

## **The Case for Physician-Led Education Sessions for Research Coordinators**

L. Waitkus

Cleveland Clinic Cancer Center

### **1. Background**

Research Coordinators (RCs) play a vital role in a site's successful management of clinical trials. The majority of skills and education that are needed to be a successful RC are often learned "on-the-job" as opposed to the prospective training and education that defines many other disciplines. As such, there is a continued need for new and continued education opportunities for RCs. Additionally, the research coordinators' offices at Cleveland Clinic (CC) are located multiple blocks away from the Taussig Cancer Institute so the physical interaction between RCs and physicians is typically limited to a few meetings each month. This can lead to feelings of exclusion amongst RCs which can lead to disengagement and poor job satisfaction.

### **2. Goals**

The goals of implementing an education model centered on physician-led education sessions were to increase RC knowledge and thereby increase confidence in job performance, improve research coordinator communication with physicians and increase job satisfaction and engagement.

### **3. Solutions and Methods**

Throughout the last 12 months varying types of physician-led education opportunities were made available to research coordinators. These included:

- Clinical Education Speaker Series: Physicians present a monthly in-person education session on a topic of their choice.
- Clinical Trial Results Overviews: Physicians presented on the results of a clinical trial that was conducted at CCF, what impact the results have on the field of medicine, and what research is being developed as a result of the trial.
- Disease Specific Education Sessions: Physicians led a discussion amongst the RCs in their specific disease group on a disease, treatment, or problem facing a patient population.

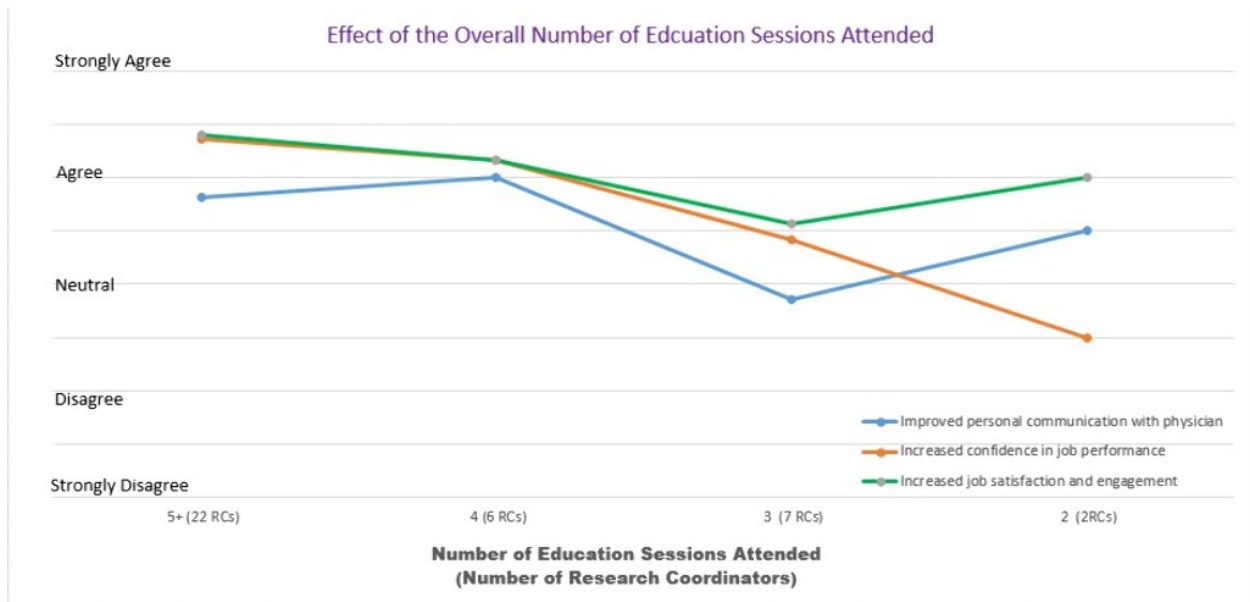
### **4. Outcomes**

37 RCs completed a survey regarding the effect the education sessions had on their communication with physicians, confidence in job performance, and their job satisfaction and engagement. These results show that there is a positive correlation between the number of education sessions attended and an increase in job performance confidence, job satisfaction and engagement, and improved communication with physicians.

The graph below shows that the greatest impact the education sessions had was improving RC confidence in their job performance. There was a 43% increase in the rating on the impact of the

Category: Training and Quality Assurance – Completed Project

education sessions on confidence in job performance in those who attended five or more education sessions compared to those who attended two.



The survey results also showed attending physician-led education sessions that are specific to RCs primary disease group has the greatest impact on RC communication with physicians. There was a 22% increase in improvement of communication with physicians for RCs who attended five or more education sessions that were specific to their primary disease group compared to those who attended no education sessions that were specific to their primary disease group.

## 5. Lessons Learned

Taussig Cancer Institute has 67 RCs who manage hundreds of clinical trials. Improving confidence, communication, engagement, and job satisfaction through physician-led education sessions has a notable impact on the entire research department. Future directions include increasing the overall number of physician-led education session opportunities and studying what impact these education sessions have on the physicians who lead them.