

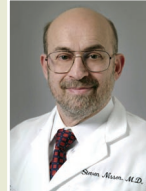
There are many health care issues our readers want to know about. Here is a question we posed to some of our expert staff:

A group of well-known medical journals has announced that they will not publish the results of clinical trials unless a test is registered from its beginning in a public database. How do you think this will affect reporting of trial test results and new medicines becoming available?

Steven Nissen, M.D. *Department of Cardiovascular Medicine*

“From my perspective this is a very important and needed change. The problem of negative publication bias, meaning trials conducted but never published, undermines scientific integrity. Now trials will be registered and we will be aware of their existence. Everyone, especially those who are actively at work in health care research, will expect to see the results and will confront companies that do not release the results.

I don’t believe that trial registration will slow the release of new medicines to patients. Almost all of these trials are Phase IV trials. This means that the drugs being studied are already approved by the Food and Drug Administration and are already available.”



Michael S. Lauer, M.D. *Department of Cardiovascular Medicine / Vice-chairman, Institutional Review Board / Contributing Editor, Journal of the American Medical Association*



“Almost everyone at some point becomes a patient and therefore eligible to participate in a clinical trial. People who participate in trials do so believing that they are contributing to science and helping future patients.

Unfortunately if the trial results don’t look good, trial sponsors – usually private for-profit companies – sometimes don’t publish or delay publication. Information is buried, giving the public a skewed view of what the trial actually shows.

By requiring registration, we hope to see more balanced reporting – good news and bad – of clinical trials. Pharmaceutical companies want to get published by major medical journals – it’s good for their business – so they’ll register their trials. For the public, all results will be out in the open.”

READERS’ POLL

Low-carb Food for Thought

On our Web site, readers were invited to tell us about their own low-carb dieting efforts. Here’s what we heard from those who took our informal poll*:

61% have tried a low-carb diet
63% thought they were likely to try a low-carb diet
60% thought that in five years, they would be on a low-carb diet

30% were currently cutting carbs and of those
50% were following the South Beach diet while
32% were loyal to Atkins

Readers found good reasons for cutting carbs:
30% want better nutrition and a healthier lifestyle
22% thought losing weight was key
18% enjoyed choices allowed on a low-carb diet

Readers also found good reasons to avoid low-carb dieting:
39% feel these diets are unbalanced
30% said low-carb diets contain too much fat and protein
22% worry about effects on future health

*Each percentage is based on a separate question. Answers given here are those of the readers polled and do not necessarily reflect opinions of The Cleveland Clinic. For more information on low-carb dieting go to www.clevelandclinic.org/healthextra/default.asp?index=9360

To take our next Readers’ Poll “Shared Medical Appointments: Would You or Wouldn’t You?” and to read additional magazine stories, go to *Cleveland Clinic Magazine Online!* at www.clevelandclinic.org/clevelandclinicmagazine.