Fight Back Give Back With Clinical Trials

Although there are more than 400 melanoma-focused clinical trials recruiting participants, 1 out of 3 of these trials will fail due to low enrollment.

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By Cody R. Barnett, MRA Director of Communications

Clinical trials are absolutely critical to curing cancer. They propel our understanding of melanoma forward and offer patients access to new and potentially lifesaving treatment approaches. Every single FDA-approved drug that exists today was only made possible because of clinical trials. Without clinical trials, we would have no idea what works, under what circumstance, or in what type of patients. Put bluntly, without clinical trials — and the volunteers who enroll in them - our entire medical research process would shutter to a standstill.

Of the more than 2100 clinical trial volunteers, a striking 94% would enroll in another clinical trial if it were offered.[1] Despite these high rates of satisfaction from previous clinical trial participants, only 1 out of every 20 cancer patients enroll in a clinical trial in the United States, far less than in other countries.

In addition, lack of enrollment in clinical trials is one of the biggest obstacles to bringing a drug to market. Today there are more than 400 melanoma-focused clinical trials currently recruiting patients and we know that 1 out of every 3 of these trials will fail due to low enrollment.

Why Don’t More People Enroll in Clinical Trials?

There are many reasons why patients aren’t enrolling in clinical trials.

- First, research tells us that only 1 out of 4 people know anything about clinical trials.[1]
- Second, most of us expect our doctor to discuss clinical trials with us. Yet, only 15% of patients report ever having been asked to participate.[2]
- Third, people are afraid of being a ‘guinea pig’ or getting a sugar pill instead of any kind of actual treatment — both concerns are just not true in today’s heavily regulated clinical trial

process! These myths are perpetuated by television and urban legends that surround medical research.

In summary, most of us just don't know much of anything about clinical trials. And, when we do, what we know is outdated or just wrong. Learn more about clinical trials.

Why Do People Enroll in Clinical Trials?

In a survey of 12,427 people, the most common reasons clinical trial participants gave for enrolling in a trial were obtaining newer, potentially better treatment, and helping to advance science and treatment options for their condition.[1,2]

People who enroll in clinical trials understand that they will receive expert medical attention, be closely monitored, and are helping to advance the pace of discovery for future treatments and eventually a cure for their disease. Learn more about the benefits and risks.

Most patients who have gone through a clinical trial would do so again!

Clinical Trials Are Critical to Curing Cancer

We all want to cure melanoma; heck, we all want to cure cancer. But, curing cancer is impossible without helping people to better understand how research, and clinical trials, work.

The Melanoma Research Alliance developed and launched the Fight Back Give Back campaign to do just that, to help patients, their friends and family, and even their doctors understand just how important clinical trials are to everyone.

The campaign uses social media, patient-friendly information, and patient stories to raise awareness of the importance of clinical trials. The name "Fight Back Give Back" was selected to reflect the two biggest explanations that clinical trial volunteers give for participating, the desire to get the newest—potentially game changing—therapies AND the eagerness to help future patients facing their same condition.

When patients understand all of their options, including clinical trials, they can make informed decisions about their care. Right now, patients are choosing their treatment course without considering all of their options — and this campaign aims to fix that.

"We believe a real obstacle for patient participation in clinical trials is the lack of awareness to such opportunities, particularly for patients seen outside of premier cancer centers, along with some of the myths that exist about trials," says MRA President and CEO Michael Kaplan.

"You aren't a guinea pig and you always have the choice to discontinue a clinical trial. For metastatic cancer clinical trials, no one gets only a 'sugar pill' like we see on television. These are damaging myths that are keeping patients away from trials where they can access promising treatments and get closely monitored. We hope Melanoma > Exchange is able to shine some light

on the win-win proposition that clinical trials represent," says Kaplan.

We are committed to curing melanoma, but we can't do it alone. That's why Fight Back Give Back is so important.

Learn More About Clinical Trials:

- Find a clinical trial with our easy to use Clinical Trial Navigator!
- Learn more about the benefits and risks, clinical trial myths, how clinical trials work, and more in our Clinical Trial center!
- Read Stories of Patients, Survivors, and Families Affected by Clinical Trials
- Get Social Media Materials to Help Spread the Word About Fight Back Give Back

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