Clinical trial publications

ABSTRACT
Clinical trials are observations or experiments performed in clinical research. It is customary for researchers to publish their interim findings during the course of the trial. However, publishing the final results and outcomes is imperative. The CONSORT statement was developed to aid the randomized control clinical trial’s authors to standardize the reporting of the trial’s design, analysis, and interpretation of the results. Readers need to understand all the trial outcomes irrespective of whether they are beneficial or harmful as these impact future research. Well-reported clinical trials are a must as these provide the basis for systemic reviews, meta-analyses, and eventual clinical guidelines.

Key words: Data reporting; epidemiology; publishing; research; research design

Introduction
A clinical trial is a prospective biomedical or behavioral research study that involves the participation of humans. The trial is designed to answer questions about particular interventions such as new medications, vaccines, dietary supplements, and medical devices, amongst others. The most common type of clinical trial is a randomized control trial (RCT). RCTs are the gold standard research design to evaluate and efficiently translate research data into clinical practice. In such a clinical trial, the participants are randomly allocated to either the “intervention group,” which is the group receiving the treatment under study, or else allocated to the “control group.” The latter group receives standard treatment or else a placebo treatment. It is customary for the process to be blinded (single or double) apart from being randomized.

A clinical trial is set to progress through four phases; however, not all trials reach the end phase due to various reasons such as the development of an unexpected complication(s) or mortality, amongst others.

It is important that clinical trials get registered to national clinical trial registers and obtain an authentic trial number. Trials can be registered to more than one register simultaneously. Such a registering process ensures transparency of the trial design while the outcomes are authenticated and patented to the research body.

Publishing Clinical Trials
It is common practice that during the ongoing trial phases, the researchers start to publish interim findings. In order to aid such reporting, the CONSORT statement has been developed for the reporting of RCTs. The CONSORT statement is made up of a 25-checklist guideline and a flowchart that aids the author to present the trial’s protocol, results, and outcomes in a scientific and ethical manner. In fact, a number of journals are considering the CONSORT
manuscript is of utmost importance to ensure identification of the manuscript as describing a clinical trial. Furthermore, correct indexing also enhances the visibility of a researcher’s work and increases the citation potential of the published manuscript. Citation of published manuscripts is imperative for the enhancement of the researcher’s research metrics and for increasing the prestigious acknowledgment of the researcher and his/her work within the scientific community.\(^9\)

**Conclusion**

Clinical trials should have their interim and final outcomes published in scientific journals. Journal editors should permit the publication of the trial’s outcome(s) irrelevant of its beneficial or harmful nature. Clinical trial publications provide the basis for systemic reviews, meta-analyses, and eventual clinical guidelines.

**Financial support and sponsorship**

Nil.

**Conflicts of interest**

There are no conflicts of interest.

**References**