

# NEWS FROM SPOHNC

September Spotlight

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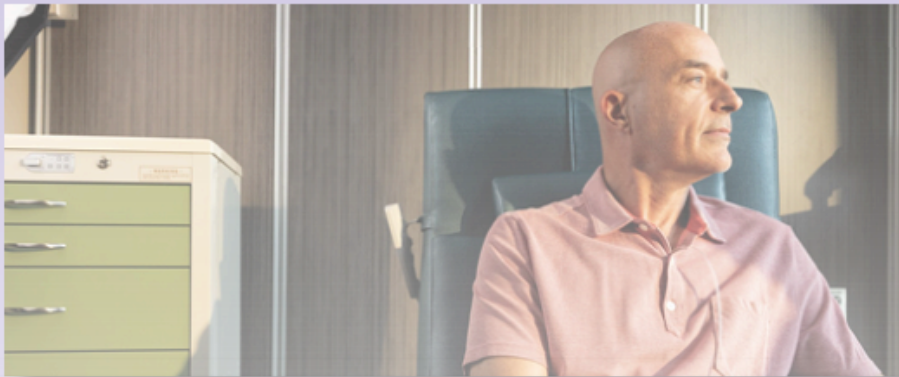
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# Oncologist Reveals Benefits of Cancer Clinical Trials

Written By: Wasif Saif, M.D., MBBS

Many myths surround clinical trials and their potential risks and benefits. Below, I answer some common questions to combat myths with facts to help illustrate the importance and potential benefits for patients considering participating in cancer clinical trials.



## What Are Clinical Trials?

Clinical trials are research studies that involve humans who volunteer to evaluate new treatments, drugs, vaccines, medical devices, behavioral interventions, or screenings. They are the best approach to discovering whether certain drugs, treatments, or devices are safe and effective for patients. All medical therapies or screenings must undergo clinical trials before being approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for regular use in the United States. Clinical trials are also performed to compare newer treatments to the current standard of care or to improve on them.

## What are the benefits of clinical trials?

The most important benefit of participating in a clinical trial for patients is having early access to potential new treatments, drugs, vaccines, medical devices, behavioral interventions, or screenings before they are available to the general public. Many cancer patients who participate in clinical trials receive the new treatment or screening before FDA approval and become available to cancer patients.



Wasif Saif, M.D., MBBS

Leader, Phase I Clinical Trials Multidisciplinary Team  
Co-Leader, Gastrointestinal and Neuroendocrine Multidisciplinary Team

Wasif Saif, M.D., MBBS, has been recognized as an internationally renowned expert and key opinion leader (KOL) in the fields of gastrointestinal (GI) cancers, experimental therapeutics and pharmacogenetics, as well as an exemplary clinician. He has been involved in the development and management of clinical trials with a focus on translational research, standardization of treatment algorithms, collaboration among different modalities, mentorship of junior staff and training physicians and medical students for the last two decades.

His major contributions include:

1. He has coordinated and led several clinical trials in GI cancers, including pivotal trials of agents later approved by the FDA for use in several tumor types.
2. Dr. Saif has extensive experience in writing and performing phase I dose-defining or hypothesis-driven studies. He has collaborated with teams that led to translational cancer research at Yale University, Columbia University, Tufts University, and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories.
3. An important part of his research involves translational studies focused on GI carcinogenesis, predictive biomarkers, and resistance mechanisms of cancer therapeutics. These studies include several "team science" collaborative projects with investigators from other institutions, "systems biology" approaches to analyzing and understanding genetic pathways and signaling networks.

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