

Recruitment in Reverse: Motivating Patients to Find the Study

For a fertility study, we needed to recruit young women who had had at least three unexplained miscarriages and who were currently trying to conceive. The field of prospective recruits was huge: all women 18 to 37 years old living in the United Kingdom.

The challenge: cost-effectively reach, screen, and randomize 150 patients. The solution: motivate them to reach us by replacing patient recruitment with a wide-reaching study marketing campaign.

Finding a hidden patient group

We knew going in that identifying patients from within such a large population would be difficult, so the first decision we made was to not think about the women as traditional recruits, but as the target demographic in a marketing campaign.

We needed to approach them not as patients, but as healthy young women with lives to live and things to do.

We presented the study much as one would promote a typical consumer brand, developing a strong logo and graphic look and promoting it where this audience spends much of its time: Facebook and Twitter.

We weren't so much recruiting patients as making friends.

Getting the message right

We worked with the Miscarriage Association to get the emotional tone just right. We analyzed traffic in detail and made continuous improvements. After a slow start, interest took off, and every week 50 to 100 patients visited the study website by following links from social media. The website invited them to complete a simple prescreening form.

Study teams contacted the applicants, identified those who had become pregnant, and converted them to screened patients. Then we invited investigators, study nurses, and midwives to a recruitment retreat where they shared their experiences and developed site-specific approaches to handling the applicants with the support of our team and the sponsor.

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Study Description:

Randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled Phase II study of a recombinant human granulocyte colony stimulating factor (G-CSF) designed to reduce the likelihood of miscarriage in women with a history of recurrent miscarriage

Therapeutic Area:

Women's Health

Indication:

Reproductive Medicine

Geographic Scope:

Approximately 20 sites across the U.K.

Patient Population:

151 patients who have had three or more unexplained miscarriages and who are currently pregnant

Patient Commitment:

Self-injection of medicine and, once pregnancy occurs, 12 clinic visits over 20 weeks of gestation

Primary Outcome Measure:

Clinical pregnancy at week 20 of gestation

Outcome:

Patients are now in follow-up



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