

CLINICALTRIALS.GOV

The website clinicaltrials.gov offers information about available clinical trials for in a single location, with an option to search in a generic fashion or for specific clinical trials.

When the site first became available, the search features produced a listing of either currently recruiting clinical trials, clinical trials not yet recruiting or completed trials. The search option was simplistic and involved using a location and disease/condition to locate the trials. For example, if the user was looking for available cancer trials in the country of Africa, they would use the search keyword combination of "cancer AND africa" to locate these trials. In addition, if the user is aware of the specific type of cancer trial, the search can be further specified by using a type of cancer, ie "breast cancer AND Africa".

The lists produced from the search will provide the full protocol title, the conditions the trial is designed to attempt to treat or address, the interventions used in the trial, and the trials status (recruiting, not yet recruiting, or completed).

In addition, the trials listed can also be presented alphabetically, or by category, for one or more of the condition, drug intervention, or sponsor of the trial. Locations can also be presented either alphabetically or by region.

One of the more useful "overview" type features of the site is the presenting the results of the search on a clickable world map. For example, if the above-mentioned search of "cancer AND africa" is conducted, as of 06 Dec 2007, 206 clinical trials populate the list produced. If the results are viewed using the map option, the following global location information is provided for the 206 clinical trials. It is important to note that several trials recruit from many different locations; therefore, there are more sites than actual clinical trials produced in the list, but all must be recruiting form at least one African site (based on the keyword search used).

The results by loca-

tion can also be further defined, by clicking on the continent or country of interest and narrowing the locations within that site. If Africa is selected, the following results are produced. It is interesting to note that an overwhelming amount of clinical

LOCATION	NUMBER OF TRIALS
Cameroon	1
Congo	1
Congo, Democratic Republic	1
Egypt	10
Ghana	1
Kenya	2
Mali	1
Morocco	2
Senegal	1
South Africa	191
Tanzania	2
Tunisia	3
Uganda	2
Zambia	2
Zimbabwe	1

Table 1. Cancer trial locations in Africa.

research takes place in South Africa.

While the site is comprehensive and easy to use, I assume that the greatest fault may lie in getting the information about the clinical trial reported to the site so that it may be posted. Therefore, I conclude that the listings provided here are likely to be incomplete.

By T Ziolk MS

