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PUBLISHER Lisa Banket

EDITOR Taren Grom

CREATIVE DIRECTOR Marah Walsh

SENIOR EDITORS

Robin Robinson

Kim Ribbink

FEATURES EDITOR

Carolyn Gretton

DESIGN ASSOCIATE

Ariel Medel

NATIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGER

Suzanne Besse

NATIONAL ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVE

Amy Bishop

WEBCAST NETWORK PRODUCER

Daniel Limbach

CIRCULATION ASSISTANT

Kathy Deiliulis

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The clinical trial horizon

The rise of decentralized clinical trials, otherwise known as DCTs, is the hottest topic in the clinical research arena at the moment, and appropriately so. The global pandemic exposed significant cracks in the structure of how clinical trials have been conducted for decades. As we start to embrace the beginning of the end of the first phase of life after the pandemic, there is hope for a better tomorrow for patients, clinical research sites, and sponsors. There are definite win-win-win possibilities. With increasing buy-in around virtual or hybrid trials, there are opportunities to streamline the entire drug development process from patient recruitment to database lock. Most experts agree that a fully virtual experience is not appropriate for every trial or every indication; at the same time all of the experts we have spoken to over the past 14 to 15 months do believe there is an opportunity to include a tech-enabled solution to every trial that will deliver improved efficiency, a reduced timeline, or a better ROI. In this month's Showcase Feature on Clinical Trial Solutions, industry experts explore the opportunities of DCTs as well as other major trends impacting clinical research, such as AI, wearables, and enhanced patient engagement.



Another added benefit of the DCT evolution is the ability to reach more diverse patient subpopulations, many of which have been woefully underserved either because of geography, economic standing, or cultural influences. Hopefully, DCTs will be able to address many of the health inequities that were illuminated during the pandemic. Already we are seeing the industry make strides in this direction. In one of this month's feature articles, we just scratch the surface of the health inequity issues that disproportionately impact at-risk populations based on social and economic conditions and their effects on people's lives, which are clear determinants of their risk of illness and the actions taken to prevent them becoming ill or to treat illness when it occurs.

Another clinical trend we are tracking is the momentum around personalized medicine. While there is still a good deal of work to be done, in this month's cover story we explore the advances in big-data analytics that are increasingly being employed to extract targeted information with the potential to drive life-sciences research and clinical practice closer to the goal of personalized and precise medicine.

As we look forward to our second virtual DIA experience, these are just a few of the trends that we will continue to track. We are excited to launch a series of initiatives around this annual meeting with our Countdown to DIA, which kicks off Monday, June 21 with a virtual Super Panel: A Tech-Enabled Clinical Future featuring a dozen industry experts. We are honored to donate each \$25 registration fee to Girls Who Code, a national nonprofit organization working to close the gender gap in technology. We hope you are able to join us for an engaging 90 minutes and do some good at the same time.

Taren Grom
Editor

Their word...

ROBIN ROBINSON

Senior Editor



To reach the up-and-coming Gen Z generation, pharma needs to promote a positive purpose and strong values, and use digital channels.

KIM RIBBINK

Senior Editor



Addressing health disparities requires dismantling systems of oppression and engaging marginalized communities in trusted, meaningful ways.

CAROLYN GRETTON

Features Editor



The lightning-swift advances in data collection have led to both breakthroughs and challenges in analyzing and interpreting this information for use in personalized and precision medicine.

July/August PharmaVOICE 100

Who will you know on the list?

We received a record number of submissions this year — thank you to all who took the time to put forward their nominations. We wish we could recognize everyone.

See who's on the 2021 list on August 1!