



# Clinicians and life sciences companies working together: What types of relationships do clinicians find most appealing?



Truven Health Analytics® was acquired by IBM in 2016 to help form a new business, Watson Health™. Watson Health aspires to improve lives and give hope by delivering innovation to address the world’s most pressing health challenges through data and cognitive insights.

What are the top scenarios of interest to clinicians who may want to work with life sciences companies?

Researchers from Truven Health Analytics®, part of the IBM Watson Health™ business, wanted to answer that question. They conducted a survey of nearly 400 providers from 13 European and North American countries to better understand the types of relationships that clinicians would find most appealing if they were to work collaboratively with a life sciences company.

Clinicians were most interested in working with life sciences companies to help design clinical trials that measure the safety and efficacy of new treatments.

Background

Truven Health researchers used a survey instrument to reach out to 399 providers from the US, Canada, France, Spain, Italy, Austria, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Ireland, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Switzerland. All providers agreed to participate in the survey.

Responding providers specialized primarily in hematology (68%), with smaller groups of nephrology, internal medicine, oncology and other specialties. Our survey was part of a larger study concerning rare diseases and orphan drugs, thus the distribution of specialties. Responses by specialty are listed in Table 1 and the country distribution is shown in Figure 1.

Specialty	Number of clinicians
Hematology	228
Nephrology	59
Hematology/oncology	36
Internal medicine	34
Oncology	12
Pediatric hematology/oncology	6
Other hematology specialties	3
Gastroenterology	3
Other specialties	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>

Table 1. Responses by specialty

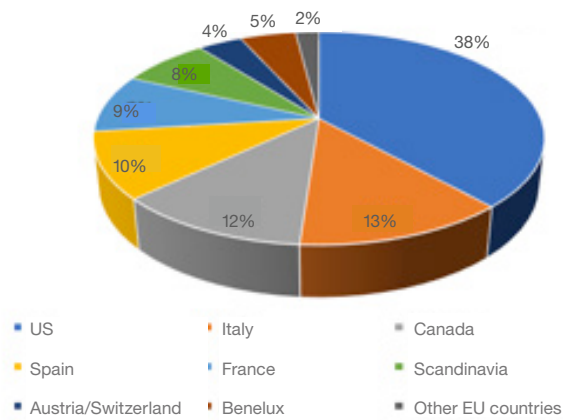


Figure 1. Distribution of responses by country

### Survey questions

Participants were asked the following questions:

1. Are you currently working with a life sciences company as a speaker, advisor or clinical trial sponsor?
2. If you are currently working with or would consider working with a life sciences company in the future, what are the top three situations that would be most appealing to you?

### Results

Ninety-seven percent of all clinician respondents reported they were not currently working with a life sciences company in the capacity of a speaker, advisor or clinical trial sponsor. Those who were, were primarily from Canada and the US.

Helping to design clinical trials was by far the top answer on Question 2, with 47% of clinicians responding (Table 2). This was followed by working on peer-reviewed journal-eligible research, working early in the drug development process providing expertise and knowledge and helping to research genetic markers or other molecules for rare disease treatment innovations. The latter is not surprising given the focus of these clinicians on rare diseases and orphan drugs.

If you are currently working with, or would consider working with, a life sciences company in the future, what are the top three situations that would be most appealing to you?	Number of responses
To help design clinical trials measuring safety and efficacy of new treatments	187
To work on research that will be published in peer-reviewed journals	142
To work early enough in the drug development process that my experience and knowledge makes a real difference in the treatment that comes to market	137
To work with drug developers as they research genetic markers and/or molecules that could lead to future innovative treatments for rare diseases	135
To conduct research on the effectiveness of treatments once new treatments have been approved and are being used in clinical practice	133
To be a clinical trial site sponsor	114
To help educate healthcare colleagues about contemporary research regarding the effectiveness and safety of therapeutic options or a new therapy in the field of rare diseases	109
To help develop economic models that demonstrate the economic benefits of treatments	97
To discuss contemporary issues and challenges around <b>treatment options</b> with colleagues from around the world	43
To present at congresses	41
To discuss contemporary issues and challenges around <b>access to care</b> with colleagues from around the world	27
To work on patient portal strategy and/or content	25

Table 2. Most appealing relationships with life sciences companies for responding clinicians

## Summary

We have been offering stakeholder management solutions to the life sciences industry for over a decade worldwide. In our experience, life sciences companies often don't start to use key clinicians early enough in the drug development process. This large survey demonstrates that clinicians may have the most interest in being involved early in research and in the design of clinical trials that could bring innovative treatments to market to help their patients. They also have a strong interest in Phase IV studies and being involved in research that results in authorship in peer-reviewed medical journals. A perhaps surprising 24% of clinicians are interested in the economic aspects of healthcare. No respondent indicated having no interest.

As more than 90% of respondents told us they did not have relationships with life sciences companies, this survey may shed light on how to attract key clinicians for the various engagement projects and touchpoints required to successfully commercialize a new discovery or launch a new indication for an existing compound. The best relationships for both life sciences companies and clinicians are ones where the business need matches the individual clinician's interests.

We recommend identifying and engaging with clinicians as early as Phase I with early product interviews to gauge perspectives on how new product characteristics compare to existing treatments, confirm knowledge about current treatment pathways, consult on clinical trial design and identify clinical researchers who can conduct Phase II trials. We offer identification, profiling and mapping services across the globe, as well as engagement planning and virtual advisory boards that can help bring clinicians together into a convenient, lower-cost forum for discussions on key issues versus onsite meetings.

This survey demonstrates clear interest on the part of clinicians to be involved with life sciences companies, and illustrates a path to interactions that may interest them the most and could lead to productive relationships with the industry. These connections with clinicians may help life science companies transform health.

## Limitations

The survey sample is biased to those clinicians working in the specialty area of rare disease and orphan drugs. Responses by country were from a small number of clinicians; therefore results should not be considered as representative of the provider community at large in any one country. Survey results could be considered directional.

## About the authors

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## For more information

To learn about our stakeholder engagement solutions, please contact us at [scienlif@us.ibm.com](mailto:scienlif@us.ibm.com) or visit our website at [truvenhealth.com/life-sciences](http://truvenhealth.com/life-sciences).

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