Clinical trials are a key part of the drug development process and are resistant to a ‘one size fits all’ model. They are important for ensuring new medicines are safe and work well for different people, including those of various ages, gender, weight, race, ethnicity and other factors. Diverse people can help show that treatments are safe and work well for different communities.

Clinical trials rely on people who volunteer to be trial participants. It’s vital that these people come from diverse backgrounds. That way, the clinical trial can show if the new treatment benefits a wide range of people. Merck seeks to enroll diverse people to make sure treatments are safe and work well for people from all communities.

Why are clinical trials needed?

Clinical trials are needed to find new treatments to help save and improve lives. Did you know that most products that go on to become medicines have never made it through laboratory testing? In fact, about 95% of drugs that undergo laboratory testing never make it to clinical trials. This means that most medicines we use today have only been tested on a small number of people.

Clinical trials also have some risks, such as:

- Unwanted side effects (A placebo looks like the trial medication, but does not have any treatment effect)
- Treatment (A new drug or medication)
- An existing treatment

There are many reasons why people volunteer for clinical trials

- To help others
- To find new treatments
- To help future patients by advancing medical knowledge
- To take an active role in your own health care
- To receive free or reduced rate for trial-related medical costs
- To contribute medical knowledge
- To improve your own health

Questions: How long is it? Who takes part? How much of it is there? What are the side effects? How well does it work? Is it safe? Can it work for men or women? Is it safe for older people? How will it be approved by a government agency?

References: