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The sequelae

The personal, economic, and cultural upheaval from the coronavirus tragedy has changed our lives. The numbers, which during the early days of reported cases were abstract for most of us, have taken on new meaning in the subsequent months, as most of us now know someone who has contracted the virus or who tragically has lost someone to COVID-19.

Researchers and scientists continue to learn more and more about this disease and its long-term effects. This data, along with other research, is being used by a multitude of companies working toward developing new vaccines, new testing methods, and new medications. We are seeing our industry push as never before — or for as long as many of us can remember — to meet the future of now. Gold standard processes are no longer satisfactory to meet the demands of a virus that knows no boundaries. New ways of thinking, acting, and reacting are pushing many of us out of our comfort zones. The often-used phrase of “new normal” is open to interpretation and uncertainty. Should we accept normal — new or not — to be what we aspire to? Or, should we take this opportunity to be anything but normal and embrace the extraordinary? Would it be so bad to rise to a new level and continue to push the boundaries of what was once accepted?

The future is now, and we have the capacity to make it remarkable for our families, for our patients, for our businesses, and for our industry. We continue to see what exceptional means right now in everyday life by all of the healthcare workers, first responders, and essential workers — many of whom will remain anonymous heroes — who unselfishly put themselves in harm’s way for our greater well-being. We will forever be in their debt.

At the same time, we need to remain vigilant about caring for our most vulnerable populations, including non-COVID-19 patients whose clinical treatments have been interrupted. A recent survey conducted by Clinical Research IO shows that investigators conducting clinical trials on a wide range of diseases are experiencing significant interruptions in their trials due to the ongoing coronavirus crisis. The results showed 24% of investigators reported that they have stopped enrolling new patients due to patient safety concerns, and of the 76% remaining investigators, more than one-third, or 37%, indicated they are considering halting new patient enrollment. These numbers could have a devastating and long-term impact for everyone involved in clinical research.

Dr. Marcus Stone, CEO of The Spine Institute of Louisiana Foundation, one of the clinical investigators quoted in the research, says due to COVID-19 restrictions in healthcare, clinical trial activity has largely come to a halt, which will lead to a significant slowdown in new drug and device development.

To minimize the negative impact across the board, especially in the approval numbers of breakthrough new medications needed to address a host of serious and rare conditions, we will need to be extraordinary in our thinking and our actions — the antithesis of normal.



Their word...

ROBIN ROBINSON
Senior Editor



The expectation of an “Amazon” experience in healthcare interactions will require a new marketing hybrid model of both consultancy and agency in one.

KIM RIBBINK
Features Editor



The digital twin could help to solve many challenges in R&D and manufacturing by accurately predicting many behaviors.

June 2020

- ▶ The Changing Clinical Trial Landscape
- ▶ Behavioral Science Marketing
- ▶ Digital Medicines
- ▶ Machine Learning
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Taren Grom
Editor