5 Major Ways in Which Mobiles Reshape Clinical Trials

Mobile technology has gained a tremendous role in many different industries. But somehow its deeper presence has yet to be incorporated into clinical trials, as they have lagged a little bit behind. Even though mobile devices have been used as effective instruments that bring a variety of benefits to different areas, to some extent, research companies still remain reserved when it comes to relying on entirely technology-oriented practices. There are concerns related to the legal or regulatory-compliant settings coupled with the overall conservative nature of this particular sector that prevent the widespread adoption of mobile tools to happen at faster rates. Fortunately, things are changing and slowly but surely new trends arise in healthcare. Trends which have an impact on clinical studies as well. Researchers, sponsors and even regulators all across the world begin to acknowledge that the future of clinical studies very much depends on technology. And with the growing popularity of smartphones, tablets and other similar devices, their massive implementation in pharmaceutical organizations is foreseen to soon become an inseparable part of routine tasks and many good practices.

**HOW MOBILES RESHAPE CLINICAL TRIALS?**

Life science companies are constantly searching for new means to push clinical studies forward, while trying better currently used techniques. Nurturing mobile devices and embracing their comprehensive set of capabilities is a way to foster the research industry and introduce it to a completely different level of advancement. Thus, mobiles are able to restructure the industry in several ways.

- Increased patient involvement

One of the key factors that ensures bigger patient involvement is information. People want to be informed and sometimes the lack of adequate or easy to access material costs the clinical trial field a huge number of volunteers. In other words, the decreased levels of informativeness may lead to decreased levels of patient engagement. Which becomes a real drawback for specialists, especially when they try to recruit as many clinical trial participants as possible. Using mobiles, however, is observed to pose optimistic outcomes. Providers who offer health information that can be read on smartphones can collaborate with people more effectively. On top of this, they reach to mutual informed decisions almost effortlessly. In this sense, mobiles provide with innovative consumer-centered models with a focus on patients' involvement. These models, for instance, make sure that patients receive instant messages, push notifications and reminders on their phones whenever there are updates or new information available.

- Collecting objective data

One of the trickiest things in clinical research is gathering objective data from participants regarding their health condition. With mobile tools, researchers and other personnel involved are given a chance to go through this process much more smoothly. Because the functionalities of mobile developments extend, pretty much, on a daily basis, the sector is enabled to reach a phase which will benefit experts from a new class of information. In many ways that information is critical to unfolding revolutionary treatments but was still too difficult to obtain before the adoption of smart technologies.

- Remote monitoring

Since very often one thing leads to another, caregivers can not only receive objective data thanks to mobiles, but they can also monitor the progress of the treatment, using different activity trackers available on their mobile devices. Such increasingly pivotal measures, in fact, become useful tactics that deliver real-time and real-world observations of how a certain treatment is going, what effects it has on the targeted group of people, how they respond to it as well and how they behave. What is more, caregivers can also enter information about the symptoms, medications and regular check-ups. On the other hand, patients can store prescription details or additional specifics as to when to take their prescribed medicaments. Lastly, instead of wasting time and money on going to follow-up visits, patients can take advantage from virtual check-ups and similar routines thanks to many mobile applications.

- Recruitment

Enrolling patients for clinical trials is lengthy and costly process. There are plenty of challenges and obstacles, including recruitment bias or specifications in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, health conditions. Location can also turn into a problem. Sometimes the people appropriate for a given drug testing are too far away and they indicate traveling as the main thing that stops them from taking part in a trial. The use of mobile phones addresses these difficulties and effectively manages to tackle them. Hence, mobile technology facilitates online patient recruitment and allows people to participate in research remotely. In 2015 Medidata Solutions aimed to try online recruitment for a study that included mobile health app – Fitbit. The application was used to evaluate activity levels and assess quality of life of 20 patients diagnosed with mild to moderate Type 2 diabetes.

Kara Dennis, Managing Director of mHealth for Medidata Solutions, indicated that; “We worked with a clinician who believes that two very effective strategies for the management of Type 2 diabetes are increased activity and a healthier diet, which can help to better manage levels of glucose in the bloodstream. We wanted to evaluate whether mobile tools could improve adherence to a prescribed regimen of diet and exercise, and we measured this by looking at endpoints of blood glucose, weight, and activity.” She, then, continues and adds that; “When we started the trial the industry still seemed to be in the early phases of exploration,” she states. “We felt that by taking this on we might be able to accelerate the progress of adoption by demonstrating the effectiveness of this type of trial. We were able to show that it is possible to work through any operational challenges that might arise.”

- Saves time and money

Going back to all of the previously stated advantages of mobile integration in clinical trials, it is simply impossible to omit the fact that this trend can actually saves a lot of time and additional costs. If a participant can apply for trials and participate online, then he definitely won’t have to take extra money out of his pocket. Same goes for trial organizers and researchers. They can perform various trainings, consultancy and meetings by simply using their mobile devices. It is safe to say that, such technologies ostensibly diminish the burden of investing money and time for tasks that can be done and maintained online.

On the whole, technologies' effect on clinical trials is tremendous for both participants and organizers. Mobile devices assist professionals when they have to process voluminous data quickly, help them get enough insight in early development stages, allow volunteers to take part in remote clinical studies and, finally, deliver time- and cost-effectiveness in many ways. And despite the fact that not all companies within the Pharmaceutical, Medical and Clinical sector welcome such technology-based trends openly, there are many others that have seen what mobiles can do, and, therefore, cultivate their use.

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