

Learning the Research Process: Clinical Education for Management of Oncology Research Trials

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1. Background

- Before 2022 no structured training program existed for newly hired clinical research team members.
 - Clinical trial management is not taught in undergraduate science or nursing courses.
New hires are expected to learn the entire process during the 90-day orientation period.
- Managers were unable to accurately assess the progress of new hires, identify problem areas, or suggest reassignment if the team member was determined unfit to work in clinical research, leading to high-turnover rates at all levels.

2. Goals

- Increase educational support to team members by providing regular trainings on priority topics such as consent, deviations, and serious adverse events.
- Decrease turnover among clinical research team members.
- Increase team knowledge of existing resources, standard operating procedures, and research processes.

3. Solutions and Methods

- Clinical Research Trainer position approved in 2021.
 - Responsible for:
 - Overseeing new hire education orientation period
 - Supporting research team with training updates and refresher courses
 - Standardizing education materials and processes
- Developed eight Modules covering the core research education topics.
 - Expected to be reviewed by the new hire independently for overview understanding and with assigned preceptor.
 - Designed to align with shadow experiences and disease team mentorship providing a multi-faceted training approach tailored to the new hire's learning opportunities.
- Twice weekly, 90-minute education sessions led by the clinical trainer using the Module topics as a basis for learning.
 - Enables consistent messaging and universal understanding of topics across team
 - Ability to ask questions and learn from experiences of others in a low-risk setting
 - Must attend all sessions during orientation and missed sessions must be completed at the next offering
 - Opportunity to attend for refresher is provided to all team members
- Trainer and Managers communicate to assess:
 - New hires progress during orientation
 - Areas for team improvement
 - Individuals struggling with core research concepts

4. Outcomes

- Increased team morale and understanding of research processes.
- Benefit of centrally located resources and dedicated team member for guidance.
- Increased confidence in the role.
- Turnover rate has steadily decreased from 2021 to 2024.
- Improved adherence to standardized research processes with ability to quickly correct.

5. Learned and Future Directions

- Success and longevity in a research position can be correlated with educational support during and after orientation.
- Consistent educational messaging of research processes and practices has reduced confusion among all team members.
- Increased confidence in the role, able to triage research situations as they arise with available resources and understand when to escalate to management appropriately.

Future Directions:

- Creating a unique oncologic electronic medical record test environment for team members to develop navigation and documentation skills without compromising patient information.
- Supporting unlicensed team members through promotion and taking on higher level research responsibilities.

Figure

