



VIRTUAL trials demand
REALITY-based patient
recruitment and retention.

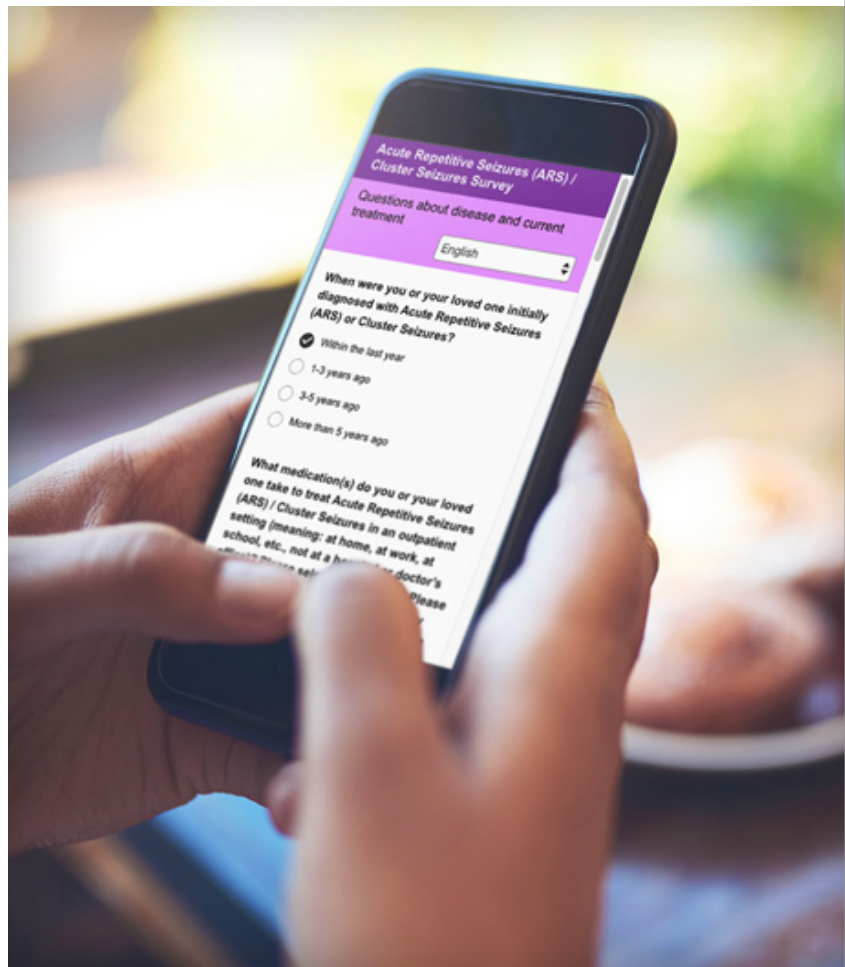
Virtual trials, real benefits.

They may be called virtual, but their benefits are real. Decreased implementation timelines, higher retention rates due to in-home convenience, and a wider geographic pool of patients from which to recruit. Virtual trials move the needle forward. But to fully realize their benefits, several key areas need to be addressed.

Program planning augmented by patient surveys.

Understanding patient needs and how to keep them engaged is even more important when you can't rely on the personal relationship between site staff and potential participant. The solution? Patient surveys. Surveys can uncover myriad details about patient lifestyles and concerns, impacting almost all aspects of the trial.

Patient surveys can be used to reveal patient experiences, uncover patient communities to aid recruitment, and most importantly, begin a relationship with the patient so that she or he does not feel isolated throughout the course of the trial.



**FIVE DAYS
850 RESPONSES**

Merge has implemented dozens of successful online patient surveys. In fact, one recent survey received 850 responses in just five days!
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Discoveries from the first virtual trial.

Pfizer launched the first virtual trial in 2011—the REMOTE study. As the clinical team discovered, the technology needed to implement an in-home, patient-centered clinical trial solution was not the main challenge—patient recruitment was.

Leveraging patient survey data. Discovering the best avenues to reach virtual trial patients.

By definition, virtual trials can't simply add more sites if enrollment lags. Nor can they rely on sites' patient databases.

The key is leveraging patient survey data to discover the best avenues for reaching virtual trial patients. This often includes online outreach, particularly since the Internet is the top source of clinical research information for patients.³

**29% LACK PATIENT
FEEDBACK**

29% of all trials conducted never gather feedback from patients outside of clinical data required by the protocol.¹ Patient surveys could be exactly what holds a virtual trial together.

*"We demonstrated our ability to distribute blinded investigational drugs directly to the patients in their homes and then use creative tools and platforms, mobile and web-based, to capture data from those patients. Now what we failed to do was to find enough eligible patients."*²

- Miguel Orri, Pfizer's then-director of clinical services



Determining the right tactics.

Virtual trial recruitment depends on a portfolio of tactics determined by the disease state. This may include advocacy outreach and outreach to online forums and communities—tactics that allow you to find patients and funnel them into the virtual platform *immediately*.



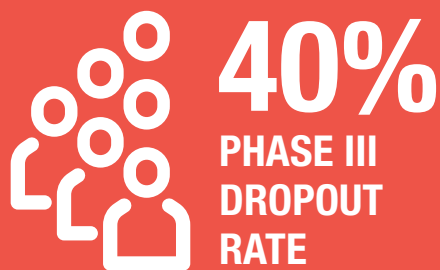
**PATIENT
GLOBAL
OUTREACH**

Having a partner that can quickly operationalize patient outreach on a global scale is key. Merge has implemented online campaigns to great success.

READ CASE STUDY

Better retention starts with better educational tools.

Thanks to the convenience of web-based and mobile trial apps, the initial data for patient retention in virtual trials look promising. Adding home care visits by skilled nurses should also boost patient engagement and study buy-in.



- Retaining patients is a major issue. 40% of Phase III trial subjects drop out of studies.⁴
- Educational materials are key for virtual trials. Short of a direct discussion about the trial with their physician, patients turn to educational materials exclusively.⁵
- One of the best ways to engage patients is through the use of video.

Video engagement rates are vastly higher than print.

A recent study revealed that people spend an average of 2.6 times more time on webpages that contain video than those without it.⁶ This fact is critical in the context of a virtual trial, in which patients interact less with investigative site staff. That said, patient education videos must promote active learning and minimize cognitive load.⁷ In this highly visual age people respond to video messaging.



2.6x more
**USER TIME SPENT ON WEB
PAGES CONTAINING VIDEO**

Merge has deep experience creating and producing informed consent, patient education, and trial support videos that improve patient compliance rates and minimize isolation.

Realizing the promise of virtual trials.

Virtual trials hold great promise for CROs and sponsors to help minimize their costs, accelerate drug development timelines, and diversify the overall patient pool. Patients living in remote areas have greater



access to studies without having to travel to a research center. Access to trials improves diversity—both in geography and ethnicity and it also assists especially vulnerable populations. Combined with proper attention to key global recruitment and retention practices, in addition to innovative patient engagement tactics, the promise of virtual trials will not only be realized—it will be greatly enhanced.

About Merge

Founded in 2003, Merge is wholly focused on patient recruitment and retention services. We offer targeted, strategic planning, flexible creative options and innovative problem solving. For more information on our virtual trials solutions or other services, contact Lindsay Jackson—Lindsay@MergeLLC.com, 919.832.3509.

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