Clinical Trials

Clinical trials are the link between investigational medicines and vaccines and the discovery of therapies that impact patients who need them. Pfizer is accelerating innovation in clinical trials by finding ways to make the process more effective and efficient – improving interactions with patients, developing complementary partnerships, and breaking new ground in the use of technology.

Partnering to Accelerate Progress

Pfizer has a long history of partnership with academic research institutions and peer companies in the development of medicines and vaccines. We are now extending these partnerships through collaborations with leaders in the technology field.

Currently, Pfizer and IBM are working on potentially groundbreaking research that strives to change the way neurological diseases are treated, using connected devices, real-time data capture and advanced data analysis. In the area of Parkinson's disease, through sensors, mobile devices and advanced machine learning capabilities, we are looking for new ways to track a host of valuable patient data – measuring everything from mobility to sleep patterns – all in real time. This has the potential to help us obtain a better understanding of a patient's disease progression and medication response to potentially inform treatment decisions and clinical trial design.

Infusing the Patient Perspective into Clinical Trials

While there is always a focus on the "what" of developing and validating potential treatments, Pfizer is increasing our engagement with patients and advocates as we develop our individual drug development programs to ensure equal attention to the ultimate "why" – the patients in need. These intensive conversations about patients' daily routines, their activities, which study endpoints matter most to them, and how they can best manage the complexity of participation in the clinical trial, help us build a more effective clinical trial study design process, and is becoming a systemic and routine approach to our development programs.

One example of this engagement is our real-world study simulations. In these simulations, we bring together all the participants – the investigators, the study coordinators and the patients – to test out the actual clinical trial experience in a real-world setting. This accelerates our ability to deliver highly effective clinical trials and lets us better measure not only how our tools are working, but also the human experience with the potential therapy or vaccine in our clinical trials.

Embracing Mobile and Digital with mClinical

In 2015, Pfizer's mClinical Initiatives introduced a range of digital and mobile tools intended to streamline the patient experience in clinical trials, from recruitment through screening and consent to ongoing engagement and tracking. In 2016, we fully embraced mobile as the program expanded to improve the patient experience and experimented with novel ways of capturing data for clinical research. Pfizer's mClinical tools were utilized by 20 study teams in 2016 and some studies utilizing these tools experienced a reduction in protocol deviations, which can improve Pfizer's ability to capture high-quality clinical trial data. Sensors and wearables captured data, iPads facilitated electronic informed consent, and apps for patients' own devices provided appointment tracking and medication reminders – and these were just *some* of the tools brought to the forefront in Pfizer's clinical trials in 2016.

Our work in this area supports the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) goal 3. Find out more on page 34.