

Recruitment and Retention of Underrepresented Populations in Clinical Trials

Abstract

Clinical trials are important for testing whether medical treatments are safe and effective. However, many clinical trials do not include enough participants from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. This can make it difficult to apply research results to all populations. This literature review examines the reasons why some groups are underrepresented in clinical trials and evaluates strategies to improve recruitment and retention. Studies show that barriers such as transportation, work schedules, childcare responsibilities, and financial costs can limit participation. Communication challenges and mistrust in research may also reduce enrollment. Evidence suggests that active and participant-centered strategies such as phone calls, text reminders, and community partnerships can improve participation. Together, these barriers show that multi-dimensional recruitment strategies improve retention. Overall, the research indicates that combining multiple strategies is more effective than relying only on traditional recruitment methods.