

Why Should I Do a Pragmatic Trial?

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The question that sometimes arises is, why would I do a pragmatic trial? Why not do a traditional trial? And there are usually two reasons that we cite for a pragmatic clinical trial. The first is that we need evidence from the real world to actually inform decisions about how we should deliver care in the real world.

So as we know, the results that come from efficacy studies in which we really control many aspects of the trial very tightly may give us very strong evidence about the efficacy of an intervention, that is how it works under ideal circumstances, but it might not tell us much about how that intervention would actually work when it's implemented in the real world. So that's often the first reason that's given.

A second is that because we want to have evidence and we want it to come faster and we want it to be cheaper than what it is when we do a traditional efficacy trial. It's not hard to imagine that there are situations in which those motivations are aligned, but sometimes, and maybe oftentimes they're not. And I think for those of us who do pragmatic trials, we know that they're not always necessarily faster and cheaper, but those are often the motivations or where we start.