Category: Investigator-Initiated Trials - Work in Progress

Development, Management, and Oversight of Investigator-Initiated Multicenter Trials

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1. Background

Investigator-initiated trials (IIT) often come with minimal funding. When proposed as multicenter, there is a need to address management and oversight internally rather than hiring a clinical research organization (CRO). In 2009, Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) created the Multicenter (MCT) Office, which was dedicated to multicenter trials where MSK is the sponsor and/or data coordinating center. The portfolio has grown from 75 to 260 trials, with increasing complexity. In 2020, MCT defined the trials which require their oversight, including therapeutic, high risk, or moderate risk, that have a primary or secondary endpoint of safety and/or efficacy. In alignment with portfolio growth and increased complexity, MCT expanded to three teams: Multicenter Activation, Multicenter Compliance, and Multicenter Protocol Operations. Each team serves a function to provide oversight and quality assurance regardless of trial type.

2. Goals

The goals of MCT are as follows:

Multicenter Activation

- Ensure feasibility of protocol(s) as multicenter IIT(s)
- Activate participating site(s), inclusive of negotiating budgets and contracts and collecting applicable regulatory documents and institutional review board (IRB) approval(s)

Multicenter Compliance

- Develop resources and policies for activating and overseeing participating site(s)
- Oversee regulatory compliance and serve as a central resource for all multicenter IITs

Multicenter Protocol Operations

- Oversee day-to-day management of multicenter IITs at participating site(s)
- Ensure quality assurance and oversight of participating site(s) and MSK
    - Real-time eligibility review of all external enrollments prior to registration
    - Retrospective eligibility review of randomly selected MSK enrollments
    - Risk-based monitoring of MSK and participating site(s)
- Standardize routine tasks, i.e. outside safety report and amendment distributions

3. Solutions and Methods

Multicenter Activation reviews each multicenter IIT prior to IRB submission and completes a feasibility assessment. The review confirms the study has funding to cover the multicenter costs, contract includes

language to run as a multicenter trial, and the protocol and appendices include the appropriate multicenter language. The team has standardized the participating site activation process, e.g., emails, meeting templates, ICF review checklist. Multicenter Compliance provides central services to the institution, including pre-review of all multicenter IIT amendments prior to IRB submission, tracking auditing of participating sites, and tracking regulatory document collection at participating sites, e.g., amendment approvals and annual reviews. Multicenter Protocol Operations has a two-pronged approach to eligibility review and verification. Real-time reviews of all participating site enrollments are completed prior to registration. Random retrospective reviews are completed of MSK enrollments. An MCT staff member performs risk-based monitoring of MSK and each participating site.

4. Outcomes

There are 137 therapeutic trials; 51 are managed by Multicenter Protocol Operations. The Multicenter Activation team is overseeing the activation of 28 studies across 75 sites.

5. Lessons Learned

- MCT is working with the MSK Office of General Counsel to develop resources and trainings focused on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). There are plans of hiring a CRO to assist with compliance with this new regulation.
- Participating site Time To Activation (TTA) remains a challenge; a goal is to reduce TTA. To avoid conflicting interests with activating studies at MSK, we are exploring expanding resources including dedicated staff for budget and legal review.