HealthManagement
Promoting Management and Leadership

How to Enhance Patient Engagement in Clinical Trials?

Patient engagement in clinical trials is vital, as it improves the trial design, ensures accurate data collection, and helps retain patients throughout the trial duration. Understanding technological advancements is essential for healthcare professionals to support patients and make clinical trials a more seamless experience. Here are five ways technology is influencing patient engagement.

Trial-Specific Websites for Informed Participation
The internet has become a crucial source of information for individuals exploring healthcare options. Biopharma sponsors are capitalising on this by developing patient-facing, trial-specific websites that provide comprehensive details about their trials. These websites offer critical information, such as trial benefits, risks, and eligibility criteria, empowering patients to self-identify for a trial and start the pre-screening process. Including features like site finders allows patients to locate nearby research sites, while digital pre-screening forms enable quick eligibility verification.

For physicians, these websites have become a powerful tool. By aggregating and sharing relevant links, they can assist patients in integrating trial participation as part of their care plan. Patients benefit from having easy access to pertinent information and resources, which fosters active participation in recruitment and enrolment. Additionally, these digital platforms enable immediate engagement with research teams, thus expediting the patient's journey from considering a trial to actively participating in it.

Texting Systems for Efficient Scheduling and Communication
As 90% of adults in the U.S. own smartphones, texting has emerged as a simple yet effective way to improve communication between research sites and patients. Patient texting systems offer convenient reminders for appointments and updates on schedule, allowing patients to confirm or change appointments with just a few clicks. This direct line of communication saves time, reduces disruptions to daily life, and reinforces that trial participation doesn't impose an undue burden on patients' schedules.

For research professionals and healthcare teams, these texting systems facilitate timely responses to patient concerns or questions, enhancing engagement. Streamlined communication helps patients adhere to their visit schedules and stay actively involved throughout the clinical trial. By making it easier for patients to communicate and engage with their care team, trials can maintain steady participation and improve data quality.

API Connections to Expedite Patient Referrals
In the recruitment process, timely follow-up with potential patients is crucial. Traditional methods of processing patient referrals through phone calls or emails can cause delays, often leading to decreased interest over time. To address this, technology vendors enable open API connections that send patient referrals directly to research site systems from referral vendors, ensuring that interest in the trial is addressed promptly.

This integrated approach revolutionises the pre-screening workflow by allowing healthcare professionals to reach out to potential trial candidates within 48 hours of referral while their interest is still high. The ability to follow up rapidly helps retain patients in the enrolment funnel and reduces dropouts. This direct, streamlined process supports a smoother transition from pre-screening to screening, making it more likely for patients to complete the necessary steps to determine eligibility.

Digital Tracking of Patient Dropouts to Identify Engagement Issues
Beyond exclusion criteria, patients often choose to drop out of trials voluntarily due to various factors, such as perceived risks or burdens. To combat this, research site teams are increasingly tracking reasons for patient dropout digitally, providing sponsors with valuable insights. By sharing these patterns through clinical trial technology platforms, sponsors can detect trends in patient disengagement and make informed

adjustments.

For instance, if patients frequently cite concerns about risks or inconvenience as reasons for dropping out, sponsors can improve trial-specific educational resources to address these issues or offer services like transportation to reduce logistical burdens. Healthcare professionals can encourage patients to share honest feedback, allowing data collection to improve trial designs and engagement strategies for future clinical trials.

eSource Solutions to Enhance Patient Visit Experiences
Using eSource solutions transforms the way source data is collected during patient visits. Traditionally, research staff relied on paper documentation, which often required flipping through pages and manually filling out information—a process that could make patients feel disengaged or rushed. eSource simplifies this process with protocol-specific electronic templates, allowing staff to complete data forms efficiently while focusing more on patient interaction.

Digitally tracking progress during visits ensures accurate data collection and significantly reduces visit times, sometimes by up to 50%. By enhancing the quality of face-to-face interactions and minimising paperwork distractions, eSource technology ensures that patients feel heard and valued, making the trial experience more positive and encouraging active engagement.

Technology is pivotal in enhancing patient engagement across all stages of clinical trials—from recruitment and enrolment to ongoing participation. Introducing trial-specific websites, efficient texting systems, API connections for quick referrals, digital tracking of patient dropout patterns, and eSource solutions collectively contribute to better patient experiences and more efficient trial processes. Technology fosters greater patient satisfaction and participation by improving communication, reducing burdens, and supporting real-time data collection, ultimately driving successful clinical trials and advancing healthcare outcomes.

Source: HIT Consultant

Image Credit: iStock

Published on : Mon, 7 Oct 2024