

Clinical Trial Research: What does it Offer?

Clinical trials are research studies in which people may volunteer to participate. A clinical study is designed to answer specific scientific questions. An ethics board reviews a clinical study before researchers are allowed to initiate their study. Participants are selected based on certain criteria. A participant chooses freely to participate or not after reviewing the possible risks and benefits of participation. Some studies will pay for people to participate in their research.

A common question people with brain injury and their families ask is: "Where can I find information on clinical trials for brain injury?" There is not just one answer to this question. Unlike specific diseases, such as AIDS and cancer, there is not a single location where the majority of brain injury clinical trials are listed. A possible reason for this is the nature of brain injury and the level of public awareness. Brain injury is not "one disease." There are distinct stages that occur during the recovery process. For instance, during the acute stage, pharmacological (medication) interventions are geared towards minimizing additional adverse medical consequences. During the post-acute stage, persons are medically stable, but may have cognitive, physical, or emotional impairments.

Locating clinical trials on brain injury can be challenging. The following information offers suggestions for searching for clinical trials and a listing of a sample of clinical trials currently recruiting volunteers.

Considerations when searching for clinical trials:

- There are no guarantees. You may search the clinical trial databases-- and find nothing. There is no guarantee that there is something out there that will help your particular situation. However, you may find that these sites can point you in the right direction.
- The presence of a clinical trial does not automatically mean you will qualify to participate, receive the treatment being offered, benefit from the treatment being offered, or "be cured" of brain injury. Keep in mind, this is research, and at the present time there is no cure for brain injury. Researchers set up a study because they have reason to believe, but are not sure about, an intervention and need more information.
- Discuss the information with your doctor before participating. Research trials are designed to be as risk free as possible, but by their very nature, research trials are looking into the unknown.

Take the time to read through ALL research material, and ask questions. Discuss the information you find with your doctor.

- Participation in clinical trials is a personal choice and may not be for everyone. Choosing to participate or not to participate is an individual decision that should be respected.

Searching the Web for Research Trials

- Search for local universities or large rehab centers. These are places that might be running clinical trials. Sites listed below will help you identify some of the major research centers associated with Universities.
- Some websites offer personal clinical trials notification, and will email updates on trials relevant to a person's interest.
- Some websites require user registration prior to a site search. Most sites only require you to register with an e-mail address.

Some websites may ask for your mailing address, name, area of interest, etc. before they allow you to gather research trial information. Make sure you read their privacy policy before doing so.

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