

JOANNA ([00:05](#)):

Hello and welcome to the next installment in our podcast series. I'm Joanna Breitstein from Global Communications, and today I am joined by Andy Lee who is head of Global Clinical Trial Operations overseeing our company's late stage trials. Before we get started, I think it's important to get a sense of the huge scope of this work. Our company runs nearly 400 studies at 14,000 sites with some 50,000 people participating in our trials. Incredibly, there are 450 million data points that are processed each year. So Andy, I just have to start off with a simple question. What has it been like for you to run this massive operation during the COVID pandemic?

ANDY ([00:53](#)):

Clinical trials are our lifeblood. They fuel the pipeline, and they fuel the products of the future. And our mission is to invent for life. From my perspective, this is an incredibly humbling experience. It is a privilege to be able to work and run a large organization that operates in over 50 countries with different cultures, rules, regulations, conditions of work, conditions at home. And what we have tried to do is collapse the hierarchy and show our human side.

JOANNA ([01:27](#)):

You have articulated a vision of no patient left behind. Can you talk about your motivation for achieving such a lofty goal?

ANDY ([01:36](#)):

These patients, who've made a very genuine and sincere commitment to us as sponsors and to the clinical trial sites, participate in an experiment. They have trusted us, and they do this mostly for altruistic purposes and when we come to a crisis, with a pandemic like this, we owe it to them. We should never let them down. We have to find a way to ensure that they continue in these trials. We have to make the impossible possible and in that way, we will not leave any patient behind.

JOANNA ([02:12](#)):

I'm just so struck by your words about making the impossible possible. Talk a little bit more about that

ANDY ([02:18](#)):

And during conduct of trials even outside the COVID-19 pandemic, we are often struck by adversity. We have wildfires, for example in California, hurricanes, earthquakes around the world, floods, wars, failed economies. But COVID-19 is something different

in that we have all of these things happening all of the time and so it's magnitude is very impactful for us.

JOANNA ([02:49](#)):

There are so many stories of clinical trial participants overcoming challenges so that they can stay on the trial. Can you share one that has touched you personally?

ANDY ([03:00](#)):

A young woman with young children in Australia who was being treated in Melbourne and she lived in Tasmania, which is an island south of Melbourne, and with the shutdown came the stopping of travel between different states. And we were able to transfer her treatment from a hospital in Melbourne to a hospital in Hobart and this is one of the last options she has at life, and it's just a tremendous story of resilience and diligence and hard work from our clinical operations people.

JOANNA ([03:35](#)):

COVID has affected the way clinical trials must be run in the short term. What types of approaches do you think you and your team will adopt?

ANDY ([03:42](#)):

A couple of things that we have done and we've looked at, shipping medicines, particularly oral medicines from clinical trial sites to patients' homes. We've looked at different consenting processes of using a digital means of consenting patients and digital means of transferring information to patients. We adhere to the principles of good clinical practice. And if we do these right, then the integrity and robustness of our clinical trials will remain intact and we'll get the outcome that we desire.

JOANNA ([04:15](#)):

On Global Clinical Trials Awareness Day, do you have a message for the world?

ANDY ([04:21](#)):

Firstly, like to express my sincere gratitude to every patient and volunteer who's entered a clinical trial. It's just amazing the commitment that you make. The patients are the most important thing we have. And it is just impossible to do clinical trials without having the dedicated patients and those who are willing to take a chance to offer up themselves and, and commit to the science that we're trying to do.

JOANNA ([04:52](#)):

Andy, thank you so much for your time and effort and as you say, keeping the lifeblood of our company going.

ANDY ([05:01](#)):

Thank you. My pleasure. Have a good day.