5 Clinical Trial Myths

1. Clinical trial participants might receive a placebo rather than real therapy - Placebos, or inactive medications, are never used in place of the best known standard of care and are rarely used at all in cancer clinical trials. If a placebo is used, it is given along with an active drug.

2. Clinical trials can delay treatment or limit other treatment options - Clinical trials do not limit access to other care; they are completely voluntary. A participant can withdraw from a trial at any time and for any reason to pursue a different course of treatment.

3. Clinical trials are not safe because the effectiveness of the treatment is unknown - The ultimate purpose of a clinical trial may be to determine the effectiveness of a new therapy. However, extensive research is conducted on a new treatment before it's tested with trial participants to ensure safety. Additionally, regulations are in place to protect patients' rights and ensure trials meet strict scientific and ethical standards.

4. Clinical trials are only for patients with advanced cancers - While there are clinical studies only for patients who have tried all treatment options or who have a cancer that is seldom seen, there are also many trials for first line treatment, common cancers, and other subjects of interest.

5. Clinical trials are only offered at hospitals or academic facilities - Today clinical trials are offered in many settings, including community-based cancer centers. Patients can access the newest trials with the same resources and expertise as a large health system, right in their community.

Consultants in Medical Oncology and Hematology and Abington Hematology Oncology Associates offer clinical trials through US Oncology Research, one of the largest community-based research programs in the U.S. with over 60 research sites. US Oncology Research has enrolled over 80,000 patients in clinical trials and played a role in nearly 100 FDA-approved cancer therapies.

Clinical trials are offered at the following locations:

Research line: 215.658.7240

CMOH Consultants in Medical Oncology and Hematology

Broomall
30 Lawrence Road, Ste 201
Broomall, PA 19008
Phone: 610.492.5900

Abington Hematology Oncology Associates

Horsham
201 Gibraltar Road, Suite 120
Horsham, PA 19044
Phone: 215.706.2034

Cancer Clinical Trials

Delivering Tomorrow's Treatments Today

CMOH Consultants in Medical Oncology and Hematology

Abington Hematology Oncology Associates

215.658.7240
CMOH.org | CancerPA.net

Cancer clinical trials are research studies to find better ways to prevent, diagnose, or treat cancer. For many patients, a clinical trial provides a new treatment option that may be safer or more effective than existing therapies. Patients considering a trial should understand the risks and benefits so they can make an informed decision about participation.

Who Is Eligible for a Trial?

Many patients are eligible to participate in a cancer clinical trial. Depending on the study, participants may need to meet certain criteria for type and stage of cancer, age and sex, general health and previous treatment received. These requirements make sure it's safe for each participant to receive the new treatment.

Cancer trials don't just test new drugs – they focus on many different areas, which means a wide range of patients may be eligible for participation.

Trials aim to study areas such as:

Prevention

Diagnosis

Treatment

Quality of life or supportive care

Screening and early detection

Genetics

Clinical Trial Stages

Drug development is a careful process and requires several years of study before a drug is approved for use. Clinical trials usually occur in stages that build on each other. Knowing the phase of the trial helps patients understand how much is already known about the treatment, an important factor when deciding whether to join a trial.

Phase I

Aims to identify a safe dose and decide how the treatment (or new use of a treatment) should be administered. Determines how the new treatment affects the body and fights cancer. This is tested with a small group of patients, usually 15–30.

Phase II

Determines if the new treatment has an effect on a specific cancer, and continues to study how the new treatment affects the human body. This is usually a larger group of around 100 or less patients.

Phase III

Compares the new treatment with the current standard treatment. This is the largest group of participants with anywhere from 100 to several thousand.

Phase IV

Examines long-term safety and effectiveness after the drug is approved by the FDA.

Understanding the Benefits and Risks

Like all medical procedures, there are both risks and benefits to participating in a clinical trial that should be carefully considered.

Potential Benefits to Patients:

- Access to the latest, most promising treatments which might be safer or work better than current treatment options
- Close monitoring by the care team of the patient's condition and treatment side effects
- An increase in the number of treatment options, even if the patient has not yet had all the standard treatments
- In some cases, the study sponsor may share the cost of care with patients
- A sense of purpose for patients, since they might be helping others who have the same condition in the future

Potential Risks to Consider:

- The treatment might not be better, or even as good as, the existing therapy
- Unexpected side effects may occur, or side effects may be worse than those of the current standard treatment
- Just like existing treatments, a new treatment may offer many benefits to some patients, but may not work for every patient
- Extra patient care costs in a trial may not be covered by health insurance and managed care providers. Coverage varies by each plan and for each study.