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As our aging population swells, the sense of urgency to conduct research studies and clinical drug trials for mild cognitive impairment dementia and other cognitive disorders is growing. We are fortunate to have research funding initiatives from the Ontario Brain Institute, Brain Canada, the CIHR Canadian Collaboration on Neuro-Degeneration and Aging, and the Alzheimer Society Canada.

Along with funding another pressing need is for people to understand that to advance our knowledge we need volunteer participants for these clinical studies. Some people may have normal memory but are at risk of dementia while others may have mild cognitive impairment or mild dementia. Those who do volunteer not only contribute to advancing treatments and potential cures for dementia, but as an added benefit tend to have better health outcomes.

Six Reasons to volunteer for clinical trials

1. The placebo effect; even though some people in clinical trials are given a placebo instead of the medication being studied, their belief in the treatment leads to a positive response to the placebo.
2. People involved in clinical trials are assessed more frequently. At least 30 percent have a previously undetected or untreated condition identified while in the study.
3. Participants in the studies engage with care providers who understand their condition, and refer them to resources available in the community.
4. Memory testing in clinical studies stimulates and challenges the brain and thought processes. Different types of mental stimulation helps preserve brain function.
5. At the end of some drug trials there is often the opportunity for participants to try the medication being studied beyond the “blinded” phase of the trial.
6. Perhaps the most important reason is altruism—unselfishly volunteering to participate in the trial, knowing they may not benefit themselves, but that someone in the future, possibly a neighbour or family member, will benefit, and that by volunteering they are contributing to research knowledge.

If you have questions about volunteering for a research study or clinical trial or would like to volunteer for studies currently underway, please call [519-685-4292](tel:519-685-4292) Ext. 46600 or email memory@sjhc.london.on.ca.