Importance of Conference Calls for Coordinators in Multi-Center Clinical Trials

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Laura Tipton
Mary Foulkes
The George Washington University Biostatistics Center
Measuring Centers’

- Recruitment as a rank percent
  - For each study, order centers from worst recruitment (1) to best (n_s)
  - Divide that rank by number of centers (n_s)
- Participant drop-out percentage
- Screen failure percentage
- Recruitment as a percentage of the total recruited
- Other methods to consider include center specific recruitment targets, and difference from expected recruitment
Recruitment Rank Percent by Attendance Percent for Each of 5 Studies (n=66)
What Affects Attendance?

**No affect on attendance:**
- Funding source
- Disease studied
- Study design (intervention or observation)
- Center’s location
- Center being part of a university
- Center’s affiliation with a 2010 Carnegie Classification ‘Very High Research Activity’ university

**Significant affect on attendance:**
- Years of study duration
- Study state (enrolling or follow-up)
  - Together they explain about 36.4% of the variation in attendance
  - Neither has significant association with recruitment, screen failure, or drop out rates
Recruitment Rank Percent by Attendance Percent for All Studies (n=66)

- For every 1% increase in conference call attendance, there is a 0.22% increase in recruitment rank.
- Attendance explains less than 4.3% of the variation in recruitment rank.
- No significant association.
1% increase in attendance is associated with 0.19% decrease in screen failure rate
1% increase in attendance is associated with 0.07% decrease in drop out rate
No significant associations
Recruitment Percent of Total by Attendance for 4 Studies (n=60)

- For every 1% increase in conference call attendance, there is a 0.06% increase in recruitment as a portion of the total recruited.
- Attendance explains less than 7.2% of the variation in recruitment.
- Significant association (p=0.0387)
Recruitment Percent of Total by Yearly Attendance for 4 Studies (n=60)

- Divided into centers who did not attend half of all calls (n=8) and those did (n=52)
- Significantly different means
- Average percentage of participants recruited was 0.03% and 0.07% for clinics who did not and did attend half the conference calls, respectively
- Very small number of studies
- Multiple measures of recruitment including both percents and counts
- Only NIH funded studies
- Limited disease scope
- Unable to measure a center’s commitment to the study
Conclusions

- Coordinator attendance on conference calls is a poor predictor of the center’s recruitment
- Attendance is also a poor predictor of screen failure and dropout rates
- Lower attendance (making less than half of the calls) is strongly associated with lower recruitment
  - Could this be an indicator of how much of a priority the study is to a center?
  - Should we focus more attention on these few centers and less on the study-wide coordinator conference calls?
Suggestions for Further Research

- Create a repository for this kind of information
- Analyze attendance over time
- Look at other issues that affect both attendance and recruitment
  - Coordinator turn-over
  - Levels of attendance for centers with multiple coordinators
  - Percent FTE of coordinators
- Analyze other methods of communication
- Use for justification for funding
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