Overview

Mobile health continues to be a hot topic in the drug development services industry as companies explore ways to leverage its use to optimize clinical trials and improve engagement with participants and patients.

Recently, SCORR Marketing, in partnership with Applied Clinical Trials, conducted a survey to gather information about mHealth initiatives, regarding the use of mobile phones, patient monitoring devices, tablets, smart phone apps and other wireless devices in the industry.

Global respondents included individuals from service providers, consultants, CROs, academia and labs. Those taking the survey had job functions of corporate management, project management, medical affairs, strategy/planning, QA/QC, business development/sales, product management, marketing, clinical research associates, market research, trial recruitment, consultants and IT.

In the survey, information was gathered on:
- The biggest benefits of mHealth technologies in clinical trials
- The biggest challenges mHealth poses
- What factors are making it difficult for companies to implement mHealth
- Therapeutic areas where mHealth is most useful
- What companies want to achieve with mHealth technologies
What is mobile health technology?
It includes a variety of devices such as smartphones, wireless laptops, portable medical devices, wearable devices, and others.

How far along is the industry’s use of mHealth technology?
80% say it is in the early stages.

What are the biggest benefits of mHealth?

- Improved data quality: 35.2%
- Improved patient engagement: 28.5%
- Improved early safety signal detection: 17.2%
- Improved patient recruitment: 12.3%
- Improved patient trial adherence: 12.3%
- Improved sponsor CRO-to-site communication: 6.6%

In what therapeutic areas would mHealth be most useful?
Recipients selected their top 3 most useful.

- Cardiovascular or cardiac safety studies: 84.3%
- Respiratory: 52%
- Sleep studies: 42%
- Oncology: 38%
- Depression/mental health: 38%
- Neurology: 31%
- Dermatology: 7%

What mHealth technologies can be effectively used in a clinical trial?
Respondents felt that disease-specific wireless health monitoring would be the most effective mHealth technology used in a clinical trial.

What challenges are you facing in pursuit of your mHealth goals?

Biggest Challenges = Internal knowledge $ Funding $ Organizational buy-in

79%
More than 60 percent say their company follows their competitors’ mHealth initiatives.

Does your organization follow what your competitors and others in the industry are doing in mHealth?

60% consider it very or extremely important to use mHealth.

50% utilize mHealth technology.

What are the primary objectives that you want to achieve with mHealth?

- Improved data quality: 61%
- Improved patient trial adherence: 58%
- Improved patient engagement: 54%

Who should regulate the development and use of mHealth in clinical trials?

- FDA: 42%
- Industry: 39%
- 19% chose an independent third party.

What are the major challenges mHealth poses?

- Security: 22%
- Cost: 20%
- Data Validation: 19%
- FDA Acceptance: 18%
- Patient Compliance: 12%
- Patient Training/Burden: 11%
- Site Training/Burden: 9%

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Does your organization use mHealth in your clinical trials and protocols and how important is it?

- 60% consider it very or extremely important to use mHealth.

What is the most important reason for using mHealth in clinical trials?

- Improved data quality: 61%
- Improved patient trial adherence: 58%
- Improved patient engagement: 54%

When will your clinical trials incorporate an mHealth component?

- 49%: 2015
- Within the next year
- 78.3%: More than a year

If currently using mHealth in clinical trials, how long has it been in place?

- 2015: 49%
- Within the next year
- 78.3%: More than a year
Key Takeaways

- Improved data quality is the biggest benefit mHealth offers and is a main objective of most respondents. mHealth is also having an impact in patient trial adherence and patient engagement.

- Disease-specific wireless health monitoring is the most effectively used mHealth technology in a clinical trial.

- Key challenges for mHealth technology include security and cost.

- Respondents consider mHealth to be most useful in cardiovascular studies or when cardiac safety is a concern.

- It is a toss-up between the FDA and the industry itself as to who should be regulating the development and use of mHealth in clinical trials.

- Companies recognize that they need to confront internal obstacles by improving their own mHealth knowledge and expertise and obtaining stronger support from key leaders.

- More than half of respondents currently use mHealth technology.

- Nearly half of respondents plan to incorporate mHealth technology in their clinical trials within the next year. Only 14 percent say they have no plans to implement mHealth technology.