Development and Implementation of an Evidence-Based Clinical Orientation Program

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An NCI-designated
Comprehensive Cancer Center

Background:

Until early 2020 the clinical research staff at the Laura and Isaac Perlmutter Cancer Center lacked a formalized orientation program for Clinical Research Nurses (CRNs) and Clinical Research Coordinators (CRCs). A survey conducted in 2019 revealed that 34.5% of the clinical team had not received a formal orientation. This led to varied and inconsistent training approaches, confusion about role delineation, and workflow standardization challenges.

Solutions and Methods:

2020

- Developed and implemented orientation program comprised of didactic, problem-based, and experiential learning
- Aligned with Association of Clinical Research Professionals CRC competency domains:
- scientific concepts
- ethical and participant safety
- investigational products development and regulation
- clinical study operations (Good Clinical Practice)
- study and site management
- data management and informatics
- leadership and professionalism
- communication and teamwork

2021

 Program expanded to include shadowing opportunities with the Research Biospecimen Management Unit, enhancing understanding of workflows and fostering collaboration

2022

 Clinical program manager position developed, a role dedicated to CRC supervision, onboarding, and education

2023

- Transitioned from a local shared drive and paper packets to a SharePoint platform, enhancing accessibility and usability
- Length of training plan tailored to each new hire based upon level of experience
- Clinical orientees began to spend 5 days per week on site for the first 4 weeks of their orientation to maximize exposure to different clinical scenarios, even though majority hired under a flexible work model

Goals:

A Comprehensive Evidence-based Orientation Program

Improving preparedness for CRC and CRN roles

Enhancing overall staff satisfaction

Outcomes:

Satisfaction

A 2023 survey revealed 72.4% of CRNs (n=21) and 73.7% of CRCs (n=14) expressed satisfaction with their training, a notable improvement from 2019.

Efficiency

Timeline for the orientation, which initially took an average of 14 weeks (n=9), has been successfully reduced by 26.4% to 10.3 weeks (n=9).

Performance & Quality

Remarkable 60% reduction in preventable reportable incidents from 2019 (n=20) to 2023 (n=8), while simultaneously managing a 25% increase in accruals and 40% increase in treatment trials from 2019 to 2023.

Future Directions:

- Continuous improvement remains a key focus, with an emphasis on learning modules and self-graded testing through online learning platform, incorporation of video resources, and interactive group sessions.
- Future plans include developing tailored orientations for the unique needs of CRNs, nurse practitioners, non-therapeutic clinical research coordinators, and an eventual sub-investigator orientation program.

References: American Academy of Clinical Research Professionals. n.d. "Core Competency Guidelines for Clinical Research Coordinators (CRCs)." ACRP Partners Advancing the Clinical Research Workforce. Accessed February 12, 2024. https://acrpnet.org/employer-resources/our-services/acrp-partners-advancing-the-clinical-research-workforce/core-competency-guidelines-clinical-research-coordinators-crcs/

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