Branding Science Group

How insights can improve the clinical trial experience

Clinical trials play a pivotal role in the development of new pharmaceutical treatments, but they are not without their challenges.

In a recent webinar, Branding Science Director Chris Recaldin and Senior Director Andrew Cavill shed light on the challenges that the pharmaceutical industry faces when it comes to the clinical development of its assets. This article summarises the key insights from the webinar.

The complex world of clinical trials

The pharmaceutical industry has been witnessing a surge in the complexity of clinical trials. This is driven by the decision to explore rare conditions, specific genetic mutations, and the collection of ever increasing amounts of data.

The Tufts Centre for the Study of Drug Development reports a 37% increase in Phase III endpoints in the period 2016 – 2021 compared to 2011 – 2015. There has also been a 42% growth in Phase III procedures from 2016 to 2021, and a significant rise in the number of planned visits per study volunteer. While this complexity is driven by scientific progress, it also comes with unintended consequences.

One of the most visible challenges is the struggle to recruit and retain participants, with many trials failing to enrol on time. Clinical trial sites must be selective in supporting trials that resonate with their objectives, and the fierce competition for patients in certain areas adds another layer of complexity.

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A paradigm shift

To address these challenges a sponsor's clinical trial team needs to shift in mindset. While operational excellence remains essential, there's a growing need to communicate the value of a trial to both sites and participants. This will come from having a richer understanding of the patient and site experience.

The role of insights in clinical trials

To adopt a value-focused mindset, deep insights into the patient and site journey are crucial. These insights go beyond the traditional patient journey analysis to include a critical assessment of protocols and operational aspects of clinical trials. The benefits include:

STREAMLINED TRIALS:

A deep understanding of the patient and site journey allows trial teams to develop protocols that maintain scientific rigour without overwhelming participants or sites.

DATA REDUCTION:

Protocols that include insights from advisory boards show a significant reduction in endpoints, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and data collection. This allows for leaner, more efficient trials.

BARRIERS AND BURDENS:

Insights help identify barriers that deter patient participation, such as restrictions on concomitant medications or uncomfortable assessments.

PATIENT UNDERSTANDING:

Insights help in explaining the benefits of treatment to patients, especially in cases where the value of the clinical trial might not be apparent.

Essential aspects of an insight generation programme

For an insights generation programme to be effective with clinical development teams, several key factors must be considered:

SPEED AND EFFICIENCY

Projects need to run quickly and efficiently to provide insights that can inform protocol changes. Timeliness is crucial, as delays could prevent the incorporation of valuable recommendations.

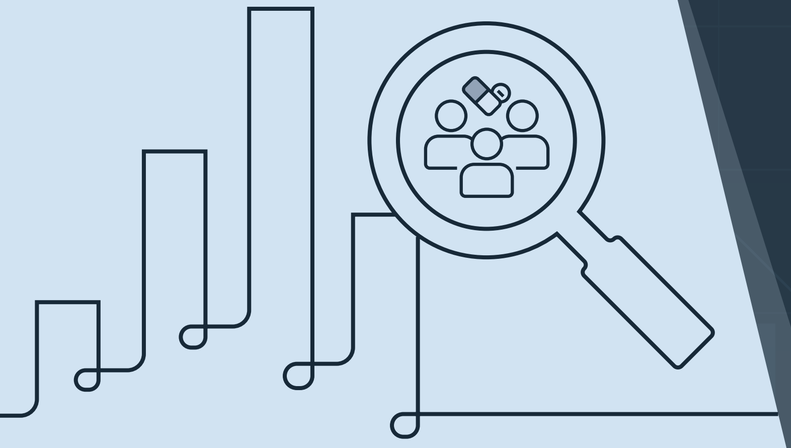
MORE THINKING TIME FOR PATIENTS:

Even trial-naïve patients can provide valuable insights. Pre-work materials, such as video animations or podcasts, can help them understand the complexities of clinical trials, leading to richer insights.

FOCUS ON IMPACT:

Insight generation teams should focus on two or three initiatives or changes that will have the most significant impact on the clinical trial experience, considering the limited bandwidth of trial teams.

In essence, these insights facilitate more frequent engagement with patients and sites, helping to understand their specific needs in the context of a given protocol. This, in turn, enhances the overall clinical trial experience considering the limited bandwidth of sponsor trial teams to incoporate all the recommendations.



In short...

The landscape of clinical trials is evolving, and a patient-centric approach is essential for success. The integration of insights into study protocols is a critical step in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of clinical trials, ultimately benefiting both participants and the pharmaceutical industry as a whole.

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Want to learn more?

Get in touch for a copy of our recent webinar

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