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IMPROVING CLINICAL TRIAL SUCCESS IN APAC THROUGH PATIENT-CENTRIC DESIGN

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The competitiveness of global clinical studies is primarily concentrated in North America and Europe, which hold a significant portion of the market share. In recent years, Asia has displayed rapid growth due to factors such as efficient patient recruitment, large populations, and reduced administrative burdens.

Asia has the largest population and generally lower costs for conducting studies, making this region a suitable choice for clinical research. However, these advantages are accompanied by challenges including the diversity of regulatory frameworks, healthcare systems, and cultural environments resulting in added complexity. Managing this environment effectively requires a comprehensive understanding of local conditions, strategic coordination, and adaptable operational models, which Medpace has developed through over 20 years of experience supporting clinical studies in Asia.

MEDPACE ASIA-PACIFIC EXPERIENCE:

WHY APAC REQUIRES A PATIENT-CENTRIC APPROACH TO TRIAL DELIVERY

Patient-centric trial delivery in APAC means designing and running studies around the needs, realities, and preferences of local patients and caregivers across Asia-Pacific's highly diverse markets. Regional operational teams with deep country-level knowledge, such as those at Medpace, can map real referral journeys, understand typical time-to-diagnosis, and identify trusted community channels. This makes it possible to design:

- Recruitment strategies that align with local patient pathways.
- Visit schedules and burdens that reflect local travel and work patterns.
- Educational materials that are adapted to local languages.

APAC is now one of the fastest-growing clinical research regions, with large, diverse patient populations and an expanding investigator base across China, Japan, South Korea, Southeast Asia, and India. Because of this fast-growing market, there is a need, now more than ever, for designing and running studies around the realities of local patients, caregivers, and healthcare systems, rather than forcing a global template into every market. Sponsors that invest in regional insight, patient advocacy partnerships, and tailored engagement strategies typically see faster enrollment and better retention.

Local operational teams with long-standing relationships to APAC sites can translate this insight into realistic country-level enrollment curves.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE APAC RECRUITMENT LANDSCAPE

Asia-Pacific countries have a diverse patient population and a significant number of treatment-naive patients, presenting various opportunities. However, there are also challenges, including regulatory restrictions, patient concierge services, and the preferences of individual sites. Some countries or sites may refuse to use educational materials due to their own preferred methods for discussing trials with patients.

To reduce complications Medpace has a dedicated Patient Recruitment and Retention (PRR) team readily available that offers a range of tools and collaborates closely with advocacy groups to enhance recruitment efforts.

Patient and Site Educational Tools

Patients in Asia-Pacific countries generally prefer to obtain information about clinical trials from trusted physicians or established health systems, rather than from external advertisements or unreliable sources. As a result, the most successful methods for recruiting and retaining participants focus on culturally appropriate educational materials for both patients and research sites. These materials help to build trust, enhance understanding of the trial process, and prepare site staff to effectively educate and support patients. Research sites in the Asian region find the greatest benefit in tools such as:

- **Study Reference Card** – Available for sites to use for on-hand reference.
- **Site Talking Points** – Aid site personnel with key points, including risks and benefits, in discussions with their patients.
- **Pre-screening Checklist** – Speed up chart review and/or database review process to find more eligible potential patients.
- **Brochure** – Inform potential participants about the study, answer key questions, and provide contact info to learn more.
- **Study Handbook** – Improves compliance and retention by giving patients more detailed info on what to expect during the study.
- **Patient Journey** – Visually breaks down the participation process to patients understand beforehand what they're signing up for.

Advocacy and Site Engagement

The presence of patient advocacy in Asia is increasing, particularly in the area of rare diseases, though engagement varies significantly across different therapeutic areas and countries. Advocacy efforts are typically strongest in Australia, Japan, China, South Korea, and Taiwan. In this region, physicians remain the primary and most trusted source of information for patients. When appropriate, advocacy engagement can serve as an effective complement to site efforts for certain studies that require broader outreach beyond health systems.

The Medpace PRR team has experience collaborating with Patient Advocacy Groups in Asia, primarily through site engagement rather than direct outreach to these groups. For rare disease studies, our engagement strategy includes connecting with sites to explore any existing advocacy relationships they may have and encouraging them to utilize those connections to engage with patient networks.

In a similar vein, sites will often prefer to own the responsibility of patient community events, such as a patient education forum or seminar. Medpace's PRR team is readily available to assist and facilitate as needed, for creating educational materials or guiding discussions amongst Health Care Providers, etc.

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE, PATIENT-CENTRIC TRIALS IN APAC

To succeed in APAC, Sponsors must design trials around real patient journeys, not just protocols on paper. By combining regional operational expertise, strong relationships with local sites, and structured collaboration with patient advocacy groups, biotech leaders can:

- Accelerate recruitment across diverse, treatment-naïve populations.
- Improve retention by reducing burden on patients and caregivers.
- Navigate complex regulatory and cultural landscapes more efficiently.

For leaders, investing in patient-centric strategies is not only the right thing for participants, but also a practical route to more predictable timelines, higher-quality data, and a stronger competitive position in one of the world's most dynamic clinical research regions.

ASIA PACIFIC DRUG DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

As a global CRO with an operational footprint across 46 countries with 6500 employees, Medpace has broad experience designing and conducting Phase I-IV clinical trials around the world. Our medical, regulatory, and operational experts have the resources to advance your medical therapeutic on a global scale. Since establishing our Asia Pacific presence in 2004, our medical and operational specialists have country-specific expertise, which allows them to integrate local language, culture, and requirements into study conduct, to deliver faster enrollment, and obtain access to country-specific patient populations. Our regulatory experts can plan and coordinate each aspect of regulatory strategy and engagement, both locally and globally.

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