The Importance of Clinical Trials & The Role of Diversity

Clinical trials are research studies involving human volunteers that investigate how an experimental treatment or intervention might prevent, detect or treat a disease. They are key to medical advancements and the drug development process, as they provide the insights and answers researchers need to bring innovative treatments and interventions to patients.

Clinical trials are often conducted to evaluate potential treatments for patients where currently available options don’t fully address unmet need. They are in many ways the last few steps in a potential therapy or intervention’s development, with years of work culminating in a well-designed effort to understand efficacy and safety in patients so that a new option may be offered to those in need.

To truly understand the efficacy and safety of an experimental treatment, individuals within the clinical trial should be representative of the population who might one day be prescribed the treatment. Recognition of the need for a more diverse representation has prompted an industry-wide effort on inclusive medical research.

Clinical trials can study a variety of treatments and interventions

Planning for a Clinical Trial

A clinical trial is an experiment, and must be designed so that the hypothesis being tested can be proved or disproved at the end of the study. All aspects of the trial must be carefully planned for and detailed in the study protocol, including:

- Why the study is being done
- Who can participate
- The required number of participants
- The groups the participants will be broken into
- What is going to be measured and monitored
- How long the trial will take place
- Where the trial will take place
- What can participants expect

Conducting a Clinical Trial

Recruited patients are then screened for eligibility to participate in the trial. If qualified and willing to participate, patients then become participants. Participation typically involves:

- Full understanding of the investigative study, or Informed Consent
- Completion of study visits
- Treatment with the investigational medicine or placebo (inactive drug for comparison)
- Testing
- Monitoring

Participation is voluntary and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any point in time.

A Commitment to Increasing Diversity

Bristol Meyers Squibb is committed to improving the design and operation of clinical trials by accelerating and expanding health equity and diversity and inclusion efforts.

Bristol Meyers Squibb and the Bristol Meyers Squibb Foundation are each committing $150 million to accelerate and expand health equity and diversity and inclusion efforts, including efforts to increase clinical trial diversity.

Over the next five years, Bristol Meyers Squibb will further extend the reach of such initiatives to underserved patient communities and the Bristol Meyers Squibb Foundation will train and develop 250 new racially and ethnically diverse clinical investigators that can enroll a diverse patient population in trials conducted across the industry.