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### Clinical Trials in Alzheimer's Disease

#### Announcer:

Welcome to CME on ReachMD. This episode is part of our MinuteCME curriculum.

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#### Dr. Agronin:

This is CME on ReachMD, and I'm Dr. Marc Agronin. I'd like to talk to you today about clinical trials in Alzheimer's disease. So one thing that's clear is the only way to advance the field of study into Alzheimer's disease to try to find better ways of both diagnosis and treatment is through clinical trials. There are many, many trials out there. If you go to [clinicaltrials.gov](http://clinicaltrials.gov), you can identify literally hundreds of them focused on Alzheimer disease. These range from smaller trials, some of which are open label, so someone knows what treatment they're getting or what type of diagnostic they're getting, to much larger trials, which are always going to be double-blind and placebo-controlled, randomized controlled trials. And the bottom line is there, is that we don't know if it works or not, and so it's important that we test individuals getting the treatment versus individuals on placebo.

It's important to encourage individuals, especially in earlier stages of this disease, to at least consider being part of a clinical trial, because without that, we're never going to find an effective treatment here. Part of being in a trial is meeting certain criteria. Now many studies today really are looking for individuals in very early stages. And this can be a challenge for someone who already may be as advanced to more moderate to severe stages, at least in terms of treating the disease itself. But there are many clinical trials also looking at associated neuropsychiatric symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, such as psychosis or agitation or depression. And these are often open to individuals with more advanced stages.

One of the benefits of being in a clinical trial is that someone is going to get a lot of extra attention from a clinical team. This follow-up can help advance diagnosis. Sometimes you need more advanced diagnostic studies to even qualify for the study, and these may be PET scans or other studies which are not covered by insurance or which may be more difficult to access. And so the clinical trial gives you those diagnostics to determine whether you even meet criteria, whether you're going to have the disease in the first place.

There's increased surveillance in terms of what's going on with someone clinically. And especially if someone gets the actual treatment, there could be benefit; this could be the next medication that's going to come on the market.

Obviously, people have concerns about this being an experimental treatment. There could be potential side effects that we're not aware of. Obviously, if someone is on a placebo over time, and sometimes trials can be 1 to 2 years, it means that they might not be getting any benefit from the trial itself or from the medication itself. There can be side effects that we're not aware of. So these are things that need to be taken into consideration.

But I would say this is the key takeaway: everyone with a potential or known diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease should be considered for participation in a clinical trial. These are meant to be free. In fact, studies will pay a stipend to cover costs. You never have insurance billed on this. They're under FDA regulation. And so the individuals running these trials, the centers need to strictly adhere to certain guidelines. But it brings great benefit, potentially to individuals participating, but especially in terms of the field itself. We have got to find

a better way to treat this disease. Clinical trials are the only way to go.

So with that, our time is up today. But thank you for listening. And hopefully this information has been helpful. Thank you.

**Announcer:**

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