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Community Based Patient Engagement: The Missing Link in Cancer Research

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FutureMeds

2025

Welcome

At FutureMeds, we believe meaningful progress in oncology trials comes from working together with patients, clinicians, the wider community and sponsors. Our community-based patient engagement model is designed to remove the traditional barriers to oncology trials, expanding access and accelerating results. I invite you to explore how this model can complement your trials and bring research closer to those who need it most.

Dr Piotr Rozpondek, PhD
Managing Director
FutureMeds Poland

Finding answers faster, together.

FutureMeds is an independent, fully-owned European Site Network and DCT service provider dedicated to running patient-centric clinical trials and delivering quality data for the world's leading Sponsors & CROs. With 24 strategically located sites, over 220 experienced investigators, and more than 1350 homecare providers, FutureMeds offers site and DCT solutions across most therapeutic areas and provides reliability, efficiency and accuracy to help clients accelerate patient access to new treatments.

What's coming up

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Executive Summary

$80 billion is spent annually in oncology R&D, but patient enrollment in clinical trials remains below 5% globally.

Despite increasing awareness and willingness among patients, only a small fraction of individuals with cancer participate in clinical trials. For decades, participation rates have stagnated between 2–8%, reflecting persistent systemic, logistical, and informational barriers.

At FutureMeds, we believe the missing link is a **community-based, patient-centric engagement mode**l that seamlessly integrates decentralised trial (DCT) elements. This model complements traditional hospital-based approaches by addressing the structural, geographic, and relational barriers that limit trial access.

Our ambulatory oncology solution is designed to:

- **Build trusted local oncology communities** that offer patients alternative treatment options
- **Engage and support oncologists** with streamlined processes and trial awareness
- **Bridge the efficacy-effectiveness gap** by reaching more representative patient populations
- **Improve patient access and convenience**, allowing participation in familiar environments
- **Enable broader adoption of DCT elements**, bringing innovative treatments closer to home

Early observations from our dedicated research sites suggest that this approach supports **faster recruitment, better retention potential, and comparable safety and compliance** when measured against traditional hospital-based settings.

By shifting the clinical trial experience closer to patients' everyday lives, we aim to increase participation in oncology trials — and, ultimately, help more patients access life-changing therapies when time matters most.

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Wojciech Szczepanik
Executive VP Site Operations
FutureMeds

A cancer diagnosis can be devastating not just for the patient but for their entire family. In those moments, many people are willing to try anything that offers hope. While more approved therapies are available than ever before, for some, clinical trials represent the best and sometimes only chance at a better tomorrow.

At FutureMeds, we believe that access to trials shouldn't be limited by geography, system constraints, or delays. Our mission is to create a new model, one that puts patients first, shortens the path to treatment, and brings cutting-edge options closer to home.

That's why we're building expertise across multiple oncology indications. But success in this space isn't just about winning trials, it's about helping patients access them quickly and easily.

Our dedicated research clinics, supported by a highly diverse team and experienced Patient Services staff, are designed to do just that. We ensure patients can connect with the right specialists based on diagnosis, access the necessary imaging and diagnostics quickly, and begin the screening process without unnecessary delays.

We've already gained experience in lung and breast cancer and are now expanding into solid tumours, melanoma, and haemato-oncology with the same goal: to make oncology trials more accessible, timely, and human-centred.

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The Underlying Problem

Reliance on an outdated structure & system

Cancer remains a pressing global health issue, with advancements in treatment largely driven by robust clinical research. Yet despite the significance of oncology trials, the broader patient population seldom participates. Astonishingly, estimates suggest the rate of patient participation has not moved from 2–8% in the past few decades.

This underrepresentation affects everyone:

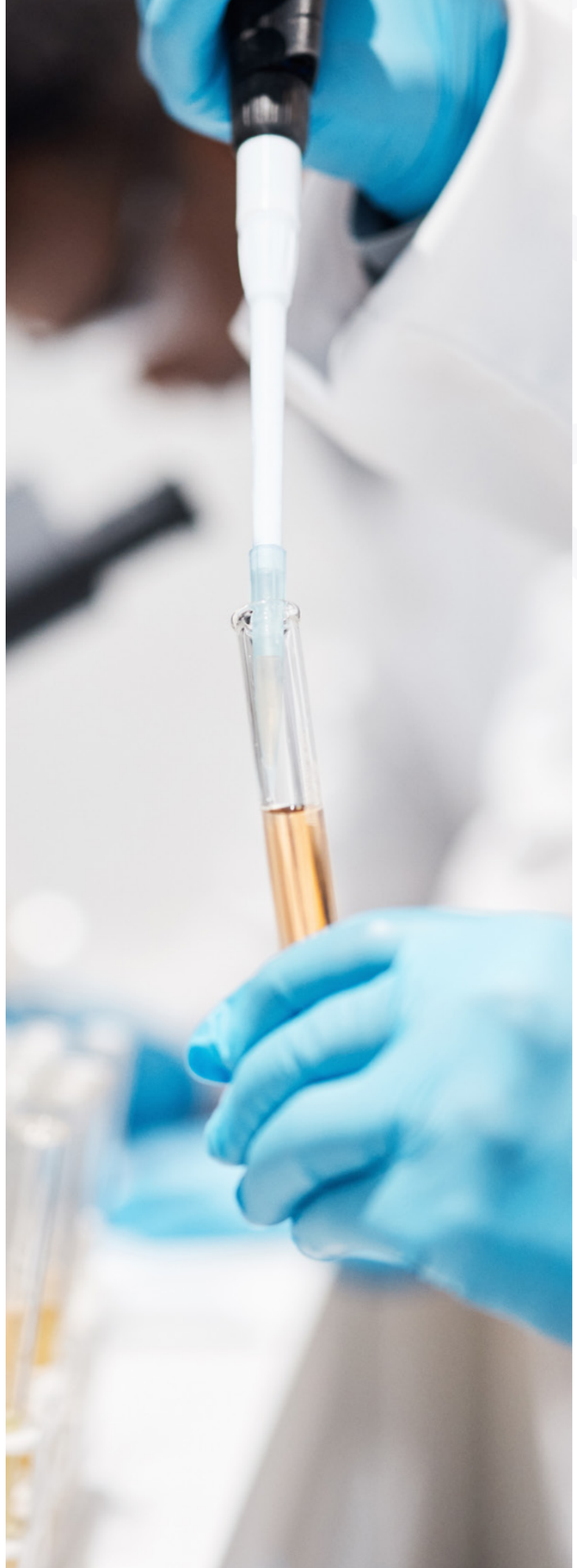
- **Patients** miss out on potentially life-saving treatment options.
- **Oncologists** may struggle to offer trials due to system constraints.
- **Sponsors** face delayed timelines, slower approvals, and limited real-world applicability of new treatments.

> *"Many of the patients who could benefit most from new therapies are never even presented with the chance to join a clinical trial. Oncologists and hospitals may not be aware of available trials that could increase their patients' treatment options."*

Iwona Tongbhoyai
Chief Client Solutions Officer

The Key Challenges

Outlining the barriers of oncology trials in traditional settings



Challenges in the Hospital-Based Model

Hospitals have traditionally served as the epicentre of oncology research. Yet, these environments are often overstretched and under-resourced:

- **Staff shortages and post-pandemic backlogs** limit capacity for research
- **Clinicians can be overburdened**, juggling clinical care and trial responsibilities
- **Lack of dedicated outreach** means patients outside of hospital databases are rarely reached

These limitations result in slow recruitment, impact retention, and uneven representation of the wider cancer population.

The Structural, Physician, and Patient Barriers

Although barriers to trial participation have been thoroughly studied, over time, the rate of trial participation has not changed substantially. FutureMeds' community-based patient engagement model is designed to address the most persistent obstacles across three key dimensions

Structural Barriers:

- **Trial Availability:** Limited availability of trials relevant to a patient's histology or cancer stage
- **Clinic Access:** Accessibility issues for patients who may live far from or feel overwhelmed by hospital visits

Physician Attitudes:

- **Protection of physician-patient relationship:** Physicians may prefer treatments they know well, fearing the uncertainties of trial protocols and how those might reflect on them
- **Practical considerations:** In busy hospital environments, physicians are often deterred by the perceived burden of the enrolment process
- **Administrative burden:** The extra paperwork and administrative duties associated with clinical trials can be daunting

Patient Attitudes:

- **Fear of experimentation:** Concerns about randomisation and side effects of experimental therapies
- **Practical considerations:** Financial or logistical worries, such as travel distance
- **Peer influence:** Family and the treating physician's own preference tend to shape patient decisions

In addition to these barriers, strict eligibility criteria and socioeconomic disparities further restrict access, disproportionately affecting underserved populations and limiting the generalisability of trial outcomes.

To move the field forward, oncology trials must evolve beyond hospital walls. Meeting patients where they are physically and emotionally is essential for improving participation and accelerating innovation.

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The Missing Link

FutureMeds' Community-Based Patient Engagement Approach

For decades, oncology trials have relied on hospital-based infrastructure, a model that, while effective in certain settings, has failed to overcome long-standing barriers to access, equity, and efficiency.

FutureMeds is leading a transition from purely hospital-centric oncology trials to a more patient-centric, ambulatory model that expands the possibilities for all stakeholders.

Rooted in our experience operating dedicated research sites and delivering decentralised solutions across Europe, our model is designed to:

- **Reduce patient burden** by increasing access
- **Enhance PI collaboration** through streamlined support and shared responsibility
- **Accelerate recruitment** by reaching beyond traditional site databases
- **Strengthen retention** by bringing trial elements to patients
- **Strengthen trial quality** through specialised staff and consistent operational oversight

> *"Our Community-Based Patient Engagement Approach is transforming how and where oncology trials can be conducted, ensuring greater convenience, broadened access, and faster progress in this critical field."*
>
> **Dr Piotr Rozpondek**
> PI & MD at FutureMeds Poland

**As of March 2025*

Bringing Trials to the Community by Tackling the 3 Main Barriers

Breaking Down Structural Barriers

- **Accessible Locations:** All FutureMeds sites are well-connected and easily approachable by public transportation
- **DCT Flexibility:** Where protocols allow, FutureMeds @home services offer in-home trial procedures (such as blood draws and IMP administration), alleviating the travel burden
- **Wider Trial Availability:** Through dedicated site operations and central support, FutureMeds can secure a broader range of trials in local communities, increasing the chance that a relevant trial is available for a given patient's histology and stage

Influencing Physician Attitudes

- **Reduced Administrative Burden:** Our centralised support team manages patient engagement, enrolment, and data entry — freeing oncologists to focus on critical patient care and the scientific aspects of the trial
- **Specialised Research Staff:** Fully dedicated research coordinators ensure quality control, expedited startup, and efficient contract management
- **Aligned Incentives:** By removing operational hurdles, we encourage physicians and specialists to confidently refer patients to appropriate trials without extra paperwork or fragmentation

Shaping Patient Attitudes

- **Comprehensive Support:** Our approach extends beyond merely enrolling patients; we engage specialists, caregivers and families, offer transparent information, and build local oncology communities
- **Convenience & Normalcy:** By offering the option for certain procedures at home and limiting unnecessary travel, patients experience a sense of normal life during trials
- **Clear Information:** We proactively address concerns about side effects, randomisation, or perceived costs, empowering patients with knowledge and reassurance

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The DCT Difference

Increasing Patient-Centricity & Access With Decentralised Elements

Many cancer patients would prefer to stay home for certain aspects of the trial. FutureMeds' decentralised trial (DCT) approach makes this possible safely, efficiently, and compassionately.

Dr. Parkitny, who works across hospital, private, and hospice settings, has seen firsthand how patients value the ability to maintain a sense of normalcy during treatment. Even when receiving outpatient chemotherapy via an infusion pump, patients want to return home, not remain in clinical settings longer than necessary.

In trials where DCT elements are integrated, home visits can make a critical difference. For example:

- **Blood draws, medication administration, and monitoring** can all be done at home, reducing patient fatigue and logistical burden.
- **If a pump malfunctions, a trained clinical team can visit the patient** instead of requiring them to travel back to site.
- **Remote monitoring tools, including wearables and telehealth platforms**, allow for real-time tracking of patient vitals without disrupting daily life.

> *"Some tiring procedures for patients, such as blood draws after each cycle, intravenous medication delivery, and comorbidity management, could be done in the comfort of the patient's home."*

Dr Michal Parkitny
PI at FutureMeds Krakow

These elements do more than improve convenience. They help:

- **Increase trial inclusivity** by enabling participation from patients who would otherwise be excluded
- **Boost retention** by removing stressors that lead to dropout
- **Generate richer real-world data**, connecting trial performance with day-to-day patient experiences

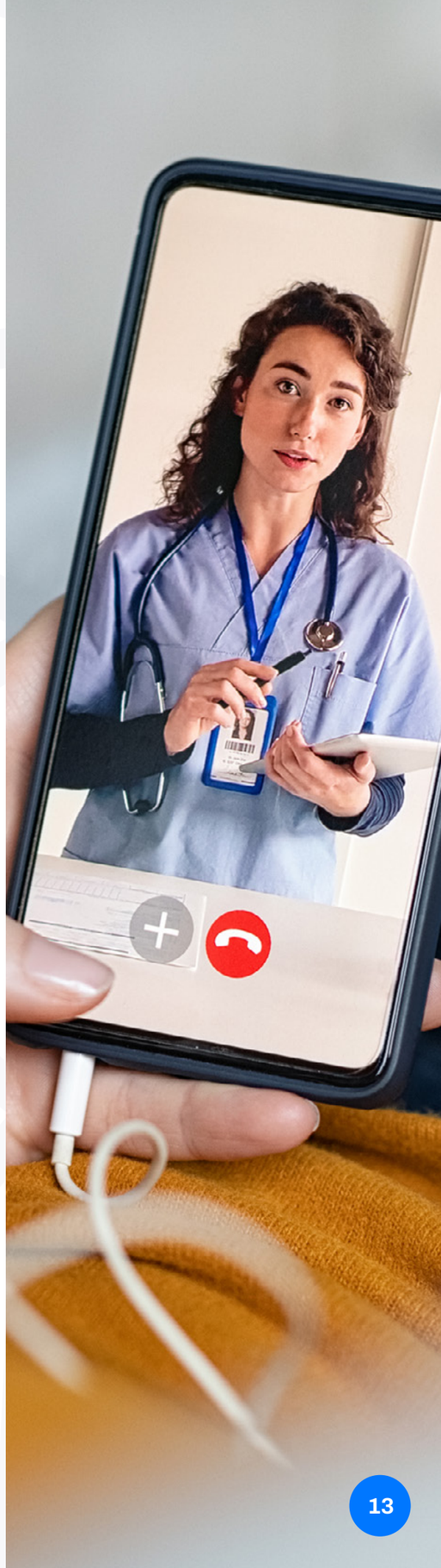
Our DCT-Ready Capabilities Include:

Home Visits: Flexible, protocol-driven procedures delivered directly to patients' homes

Remote Monitoring: Wearables and telehealth consultations that reduce site burden and patient travel

Real-World Data Capture: Home-based interactions offer more naturalistic insights into treatment impact and quality of life

Built on our operational excellence and experience with decentralised solutions, our ambulatory oncology program serves as an ideal platform to enhance patient access through decentralised elements. Since 2012, FutureMeds @home has prioritised the patient in the trial process while ensuring that sponsors have confidence that decentralised components are implemented with the same rigour, oversight, and quality as traditional in-clinic care.



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The Promising Results

Improving patient engagement, startup timelines & physician satisfaction

Our early experience with community-based oncology trials is promising and already delivering meaningful results.

At our **dedicated research site in Krakow**, FutureMeds became the **second-highest global recruiter** in an oncology trial in 2024, successfully randomising 12 patients in under 12 months and outperforming several well-established hospital-based sites. This achievement underscores the potential of our patient-centric, ambulatory model to scale recruitment without compromising quality.

While comparative data from hospital settings is still limited, **qualitative insights from clients and Principal Investigators** consistently highlight:

- **Improved** patient engagement
- **Faster** startup timelines and fewer operational delays
- **High** satisfaction among patients, caregivers, and referring physicians

To build a robust evidence base, we are working toward benchmarking our model against traditional settings across three categories:

1. Structural Indicators

We aim to track and improve:

- % of sites with oncology-specific SOPs in place
- % of fully staffed investigator teams (PI, nurses, pharmacists, lab support)
- % of personnel trained in oncology research and GCP standards

2. Process Indicators (in progress)

Once hospital comparator data becomes available, we plan to assess:

- Recruitment rate
- Inclusion rate
- Proportion of patients referred from outside existing databases
- Percentage of protocol deviation
- Number of grade 3-4 related adverse events per number of enrolled participants
- Number of serious related adverse events reported per number of enrolled participants

3. Outcome Indicators (longer-term goal)

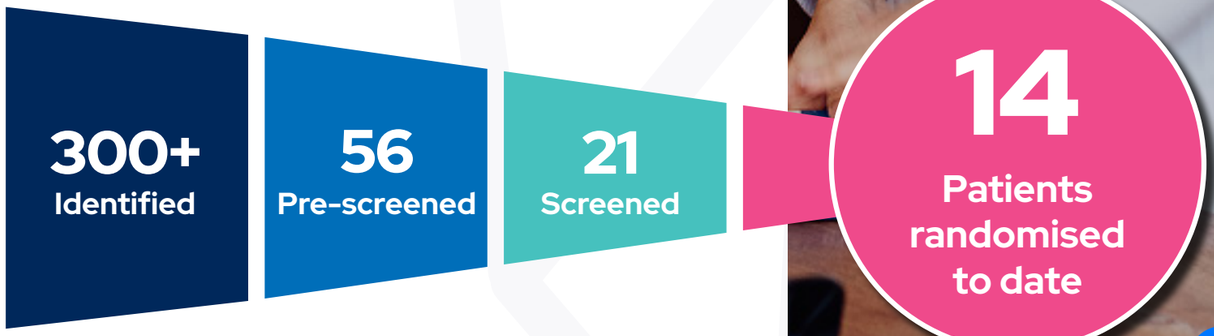
In the future, we aim to measure:

- Median survival outcomes
- Patient satisfaction with care and trial experience

While quantitative data is still in development, early results and stakeholder feedback point to significant potential across key performance indicators. Additionally, the early momentum of our model and the operational performance of our ambulatory oncology program suggest that a community-based model can meet, and possibly exceed, the standards set by traditional oncology trial environments.

FutureMeds' community-based patient engagement approach and research background have allowed us to build the capacity to conduct oncological trials safely in primary care.

Based on stakeholder feedback, oncology trials conducted by FutureMeds showed comparable and better recruitment with hospital-based settings. In terms of process indicators such as retention, protocol compliance, and safety based on our internal data and client newsletters, we assume a comparable performance. Satisfaction with health services based on feedback is comparable. We don't have any data yet on median survival indicators.



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Your Trial Delivery Partner

Working together to find answers faster

Transforming Oncology Trials

FutureMeds' Community-Based Patient Engagement model is more than just a new approach. It's a step change in how sites approach oncology trials. By enhancing accessibility, alleviating physician burdens, and reimagining patient engagement, we aim to increase participation, close the efficacy-effectiveness gap, and bring innovative therapies to the patients who need them most.

If you are interested get in touch to explore how your trial or institution can benefit from our patient-centric, community-based patient engagement model.

About FutureMeds

At FutureMeds, we are building the future of a patient-centric clinical research organisation differentiated by our capability to deliver studies efficiently anywhere on the spectrum from site-centric to virtual trials. There's no other fully owned, independent, dedicated site network in Europe that also offers a proven decentralised service with over a decade of experience in bringing trials to patients' homes.

In the oncology field, our mission is to push the boundaries of patient-centric research, ensuring that oncology trials are more accessible without compromising on quality, safety.

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CONNECT WITH US

Get in touch

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