

Educating the Next Generation of PIs: CTO Fellows Rotation

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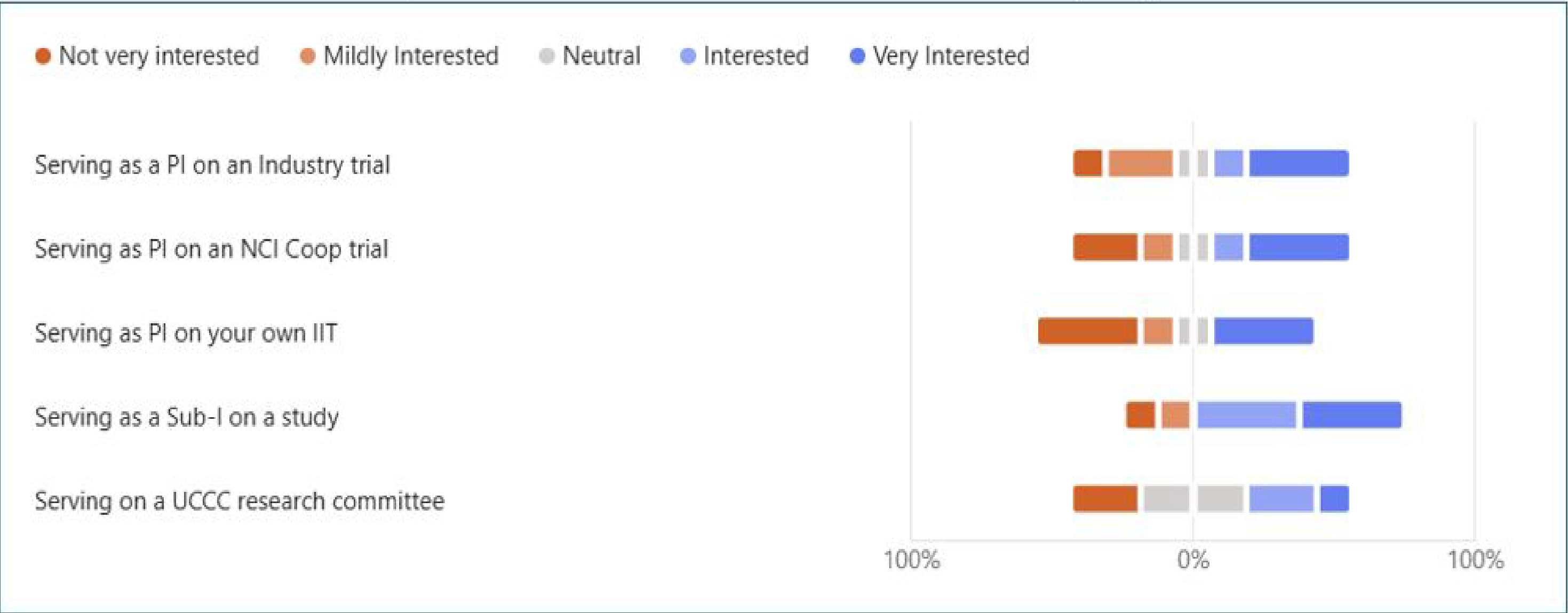
Background

The University of Cincinnati Cancer Center Clinical Trials Office (UCCC CTO) strives to encourage physicians to engage with clinical research as PIs, Sub-Is, or by writing their own research protocols or by serving on research committees. But these can be daunting asks of busy junior faculty or new faculty who may never have had prior exposure to the resources available to support research. In collaboration with the Heme-Onc Fellowship Director the UCCC CTO designed a novel hybrid rotation for second- and third-year Fellows within the UCCC CTO to help these newest physicians gain exposure to the research support framework available to them at UC and to de-mystify the many ways to engage with clinical research.

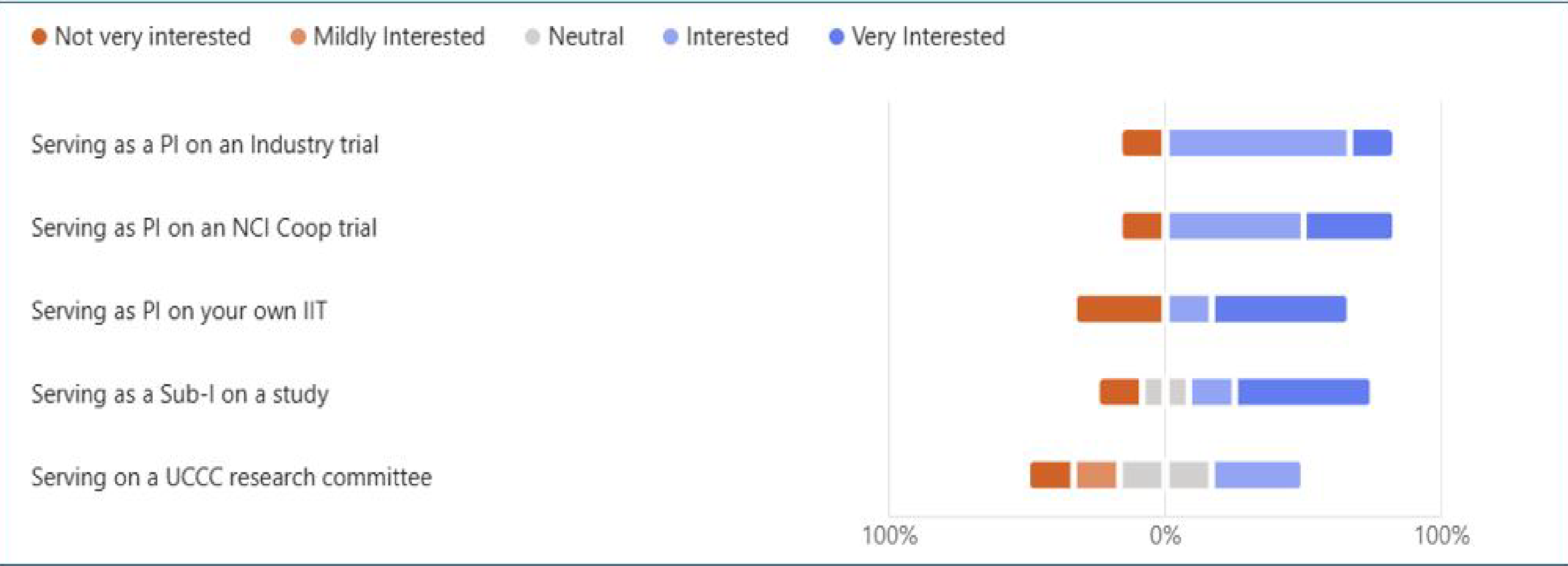
Goals

Pre and post rotation surveys were designed to identify the rotation's impact on a Fellow's possible career interest in research, their interest in engaging in research activities as a PI, Sub-I, in protocol development, and with research committee service. In addition, surveys were designed to evaluate how valuable Fellows found the information during the rotation, their likelihood to recommend it to a colleague, and their understanding of the resources that exist to support research at UCCC. Ultimately, our goal was to ensure Fellows know the CTO exists, what it does, and to increase engagement with research by Fellows.

Research Activities Interest Before Rotation (n=8)



Research Activities Interest After Rotation (n=6)



Solutions & Methods

A two-week rotation was developed with the first week comprised of asynchronous learning via Canvas about core research concepts, outlines of CTO roles/resources, research committees, and required institutional trainings (CITI). At the end of the first week the Fellow met virtually with the research coordinators they would shadow in the second week (paired to match clinical interests). The second clinical week involved direct observation of a research coordinator's visit preparation activities and visit completion in clinic, interspersed with meetings with data, regulatory, and QA staff. The rotation's focus was with interacting with CTO staff only rather than shadowing PIs to ensure Fellows understand CTO roles and how these provide a supportive framework for research conduct at UC.

Outcomes

Eight Fellows completed pre-rotation surveys, and six post-surveys were completed as of Feb 2025 (100% Fellows who already have rotated). The career goals for Fellows did not typically alter after rotation, those who did want to work in academic medicine in research still did, and those who were not considering it, still were not. However, when asked about interest in participating *in specific research activities* rather than research as a career path, we identified a marked decrease in the amount of neutral or mildly interested responses as Fellows (now knowing more about the research infrastructure and actual research tasks) were more confidently able to assess their interest. For example, pre-rotation interest in serving as a PI on their own IIT was: Not Very 37.5% Mildly Interested 12.5% Neutral 12.5% Very Interested 37.5%. Whereas Post-Rotation it was Not Very 33.3% Interested 16.7% Very Interested 50%. And 100% (n=6) said they would recommend rotation to a colleague and that it improved their understanding of the CTO's function.

Lessons Learned & Future Directions

Based on Fellows feedback we are expanding the rotation to include two additional weeks in an experimental therapeutics clinic shadowing our most experienced Investigators in addition to observing CTO staff. Management of the rotation by CTO Education program staff is efficient and has produced materials that are also useful for educating our Investigators and CTO staff which we will continue to develop with our more experienced Investigators.