

According to a recent poll conducted by CenterWatch, the global center for research trial information, a full 75% of the general public state that they have little or no knowledge about medical research. This common lack of understanding is why over the next few months this series of articles will explain a little about this important scientific field and about what it means to volunteer as a research participant. After all, this is a valuable resource that many more people would probably take advantage of if they understood more about it.

The many new medications and treatments that are constantly being developed to improve our quality of life by pharmaceutical companies must go through a similar process before they are made available to the public. New drug research begins with years of laboratory experiments, and extensive testing in animals. If this phase of testing is successful the pharmaceutical company then provides the study data to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), requesting approval to begin testing the drug in humans.

The FDA is responsible for ensuring the safety of those people who volunteer to participate in research. To accomplish that it has imposed mandatory safeguards and regulations, in addition to requiring that each clinical research study follow a carefully constructed protocol. This is a detailed written plan that describes the need for the study, the purpose of the study, and how exactly the study is to be conducted. This protocol must be approved by the FDA and an Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is an independent group of experts, before a study can be initiated. Research sites throughout the United States must carefully conduct studies in strict adherence to the study protocol in order to assure participant safety as well as accurate and standardized data. As a further step to ensure that volunteers are not exposed to undue risk and that their rights are protected the IRB also monitors the research being conducted.

(To be continued)

To learn more about medical research and what studies are currently enrolling participants please visit the website of Horizons Clinical Research Center, LLC www.horizonscrc.com or call 303-399-4067.