

Clinical trials at the Alfred Research Alliance

Without clinical trials, ground-breaking discoveries in the laboratory would never become the treatments or medicines that improve the health and wellbeing of the community. They are a key part of the process that translates the latest medical research into real-world outcomes – and the Alfred Research Alliance is a world leader.

504

clinical trials commenced or continued at the Alfred Research Alliance in 2020



What are clinical trials?

Clinical trials are the mechanism to systematically test new medicines, treatments and preventions to ensure they are safe and effective before making them available to the community to treat or prevent specific diseases and conditions.



Why are they important?

Clinical trials are crucial for evaluating whether a new treatment or medicine is safe and effective. Other testing modalities are helpful in the initial stages of discovery, but new drugs, therapies, devices and interventions can only be properly tested in humans. Clinical trials also ensure that the benefits of a new treatment or medicine are experienced by a large cohort of people, rather than a random few.



Benefits of clinical trials

In 2020, there were 328 commercially sponsored trials at this precinct (65% of all trials at the precinct).

The pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry trusts the expertise of our members to undertake clinical trials on their behalf. These trials bring in funding to the precinct supporting local, highly skilled jobs that underpin the state's clinical trials capability.

The high percentage of commercially sponsored trials at the Alfred precinct means that both local and international industry is experiencing this capability, helping to grow the economy and continue to promote the precinct as a preferred destination for clinical trials.

There were 176 investigator-initiated trials at the precinct in 2020 (35% of all precinct-based trials), highlighting the high-quality research capability focused on improving clinical outcomes. Investigations made through clinical research into the effects of treatments in existing routine clinical practice underpin evidence-based improvements to health care standards for more effective patient outcomes.



Why here?

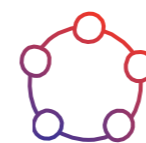
Australia, and Victoria more specifically, has a strong reputation for excellence in clinical trials. Based in the heart of Melbourne, with unique capabilities, depth and breadth of expertise, there is no better place to conduct clinical trials than the Alfred Research Alliance.

Of all new trials commenced in Australia in 2019,

1 in 5

were at the Alfred precinct.*

*MTPConnect, 2021. *Australia's Clinical Trials Sector* and unpublished data. Data for 2020 was not published to enable local comparison.



An integrated community

The Alliance brings together a health service, three universities, two independent medical research institutes, a phase I clinical trial specialist company and a specialty laboratory services organisation for therapeutic, vaccine and diagnostics development. This unique integration of experience and expertise, enhanced by co-appointments between partner organisations, creates the ideal environment for the conduct of clinical trials. Because of our breadth and depth of knowledge across many different disciplines, the Alliance is a global leader in clinical trials and a sought-after site for both local and international trials.



Consumers first

From their base at the Alfred precinct, our member organisations ensure their research is patient-focused and outcome-driven by delivering clinical trials directly to areas of need. For example, the Baker Institute Clinical Trial and Research Centre has recently opened in Hoppers Crossing in Melbourne's south-west to address high rates of heart disease in the local population.



Ethics

Ethics approval for clinical trials can often be a time-intensive process, but the 'one-stop shop' approach through Alfred Health makes ethics approval more straightforward. Shared resources help our partners navigate ethics approval in an efficient and streamlined manner, while ensuring the highest standards of compliance are applied and upheld across the precinct.



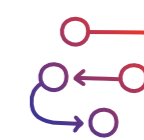
Rural and regional reach

Clinical trials are typically conducted in metropolitan regions, which can create issues of accessibility for people in rural or regional areas. For example, cancer patients who live in a capital city may be able to access new cancer treatments via clinical trials that are not available to patients in the regions. Alfred Health's TrialHub is an initiative funded by the federal government that enables clinical trials to reach regional and rural health services using a hub-and-spoke model, providing patients with the opportunity to access new medicines through these trials.



Foundations for flexibility

A reputation for excellence supported by a well-established clinical trial framework means the Alfred precinct can respond quickly and efficiently to emerging health crises like COVID-19. Throughout the pandemic, Alliance partners have conducted numerous clinical trials in many different areas including trials for multiple new vaccine candidates, improving COVID-safety with x-ray procedures and trialling patient care and safety measures such as temperature screening in hospitals.



Phase I to Phase IV

The Alliance undertakes trials across all phases, from Phase I (initial testing in a small group of people) to Phase IV (monitoring the ongoing effectiveness of a treatment after it has been released to the public). In many cases, the preclinical research that informs these trials is done on our precinct too, as well as the integration into clinical practice on successful completion of the trial. This creates a full translational research loop on site, enabling our partners to deliver better health outcomes, sooner.

Clinical trials in 2020

Phase I (including FTIH)	233
Phase II	76
Phase III	95
Phase IV	26
Device (FTIH and beyond)	48
Other trials	26



Visit the website at alfredresearchalliance.org.au/research/clinical-trials/ to find out more and who to contact at each organisation.