throughout the clinical trial.

Success of clinical trials depends on complete and reliable data only obtained through patients’ sustained participation and compliance. Enhancing the patient experience begins with study design. Evaluating the contributing factors to attrition allows sponsors to identify gaps in study design. In the review of study assessments, the question may be raised: “Is this a nice-to-have, or is this required for study outcomes?” Duration of study visits and other study requirements can also be used to evaluate the potential burden on the patient that can be relieved through cost neutrality, logistics, emotional, and mental health support. Effective strategies address these gaps and improve the patient experience.

Building Successful, Patient-Focused Clinical Trials

Thoughtful study design alone cannot mitigate the challenges to participation in clinical research. Patient feedback must be actively monitored and consistently used to identify areas of improvement. Consistent and open communication with patient advocacy groups, participant focus groups, and site and patient feedback forums give real world insight on the hurdles to participation and the effective solutions patients need.

To create a positive experience, it's important to consider all aspects of a patient's needs and circumstances inside and outside of trial participation.

1. Patient education and communication

Improving patient experience in clinical trials requires strategies to promote trust, communication, and transparency. Patients and those in their care circle must have confidence in the trial's credibility, and transparency in communications can help reassure them. Providing patients with comprehensive information about the study's objectives, risks, and the potential impact of participation to their condition can help build trust and promote patient engagement. When patients are adequately informed, confident, and comfortable with the study's procedures, they are more likely to continue their participation.

2. Logistical needs

Clinical trial sites and sponsors can greatly enhance patient experience by addressing logistical concerns that might hinder participation, and there are plenty of tools and services to do so. Coordinating transportation services can ease the burden of attending frequent study-related appointments. Assistance with booking convenient, accessible accommodation can be invaluable for participants traveling longer distances or for extended periods. Digital tools like convenient mobile apps can help manage appointments, provide reminders, and allow easy access to study information. Whichever strategies sites and sponsors implement, proactively addressing logistical details can make participation more manageable and less intrusive on patients' daily lives.

3. Financial concerns

Clinical trial sites and sponsors can also help remove financial barriers to participation. For example, providing stipends can help offset visit-related expenses and prevent patients from having to pay out-of-pocket for meals or parking costs. Additionally, implementing automated solutions for patient reported outcome and data-triggered payments can ensure timely, accurate compensation for participants. This not only simplifies the payment process, but helps build a sense of security and trust. By relieving financial burdens, trial sites and sponsors can improve the patient experience for a more inclusive and diverse participant base.

Conclusion

Addressing patient concerns, logistical needs, and financial barriers are pivotal steps towards expanding access to clinical trials for a broader spectrum of patients. These strategies not only streamline the clinical trial process, but also create a more equitable environment for trial participants, breaking down barriers that may have previously deterred potential enrollees. Furthermore, broadening participation can lead to more diverse and representative data, enhancing the applicability and effectiveness of clinical trial outcomes on a global scale. By enhancing and democratizing the patient experience, we can ensure that the benefits of clinical research reach a wider, global population, ultimately driving clinical research forward.

It's essential to view patients as partners in the clinical trial process, equipping them with what they need to make participation easy and every visit as smooth as possible. By ensuring that patients remain engaged and motivated throughout the trial, clinical trial sites and sponsors can optimize patient retention, facilitate reliable and accurate data collection, and help trials finish successfully on time. You can create a more positive, engaging patient experience and set your next study up for greater outcomes with our Scout Clinical services in clinical trial patient travel, transportation, payment, and more. Visit scoutclinical.com or contact hello@scoutclinical.com to start building a strategy to make participation easier and help more patients stick with it.

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