

Advancing Inclusive Research

Fact: people of color are vastly underrepresented in clinical research.¹

This is not a new phenomenon—historical events like the Tuskegee Syphilis Study and the abuse of indigenous populations have led to a deep, pervasive mistrust of medicine among BIPOC communities. Health disparities also make it more difficult for members of historically underrepresented communities to access clinical trials. Only 5 to 15% of clinical trial participants are from communities of color.² The barriers are clear: the events of history combine with current socioeconomic disparities to make it exceedingly difficult for people of color to participate in clinical research.

Why is inclusive research important?

In order to know if a therapy works for all types of people, it must be tested on all types of people. Modern computing allows scientists to develop personalized treatments for patients. By testing trial participants who mirror those living with a specific condition, scientists can identify important biomarkers that serve as indicators of disease. However, these treatments can only be effective if they are built on a foundation of robust data. A lack of access to clinical trials means that communities of color miss out on potentially life-saving therapies when they need them the most.

How can the barriers to advancing inclusive research be overcome?

Genentech has committed to advancing inclusive research by forwarding the following large-scale initiatives³:

- **Diversifying clinical trial recruitment and site selection.** Genentech is working with community hospitals to meet patients where they are. Traditionally, clinical trials have taken place in large-scale research hospitals and patients had to take time off of work and pay for expensive travel arrangements. By localizing clinical trial research, a wider array of people can have access to potentially life-saving care.
- **Developing relationships with historically disenfranchised communities.** The process of building trust with members of marginalized communities is time-intensive and crucial work. By developing relationships with community leaders and organizers, Genentech can establish powerful alliances that help level the playing field when it comes to health disparities.
- **Enhancing personalized healthcare.** There is still so much more to learn about what makes each of us unique. The personalized medicine movement regards each patient as an individual with a distinct health journey. Genentech's push to learn about clinical outcomes in patients of color will result in a greater understanding of how and why treatments work differently in different bodies.

What does inclusive research look like in the future? The spotlight that shone on the clinical trials for the COVID-19 vaccines brought urgency to the issue of underrepresentation in scientific research. In order for research to truly be inclusive, it must involve practitioners from historically marginalized communities. Representation allows future generations of students to envision themselves as leaders and serve as bridges that connect their communities to clinical research.

^{1,2} Genentech. "Pursuing a New Paradigm in Inclusive Research."

³ Genentech. "Advancing Inclusive Research."