Developing Trust: Engaging Referring Physicians as Partners in Health Care Research

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Background

- Clinical trials of health studies often lack racial and ethnic diversity
- Trust is a key variable in subject recruitment and particularly minority participation
- Community-based minority recruitment approaches help in common conditions but not for conditions with physician referral
- Trust is important for both patients and community physicians
Background 2 (sources of mistrust for referring physicians)

- Concern about risks for patients
- Concern about patients treated with respect
- Minority serving physicians have lower levels of trust in medical researchers than other physicians
  - Higher levels of trust is associated with higher likelihood of referral to trial
- Concern about clinical center stealing their patients
Trust Triangle for Recruitment

- Trusted entity (e.g., minister, physician, etc)
- Trust relationship needed for entity to recommend trial
- Trust relationship needed if participant contacts the investigator
- Primary trust relationship for trial recruitment

Trust Triangle
Circle of Trust for Recruitment
How do we engage providers to refer patients to studies?

EVIDENCE FROM RECRUIT.

U24MD006941 NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MINORITY HEALTH AND HEALTH DISPARITIES.
RECRUIT Methods

**Design:** A cluster-randomized trial conducted within 4 NIH funded multi-site trials.

- *A trial within trials*— 50 sites were randomized within their parent trials
- *Parent trials*— CABANA-Cardiovascular; PACES & BMT-CTN-Cancer; STEADY-Parkinson’s

**Intervention:**

- Trust-based training modules and continuous quality improvement methods
- Monthly coaching calls between investigators and sites for 12 months
Strategies to Build Engagement with Community Providers

- Training module for investigators on communication with minority serving physicians
  - Sensitize PI to potential concerns in the community
- Training module for investigators on development of a minority recruitment plan
  - Plan who they are going to talk to and how
- Training module for investigators on communication with recruited patients
  - The patients will report back to their doctor
- Encourage active engagement between site PI and community doctors
  - Don’t dump all contact with the community onto the staff
Results

- In three of four parent trials (PACES, CABANA and STEADY-PDIII) the intervention sites exhibited greater minority enrollment (29.9%) compared to control sites (8.2%).
  - The bone marrow transplant trial was too diverse and was actually multiple different studies classified as one.
- Sites that followed the intervention program showed success!
Discussion

- This intervention focused on building trust between investigators and referring physicians
- This strategy works
- Building trust and relationships is work
  - difficult to implement due to time and effort but it pays dividends
- Trust is not built by sending blast emails by the recruitment coordinator
- RECRUIT strategy may be suited for certain types of trials and not others
The End