Management of a clinical research program is becoming increasingly challenging due to myriad of factors, including regulatory and administrative burdens and fewer available yet more complex trials. Site resources are often limited, so investigators and program managers must be able to use their staff as effectively and efficiently as possible. Workload assessments can compete with other important clinical trial management tasks, such as maintaining data quality, complying with protocols, meeting program accrual goals, and keeping within budget. To help ease this administration burden associated with clinical trial-associated workload, the American Society of Clinical Oncology Research Community Forum created the ASCO Clinical Trial Workload Assessment Tool.

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS, TIPS, AND BEST PRACTICES**

Regular assessments are necessary to determine each staff member’s clinical trial associated workload and the complexity of work they are able to manage. The resulting information can help a research program establish their own benchmarks, monitor trends and shifts, justify current staffing and the need to hire additional staff, assist with budget planning, provide metrics for staff performance, ensure workload balance, and ultimately improve staff satisfaction, potentially reducing staff burnout and turnover.

**Measuring Workload**

*To effectively measure staff workload, consider the following best practices:*

- **Assess Complexity of Trial** – Clinical trial associated workload cannot be measured solely by the number of patients enrolled and observed. Measurement of workload based on trial complexity scoring or trial-specific effort more accurately represents actual workload. The ASCO Clinical Trial Workload Assessment Tool uses a 4 point protocol acuity rating scale, which distinguishes trials on a continuum from less complex trials (i.e., observational/registry trials) to very complex trials (i.e., multiple drug regimens and high degree of toxicity potential).

- **Assess Balance of Workload** – A regular assessment of workload across staff members enables research managers to ensure workload balance, optimize efficiencies, and improve staff satisfaction and retention.

- **The ASCO Clinical Trial Workload Assessment Tool** is designed to help research sites assess staff workload based on the complexity of research protocols and the number of patients assigned to staff. It can be used for the following key elements of assessing and managing clinical trial associated workload:
  - Assess staff workload on a per protocol basis,
  - Compare and redistribute research staff workload,
  - Identify staff-related accrual issues and opportunities for improvement,
  - Provide productivity data for annual staff performance review,
  - Re-evaluate current processes for improvements in efficiencies, and/or
  - Assess staffing needs and justify budget for staffing (for grant and/or institutional justification).
REFERENCES

OTHER RESOURCES

Email researchcommunityforum@asco.org with ideas and suggestions for content revisions, additional and/or new topic summaries.

Visit asco.org/research-community-forum to learn more about the ASCO Research Community Forum initiatives and to access more resources and tools for oncology research sites.

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