



## IN-OFFICE CLINICAL TRIALS

Vol. 3 Issue 96

There are some practices performed by some medical doctors that should set alarms off for their patients. One of these to watch out for is if your doctor wants to recruit you for a clinical trial of a new drug. Once confined to university medical centers and research institutions, many of these trials are now performed in doctors' offices.

In-office trials now allow pharmaceutical companies to reach a larger number of test subjects and thus speed the development of new drugs. In order to access these plentiful subjects, drug companies pay doctors anywhere from \$1,000 to \$4,500 for each patient enrolled in the trial.

This financial incentive can create a conflict of interest. In research institutions and universities, a review board looks at every trial and makes sure that each patient has given informed consent and that each patient has an illness for which the medication may prove helpful and most importantly, that the patient is without risk factors. These checks and balances don't exist in a doctor's office.

Where there's money to be made, there's the temptation to sign up patients who aren't ideal candidates for the trials. Patients also may blindly trust their doctors without considering any of the potential risks. Patients should never be coerced or inappropriately persuaded to participate in clinical trials and have the ultimate right of refusal.

SOURCE: New Woman Magazine, September 1999.