



Chasing Medical Miracles: The Promise and Perils of Clinical Trials

Alex O'Meara

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Clinical trials are the gateway for new drugs, devices and procedures to be accepted as safe and effective. More than 20 million Americans volunteer for clinical trials--three times as many as a decade ago. Clinical trials have become a \$40 billion industry that is reshaping every aspect of healthcare development and delivery in the United States and around the world.

Journalist Alex O'Meara, a type-1 diabetic who suffered from life-threatening hypoglycemic unawareness, participated in a clinical trial to receive a transplant of pancreatic islet cells from cadavers in the hope of curing his diabetes, even though it meant he must take immuno-suppressant drugs for the rest of his life regardless of whether the islets cells worked. *Chasing Medical Miracles* is the first book to objectively explore the complicated world of clinical trials. Although 20th-century medical trials have led to advances that have helped millions of people, it also was an era of medical trial atrocities, from Nazi experiments during World War II to the Tuskegee Experiment in Alabama between 1932 and 1972 to clinical trials on mentally retarded children at Willowbrook State School in New York in the 1960s. *Chasing Medical Miracles* examines the regulations, ethics, and consumer misconceptions about clinical trials. Using his own experience as a jumping off point, O'Meara gives readers a behind-the-scenes look at an experimental procedure in a Virginia operating room, a for-profit clinical-trials "factory" in Phoenix, Arizona, Congressional policy meetings, and clinical trials in Uganda. *Chasing Medical Miracles* reveals what everyone needs to know--whether you are considering participating in a clinical trial or trying to make sensible health choices about drugs and treatments based on the published reports of clinical trials.

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