Protocol & People

Cancer and clinical trials, explained plainly.

Free answers to the questions people ask after a cancer diagnosis, in six languages, written by physicians.

protocolandpeople.org · info@protocolandpeople.org

THE PROBLEM

The hardest decisions in cancer care come with the hardest reading

12th

grade: the average reading level of consent forms across 798 federally funded trials

16%

higher dropout for each added grade of reading level in a consent form

2.7%

of 14,367 trials mentioned translation, while 19% required English

About 26.5 million people in the United States have limited English proficiency.

Sources: Mirza et al., eClinicalMedicine 2024; Muthukumar et al., PLoS Medicine 2021; Migration Policy Institute, 2022 American Community Survey data.

THE GAP

A simple tool works, and almost none of it is in the languages patients read

14

randomized trials (2,678 people): question lists help patients ask more and decide with more confidence

7.9%

of 89 question lists at 64 NCI-designated cancer centers exist in more than one language

0

of those lists were built with a specific patient community

Sources: Han et al., Asia-Pacific Journal of Oncology Nursing 2025; Lockhart et al., Journal of Cancer Education 2026.

CARDS ON THE TABLE

One question on the front. A plain answer on the back.

ENGLISH

Am I a guinea pig?

No. A guinea pig has no say and no protection. You choose whether to join, and you can leave whenever you want. An independent committee had to approve the whole thing before you were even asked.

YORÙBÁ

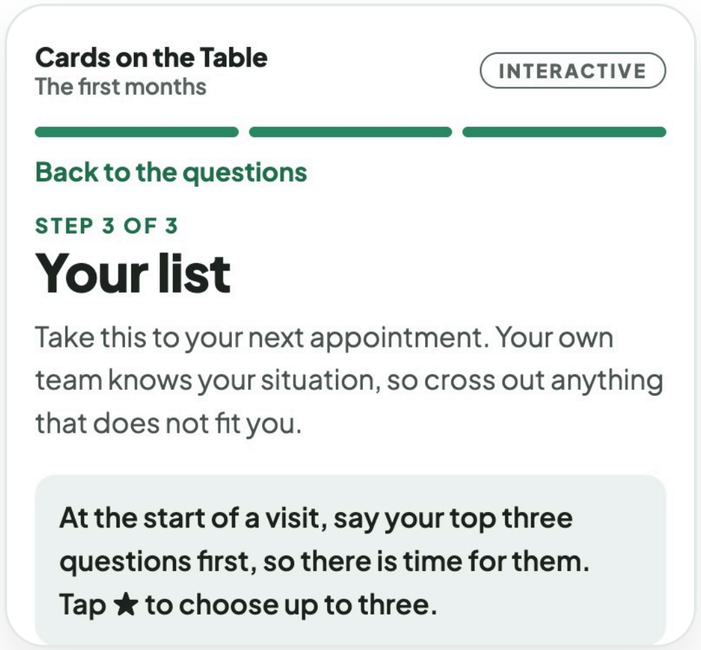
Ṣé ohun ìdánwò ni mí?

Rárá. Ohun ìdánwò kò ní ohùn, kò sì ní ààbò. Ìwọ ni ó ń yàn bóyá kí o kópa, o sì lè jáde nígbàkúgbà tí o bá fẹ́.

- More than 150 questions, from cancer screening (mammograms, colon checks, Pap and PSA tests, lung screening) to a diagnosis and clinical trials
- Every card in English, Spanish, Chinese, Hindi, Yorùbá and Vietnamese
- About a fifth-grade reading level, measured on every card (mean grade 4.8)
- Written by two physicians; every answer points back to the person's own care team
- Free on any phone at protocolandpeople.org

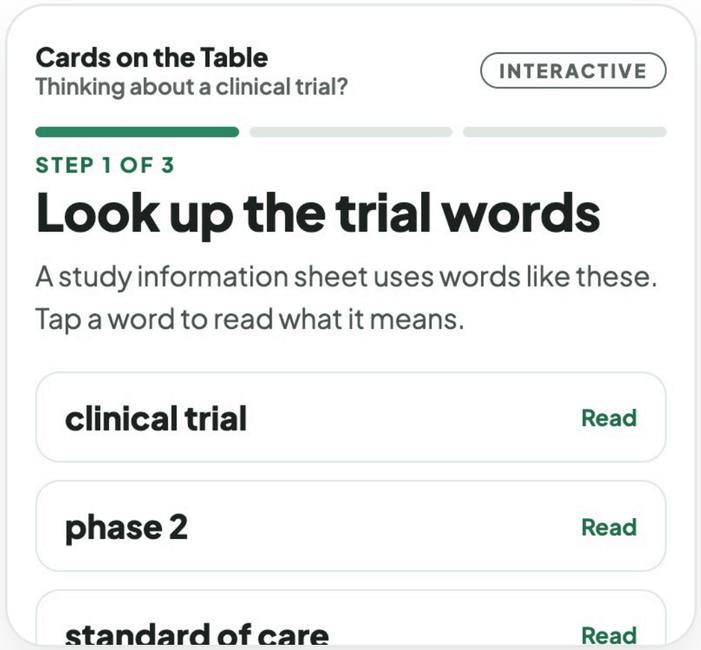
INTERACTIVE CARDS

Practice on a phone before the appointment



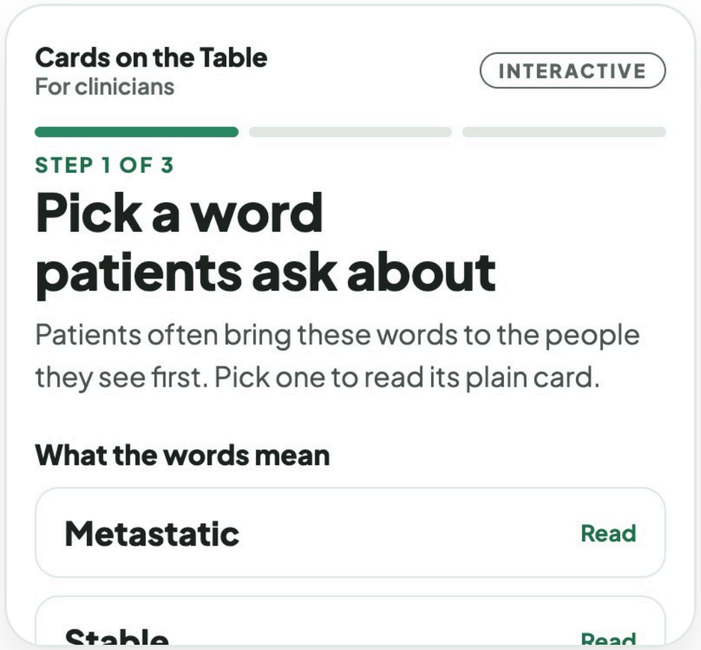
The first months

Look up the new words, pick your questions, and leave with your own list for the visit.



Thinking about a clinical trial?

A study sheet's words, from randomized to placebo, one card at a time.



For clinicians

Practice answering the words patients ask about, in plain language.

HOW PEOPLE USE IT

Read it, practice it, take it into the room

Read

Look up the answer to the question on your mind, in the language you read best, at home and at your own pace.

Practice

Use the interactive cards on your phone to learn the new words and choose the questions that matter to you.

Bring

Take your list, or the free Taking Notes planner, into the appointment, and say your top three questions first.

WHERE WE ARE

Live and free today. The 2027 work builds the evidence.

Live now

- The deck in six languages, reading level measured on every card
- Three sets of interactive cards
- Taking Notes planner, short books, quizzes, newsletter and video series
- Anonymous counts of which questions people open, by language

Next

- Review of every translation by clinicians who speak the language
- A clinic pilot: questions asked, recall and readiness to decide, compared with usual care
- A paid patient and caregiver advisory group across language communities

TEAM

Physicians who meet these questions in clinic, with engineering behind it

Oyepeju Abioye, MD, MSc

CLINICAL CONTENT

Internal medicine resident and future oncologist. 2026–2027 Health Equity Fellow (HEFT) at Health Affairs. MSc in epidemiology and biostatistics.

Ayooluwa Akintola, PhD

DATA AND OPERATIONS

Engineer with a PhD in process systems engineering and more than a decade in data and machine learning. Built the system that keeps six languages in step from one source.

Meghna Mathews, MD

CO-AUTHOR, CARDS ON THE TABLE

Internal medicine resident and co-author of the deck.

TRY IT

See it for yourself

The cards: protocolandpeople.org
The interactive cards: protocolandpeople.org/play
Press page, screenshots and a one-minute walkthrough:
protocolandpeople.org/play/press

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