

Clinical Research Offers Treatment Options

When psychiatrist Shivkumar Hatti, pictured to the right, began his clinical practice in Media, Pennsylvania almost 40 years ago, his focus was treating patients with psychiatric disorders. Although he prescribed medications to help ease symptoms, he said he never thought much about the research required to develop the drugs his patients needed.



Today, as the principal investigator and CEO of Suburban Research Associates, Hatti is helping to discover new drugs to treat mental health conditions. He was recently featured on CBS channel 3 in Philadelphia for a promising new drug treatment for obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). The new drug, made by Biohaven Pharmaceuticals, targets a brain chemical called glutamate, rather than the traditional OCD drugs that target brain chemicals serotonin and dopamine.

“The drug works on the symptoms of anxiety. If the anxiety comes down, compulsion to perform an activity will also come down,” Hatti said in his television interview.

Clinical research is a branch of medical science that helps determine the safety of and effectiveness of new drug treatments. Suburban Research Associates conducts FDA (Food and Drug Administration) approved studies with volunteers who qualify for specific treatments. Patients are evaluated and monitored throughout the study, with 24-hour access to a psychiatrist, at no cost. Volunteers may opt out at any time during the study.

“It wasn’t until I got involved with this, that I realized the importance of clinical research trials,” Hatti said. “Drugs are expensive. A clinical trial can be an option when cost is an issue.”

The option to join a clinical trial can provide other benefits as well, Hatti noted. Individuals who have experienced treatment-resistant symptoms or long wait times to see a psychiatrist, as well as those who have felt the financial strain of expensive medications, may consider participation in a clinical trial. Individuals can find out more about specific studies at the Suburban Research Associates website. <http://suburbanresearch.com/>

“My interest is to look for something new,” Hatti said. “Patients who take part in the studies are helping with that. The FDA needs data and the volunteers are really the medial heroes.”

End