Clinical vs. Medical Treatment

by BRENDA VANTA

The Difference Between Clinical Research and Medical Treatment

Chronic pain burdens millions of people worldwide, and many don’t get see improvements they’d hoped for in their current therapy. For this reason, scientists are continuously looking to find better solutions for Chronic Pain. What is the difference between a clinical trial and your regular treatment? Here is a brief summary:

The Goal

The goal of a medical treatment is obvious; you take certain drugs in attempt to improve the symptoms of your Chronic Pain.

The goal of a clinical trial is to research (with the help of participants) better treatments and to lead investigations that could potentially help the future generations. They are generally designed and intended to benefit future patients; a study can take up to seven years to fully complete.

The Cost

You pay for your medical plan from your pocket or via a designated healthcare plan. Drug developers and various government agencies fund clinical trials. You do not have to pay for the drugs, lab tests or any other investigation during the clinical trial. More than covering the cost of the drugs, researchers will compensate you for your time, and sometimes they will also cover travel expenses, childcare or other costs associated with your involvement in the study.

The Duration

The treatment plan provided by your doctor is ongoing, until your condition has improved and no longer requires medication. Many individuals with Chronic Pain will use medication throughout their entire lives. On the other hand, clinical trials last anywhere between couple of weeks and a few years, depending how the study was designed.

Doctors’ Visit

See your doctor as needed, or when he or she suggests you have a follow up. A doctor will see you throughout the clinical trial, but these appointments will be on a regular basis and will involve systematic evaluation of your symptoms and therapy.

Certainty of Benefits

Your doctor will only recommend specific drugs and procedures that are considered safe and effective, based on

medical guidelines and the medical community. Conversely, the drugs or interventions used in clinical trials have not yet a proven benefit; the research is in progress and had been designed to test the safety and efficacy of that test or drug.

Consent and Release of Findings

You will have to sign an informed consent in order to participate in a clinical trial. A medical treatment often involves your consent, although some treatments, some emergency procedures for example, may not always involve your consent.

The results of a clinical study are published in medical journals and are made available to public, once the research study is completed. On the other hand, your individual records from your medical treatment are private.

Patient Protection

The wellbeing and safety of a patient is protected in both cases. In the case of medical treatment, state boards of medical practice, professional standards, informed consent, peer review and applicable law protects patients. In the case of clinical trials, governmental agencies, institutional board reviews, informed consent and any applicable law protect patients.

There are clear differences between your regular treatment and becoming involved in a study. Talk to your GP to find out if and how you can benefit from enrolling in a research study.