



Methods and Perceptions of Success for Patient Recruitment in Decentralized Clinical Trials

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Background

Patient recruitment, enrollment, and retention continues to be one of the leading barriers to successful clinical trials, and results do not always reflect the diversity of the general population. This systematic review aims to assess the impact of decentralized methods on recruitment, retention, and diversity on recent clinical research.

Methods:

A systematic search of the literature, using databases such as PubMed, Cochrane Library and EMBASE to find publications reporting on the aspect of recruitment in decentralized clinical trials was performed. The titles and abstracts of the publications were assessed, excluded those lacking sufficient or pertinent information regarding decentralization in clinical trials. The remaining publications were reviewed for those reporting sufficient data regarding the impact of decentralization on the aspect of recruitment in clinical trials to be included in the focused analysis. Studies reporting on participant retention and diversity in addition to recruitment were emphasized.

This systematic search returned 13 studies highlighting the role of decentralized clinical trial methods impacting participant recruitment, retention, and diversity in clinical trials.

Results:

Out of the 13 studies, 10 reported improved recruitment using virtual or decentralized methods, and 7 of these reported improvements when compared alongside traditional methods. 7 studies reported a positive impact on participant retention, with 4 of these directly comparing decentralized methods with traditional methods. Lastly, of these studies, 5 were reported to have trended towards diversity in the demographics of the sample population, including race or geographic location. Related reviews have stated a lack of published comparable data to determine if DCTs (Decentralized Clinical Trials) improved recruitment and retention. Results suggest this review addresses such a gap, by providing data on how decentralized methods can benefit recruitment and retention, potentially highlighting a new standard.

