Challenges in including males in clinical trials

1. Males with Rett syndrome or MECP2-related disorders are very rare. Recruiting sufficient numbers of males for clinical trials is a challenge. There are slightly over 60 male patients with MECP2 gene changes reported in literature, though there are probably more unreported males with MECP2 mutations.

2. Males with typical MECP2 mutations present earlier with more severe symptoms and a different clinical course than females with Rett syndrome. Including males in clinical trials for Rett syndrome creates challenges for interpretation of data, safety and efficacy.

3. Trial design and eligibility criteria typically exclude males with MECP2 mutations from the early clinical trials in Rett syndrome. This is partly due to the challenges of having essentially two different patient populations within the same clinical trial. The trial design may be different in a male population than a female population, including such factors as age of inclusion, outcome measures, dosage and safety parameters.