

International Clinical Trials Day celebrated on May 20th

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On May 20, 1747, Dr James Lind, a Scottish physician, conducted the first controlled clinical trial on a group of sailors suffering from scurvy. Through their participation in the study, the sailors contributed to the discovery that Vitamin C was an effective treatment for scurvy. The day is now commemorated as International Clinical Trials Day.

To commemorate the day, Indian Society for Clinical Research (ISCR) released 'Clinical Trials - A Guide for Participants', which provides responses to frequently asked questions about clinical trials, and also guides patients participating in clinical trials.

"Core to clinical research is a commitment to patient privacy, safety and ethics. The Guide we have released is a step forward by ISCR in empowering patients with enough understanding and knowledge on clinical trials so that they can make a responsible and informed decision to participate. Given the misconceptions that exist about clinical research in the country today, we felt it was necessary to provide an objective guide for patients. We seek the media support in making the information in the Guide available to the general public."

The Guide will also be distributed widely to investigators and medical institutions involved in clinical research.

ISCR is also hosting a panel discussion on clinical research in Mumbai in partnership with Tata Memorial Hospital to commemorate International Clinical Trials.

The Organization for Rare Diseases India ORDI, which represents the collective voice of the rare disease community in India has sent the following message for International Clinical Trials Day:

"The stalemate on Clinical Trials in India is causing severe and irreversible damage to clinical research in the country and undermining our ability to bring new drugs to market. This is of particular concern to the more than 70 million rare disease patients in India since a majority of the over 7000 rare diseases that are prevalent in our country do not have an approved drug yet although many of the rare genetic diseases are treatable. Hence, we strongly urge the Government of India for the revival of well designed, high quality clinical research and trials for orphan drugs in India."