

Field Trials

Field trials differ from clinical trials in that they deal with subjects who have not yet gotten disease and therefore are not patients. Whereas the patients in a clinical trial may face the complications of their disease with high probability during a relatively short time, typically the risk of contracting a given disease for the first time is comparatively small. Consequently, field trials usually require a greater number of subjects than clinical trials and therefore are usually much more expensive. Furthermore, since the subjects are not patients, who usually come to a central location for treatment, a field trial often necessitates visiting subjects in the field (at work, home, or school) or establishing centers from which the study can be conducted and to which subjects are urged to report. These design features add to cost.

The expense of field trials limits their use to the study of preventives of either extremely common or extremely serious diseases. *Several field trials were conducted to determine the efficacy of large doses of vitamin C in preventing the common cold (Karlowski et al., 1975; Dykes and Meier, 1975). . . .*

Modern Epidemiology

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