SEEKER HEALTH® BY EVERSANA:

PATIENT ENGAGEMENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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As the public health pandemic spreads, EVERSANA has identified challenges facing clinical trial participation, and how these challenges will impact patients now and following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Challenges facing clinical trials

For ongoing studies, the primary concern is the safety and well-being of the participating patients. Clinical trials commonly require participation from patients that may be vulnerable to infection, and travel to sites (based on local governance at the time) could pose a threat of COVID-19 exposure.

Another risk of COVID-19 could be the willingness and ability of potential patients to travel to study sites. Increased patient anxiety and hesitancy to visit healthcare facilities and the contamination risk between patients, sites and the community are also potential variables that will impact trial participation.

Bringing the trial to the patient

The solution to these challenges is adjusting the patient's point of care (POC). The FDA's March 2020 guidance makes clear that the safety and well-being of clinical trial patients be the primary concern of sponsors conducting clinical trials. The guidance issued by FDA recommends that sponsors evaluate whether in-person assessments are necessary, and alternatives to in-person clinic visits and locations be considered.

Despite this guidance, the difficulty of conducting trials in an adjusted POC model is extremely high. Even if companies can add virtual elements to the trial and incorporate more digital technologies to track patients along with enhanced data and analytic capabilities, that doesn't mean that most sponsors can do so or have the expertise to make it happen.

Permanent impact on clinical research

Sponsors will need to establish enrollment agility to manage disruption at some of their sites, identify all options and support services for enrolling more patients at the sites that are able to continue trial enrollment while minimizing patient risk.

Sponsors need to embrace technology and innovation; what was once considered as nice to have study support tools are now mandatory. These tools, such as digital patient recruitment and screening, at-home and telehealth study visits, and direct to patient medication transport, shift the dependence of trial success away from the study site and more wholly on the patient.

These solutions are no doubt here to stay in study conduct and in turn, this will open the door for smarter digital health solutions and patient monitoring apps. What was once considered "remote monitoring" will now become highly accurate, patient centric, data collection tools that enable cleaner trial data, less burden on site staff and more patient compliance.

Thus, at the end of the COVID-19 crisis, more attention and resources will undoubtedly be focused on effective and efficient adaptive solutions in all aspects of clinical research, thereby increasing trial enrollment and ultimately speeding treatments to market.

Through the Seeker Portal™

Supporting patients and providing them with valuable information is key in addressing these priorities. To that extent, our Seeker Health Team has introduced and personalized multi-channel outreach campaigns to inform patients of relevant updates, safety measures and risk levels. This shift in communication focuses on COVID-19 updates while maintaining effective patient engagement to ensure patients' successful participation in a trial.

To best ensure the safety of all patients, outreach campaign tactics must be transparent and include proactive decisions on pausing screening activity. EVERSANA has expertise in developing clinical trial recruitment frameworks, and we are equipped to make screening continuity decisions quickly, mitigating impact on the drug development process.

Seeker Outreach Campaign

CHALLENGE:

Enrolled patients must be kept informed of treatment plans and provided with access to an open channel for questions and concerns.

OUR SOLUTIONS:

- Personalized, ongoing outreach campaigns
- Multi-channel outreach capabilities including email, phone, SMS and social media
- Case Managers to engage patients directly

Seeker Safety Measures

CHALLENGE:

Patient health and COVID-19 risk level must be assessed to ensure the safety of the patient, site staff and investigators.

OUR SOLUTIONS:

- Pre-screening visits
- Assessment of possible symptoms and known exposures

Recruitment Go / No Go

CHALLENGE:

Need to increase screening activities to assess factors that may prevent patients from completing full course of treatment given escalating COVID-19 risk and containment measures.

OUR SOLUTION:

- Predefined triggers and risk/benefit frameworks for screening continuity