

Improving Equity and Inclusivity in Multiple Myeloma Clinical Research

MMRF sponsored a 1-day workshop of 46 experts spanning the ecosystem of multiple myeloma (MM) research and care to discuss specific, tangible steps to overcome the well documented barriers to improving the diversity and inclusivity of clinical trials

Why It Matters

Black patients account for ~20% to 27% of individuals who are diagnosed with MM in the US; however, enrollment of Black patients into MM clinical trials has been estimated at only 4% to 5%. Given the differences in incidence, diagnostic timing, disease biology, and treatment access across racial and ethnic groups, more work needs to be done to ensure that the gains in the field of MM are experienced equitably by all patients.



Solution

The program identified actionable ways to eliminate structural barriers to clinical research, determined ways to leverage science and novel strategies for innovative clinical trial design in MM, and identified methods to partner with Black and Latino/Hispanic communities in a multilevel manner to allow for a more successful approach to clinical research.

Workshop participants discussed a wide range of concrete, actionable steps toward more representative MM clinical trials, covering 3 categories including:

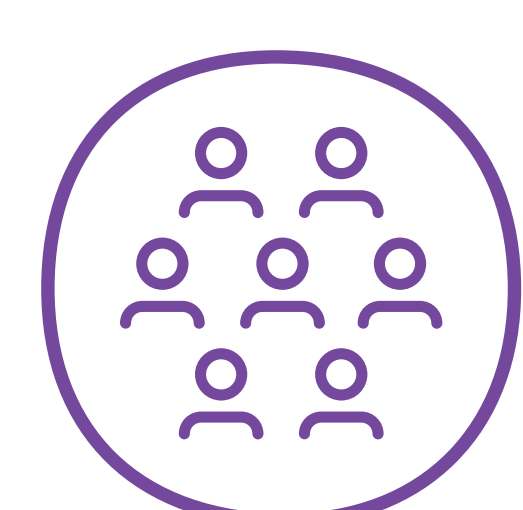
- **Clinical trial design** – building diversity plan and explicit goals, utilizing FDA guidance docs, broadening inclusion criteria, standardizing race/ethnicity data capture
- **Clinical trial operations** – reducing burden on trial participants including transportation and other costs, selecting diverse sites, requiring implicit bias training, improving diversity of care/research staff
- **Patient and community engagement** – building better awareness, education, and participation in drug development process

Impact

Key strategies were integrated into MMRF Horizon Clinical Trials Program as well as other research initiatives which resulted in the creation of internal and external workforce diversity programs including the MMRF Scholars Program and a pipeline clinical internship program.



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Inclusion criteria in MMRF Horizon Platform Clinical Trials program was expanded to support real-world population and increase representation and diversity



MMRF's partnership with Lazarex Cancer Foundation was expanded to include additional funding for patient expenses associated with MM clinical trials



The MMRF Scholars Program was launched with funding for 2 Black hematology/oncology fellows for a period of 4 years at \$100,000/year

Key Learnings

- Care must be taken to ensure that underserved populations are not further marginalized, due to digital barriers such as cellphone plans with limited data, lack of easy access to the internet, or limited digital fluency.
- A new cancer clinical trial paradigm is needed where patients are eligible for a trial by default and excluded only when there is scientific rationale and/or evidence demonstrating that enrollment would compromise the patient's safety.



Read the publication:
Creating Equitable and Inclusive Clinical Trials for Multiple Myeloma

