Clinical studies are designed to add to medical knowledge relating to the treatment, prevention, and diagnosis of diseases.

Two main types of Clinical Studies:

**Clinical trials** (or interventional studies): compare a new medical approach to a standard one that is already available, or to a placebo that contains no active ingredient, or to no medical intervention at all.

**Observational studies**: assess health outcomes in a group of participants according to a research plan. Participants may receive interventions as part of their routine care, but they are not assigned by investigators.

Every federally supported clinical study must be approved and monitored by an **Institutional Review Board** (IRB). An IRB is made up of doctors, researchers, and community members. They ensure that the study is ethical and the participants’ rights and welfare is protected.

For help with medical terms, visit the MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia: medlineplus.gov/encyclopedia.html

For a detailed guide to using the database, visit: clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/help

Not all studies listed ClinicalTrials.gov are evaluated or funded by the Federal Government. It is the responsibility of the study sponsor and principal investigator to ensure scientific validity of the submitted information.

ClinicalTrials.gov is a database of privately and publicly funded clinical studies conducted around the world.

**Patients and Families**

Search for actively recruiting studies that you may be able to participate in or learn about new interventions/treatments that are being considered.

**Researchers**

Search the database to stay up to date on developments in your field, find collaborators, and identify unmet needs.

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Front panel photo freely available by Hush Naidoo on Unsplash.com
Created and managed by the National Library of Medicine/National Institutes of Health this database about clinical trials gives information to the public about studies in which new drugs, diagnostic procedures, vaccines, and experimental therapies are tested in people to see if they are safe and effective.

Start with a simple search for trials by condition, treatment or location. The results will show you:

- what studies are being conducted
- whether a trial is recruiting,
- the purpose of the study
- where and when it will take place
- whom to contact
- sources for more information.