



**Acurian on...**

## The Challenge of Recruiting Minority Patients

Diversity in clinical trials has been challenging and thus, approved products may not be appropriately tested on representatives of the patient populations who end up using them. Even in conditions like type 2 diabetes that impact ethnic minority populations in disproportionate numbers, racial and ethnic minorities are typically underrepresented in clinical research data. Acurian, however, is not seeing significantly lower minority interest in clinical trials relative to the percentage of minorities in the population. This suggests there is no underlying hesitancy or trepidation by minorities in our data.

However, minorities still enroll in studies at lower rates than Caucasians in general.<sup>1</sup> This is due in part to a **lack of minority investigators**; just 3.8% of physicians identify as black, and 5.3% as Hispanic.<sup>2</sup> Most minority patients see a minority doctor for their care.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, if a minority patient's doctor is not an investigator, then minorities are much less likely to have access to a study.<sup>4</sup> According to the Annals of Family Medicine, up to 75% of patients who are asked by their treating physician to participate in a clinical trial do so.<sup>5</sup> However, **many minorities are never even asked if they want to participate in a study**, which contributes greatly to low enrollment rates.

Additionally, **study sites may be far** from where minorities live or work, making it difficult, time-consuming, or expensive for them to attend study visits. Finally, minorities who **don't speak English** may struggle to find a site with study staff with whom they can communicate.

<sup>1</sup> <http://minoritynurse.com/trust-the-barrier-between-minorities-and-clinical-research/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hschange.com/CONTENT/1078/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://archinte.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1792913>

<sup>4</sup> <http://archinte.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1792913>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.annfammed.org/content/10/4/372.full>



### **African Americans**

Engaging African Americans in more clinical trials is crucial. For instance, African Americans are 70% more likely than non-Hispanic white adults to be diagnosed with diabetes. In addition, they are more likely to suffer complications from diabetes, such as end-stage renal disease and amputations, highlighting the importance of including African American participants in the development of future diabetes medications.

Still, clinical trial enrollment remains low among African American patients for several reasons. Only about 25% of African Americans report that they have heard about clinical trials from their doctor, indicating that awareness is low in this population. Few African American PIs are selected relative to other ethnicities, and/or sites may not be available near African American communities.

African Americans make up about 14% of the US population. *However, Acurian has found that 18% of respondents to our recruitment campaigns are African American, indicating that many patients are interested in clinical research and can be reached via mainstream marketing efforts.*

### **Hispanics**

Like African Americans, Hispanics are an overlooked population for inclusion in clinical trials. Research has found that when doctors and other healthcare professionals speak Spanish, many people of Hispanic origin are more likely to feel comfortable participating in research. This highlights the importance of locating sites in Hispanic communities, and having PIs and study staff who speak Spanish.

People of Hispanic heritage represent more than 16% of the US population, but only 1% to 3% participate in clinical trials. *However, Acurian has found that 6% of those who respond to our recruitment campaigns are Hispanic. We believe we can reach even more Hispanics by developing and placing targeted Spanish-language ads, and referring patients to sites with Spanish-speaking staff.*



## Targeting Diverse Populations: *Acurian's Unique Methodologies*

Acurian is the only recruitment company that has the capability to target diverse populations through our opted-in patient database of over 100 million households, which includes **21.5 million patients who have self-identified as a racial or ethnic minority**. This proprietary database allows us to deploy unique methodologies to target ethnically diverse populations.

For example:

- Individuals who respond to our clinical trial recruitment campaigns are invited to provide ethnicity. This information is stored, with the individual's permission, and used for future programs when ethnic information is needed for precise demographic targeting.
- When data is acquired and ethnic information is not available at the point of acquisition, Acurian utilizes various database methodologies (including publicly available ZIP code overlays and proprietary data modeling algorithms) to approximate ethnic population concentrations and expand our reach to targeted diverse populations with a high level of confidence.
- In 68 studies supported since 2011 where patients self-identified race, Acurian screened over 670,222 African Americans, 292,692 Hispanics, 118,377 Asians, 43,646 Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders, 35,811 American Indians or Alaskan Natives, and 72,573 mixed ethnicities as part of our general recruitment process.

We use Acurian's proprietary database to effectively reach these diverse populations, in addition to other powerful targeting efforts through eRecruitment (e.g., social media and online advertising), television and print advertisements. In fact, research has shown when trying to connect with diverse populations and maximizing return on investment, marketers should align with mainstream media that resonate with the targeted population. Placement in mainstream and targeted media is not only considered an endorsement, but also translates into the consumer believing "you know what I like" and often seeing it as support of their community.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> <http://brandedcontent.adage.com/pdf/CABblackconsumer.pdf>



## Acurian's Recommendations

Acurian recommends that sponsors take several steps to address minority recruitment issues and target diverse populations.

- Hire minority investigators
- Place study sites in areas that have a high density of minority patients
- Provide transportation to and from study visits
- Develop robust education materials that demystify the clinical trial process

Taking these steps will help set the study up for success, maximizing the number of minority patients who can be generated both at the site and through a patient recruitment campaign in minority communities surrounding study sites.

## Messaging to Diverse Populations: 4-Step Approach

Acurian takes great effort and care in researching the specific population when crafting the messaging and creative materials for each clinical trial. Ethnicity and culture affect how people communicate, understand, and respond to health information, so we take the following steps in all of our diverse population messaging campaigns:

- **Research:** Acurian conducts a careful analysis into attitudes, beliefs and motivations of the specific diverse population through primary and secondary research. We conduct online surveys with ethnic subgroups in our panel to understand biases about medical issues, their perspective about diseases within the community, relationships with and views on doctors and clinical trials, and health privacy issues.



- **Create:** Our in-depth and detailed research helps us understand the targeted population as we create the messages and materials for the patient recruitment campaign. We use images and language that appeal to each population; “language” meaning that we translate materials when appropriate, but we also craft messages using condition-related words that the specific population relates to and uses in an everyday context. We also make special effort to focus on health literacy, since ethnic minorities may be among the populations most likely to experience a decreased capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services.
- **Test:** After we have refined our messaging and materials, we deploy several messages through low-cost media placements to test them. We use real-time results from first response to randomization to dictate the most impactful creative materials to be used for the majority of the study. We find this practice is even more effective than pre-testing each material in an online or in-person focus group, since real-time results are a more powerful, telling and cost-effective way to understand which materials will work best for recruitment.
- **Track:** As is Acurian’s policy, we monitor and track each creative campaign through our proprietary web-based software platform, Recruitment Manager (RM). RM provides patient screening, tracking, and reporting on all trial tactics and results every hour of the day, so we can adjust the creative campaign based on real-time performance metrics. To date, Acurian has found that minorities respond to our recruitment campaigns either in line with or in greater proportions than the general population.

# Targeted Recruitment Example (Hypertension in African American Population)

Acurian has successfully recruited patients for studies that required a single ethnicity as broad as African American or as narrow as only patients of a specific Asian descent. One example of Acurian's success in recruiting minorities for a clinical trial includes a phase III hypertension study targeting African Americans. A top 10 pharmaceutical company sought support from Acurian to help recruit and enroll a large subset of African American patients for its large, critical path hypertension program.

We utilized our proprietary patient database and launched a direct mail campaign to self-identified hypertensive African Americans within driving distance of 75 participating research sites. Acurian quickly and efficiently contributed **240 randomized hypertensive African Americans**, or 36 percent of the total enrollment goal, enabling the clinical team to avoid an anticipated four-month delay had it relied solely on in-practice recruitment.

**African American targeted materials for hypertension study (website and TV commercial to support direct mail campaign):**



The screenshot shows a website with a purple header featuring a group of diverse African American people. Below the header, there is a purple call-to-action button that says "See if you qualify! Click here". The main text reads: "Important health information for those with high blood pressure. You may qualify to participate in a clinical research study." Below this, there is a list of benefits: "Study-related health assessments", "Compensation for your time and travel", "Investigational study drug at no charge to you", and "Supervision by a local, experienced study physician". At the bottom, there is a disclaimer: "There is no cost for participating in the study. All study-related examinations, tests, and investigational medication are provided at no cost to you. If you qualify, you may be eligible for payment for your time and travel. The purpose of the study is to test the safety and effectiveness of an investigational medication for people with hypertension."



The screenshot shows a TV commercial with a purple background. On the left, a male doctor in a maroon jacket is checking the blood pressure of a female patient in a blue lab coat. On the right, there is white text that reads: "If you are an African American with high blood pressure, you may be eligible to participate in a clinical research study."



# Minority Recruitment: Proof in the Numbers

Relying on our proprietary patient database that includes **21.5 million minorities across multiple therapeutic areas**, in the past year alone, Acurian pre-screened **417,000 African American respondents** out of a total of slightly over 3 million respondents. On average, Acurian pre-screened 13.9% African Americans compared to the general population of 12.6% African Americans in the United States. This indicates that African Americans are overrepresented in Acurian's screening process.

Across all minority populations that Acurian has been able to recruit for studies, ~33% were minorities in 2015, the most recent annual period for which we captured this information. For reference, 2010 census data indicates that 36% of the US population were non-Caucasians. Therefore, generally speaking, the ethnicity distribution of our recruitment population mirrors the US indication-specific population distribution.

