

Effective Provider Engagement Strategies: Results of A Systematic Case Study Design

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Introduction

Strategies for engaging provider practices in large-scale, long-term research studies like the National Children's Study (NCS) need to: (1) take into consideration key characteristics of the practice (such as hospital-affiliation and patient volume); (2) match recruitment intensity to the practical needs of practices; and (3) be flexible in accommodating feedback from practices. Using case study methodology, we share our provider engagement strategies and recruitment experiences.

Methods

Provider practices were categorized based on their hospital-affiliation and practice volume (high, moderate, low). Recruitment intensity (high or low) was matched to practice volume, with moderate volume practices randomly assigned to high or low intensity. Six practices were selected (two each of low, moderate, high volume) for case studies. Information on practice engagement procedures, recruitment strategies, and recruitment progress was gathered from research staff. Individual interviews with research personnel at each practice provided additional details on challenges, modifications, and lessons learned.

Results

Coordinating with hospital physician relations organization facilitated access to practices, the engagement process and recruitment implementation. Issues raised by practices included participant confidentiality, retention, language barriers, and space concerns. Recruitment modifications have included matching research assistant skills/characteristics to practice population and changing locations for research activities. Practice complexity (i.e., number of locations, provider types) influences both provider engagement strategies and recruitment experiences.

Conclusions

Engaging practices requires identification of key contacts, persistent communication, an understanding of practice flow and needs, consistent research staffing, organization of scheduling and contacts, and flexibility in communication/recruitment/engagement approaches. Case examples will be provided.

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Tables

	Practice A	Practice B	Practice C	Practice D	Practice E	Practice F
Practice Volume¹	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High	High
Hospital Affiliation²	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Recruitment Intensity³	High	Low	Low to High	High	High	High

¹Practice volume = numbers of NCS segment-eligible births in 2008

²Hospital affiliation = whether providers have privileges and births occur at WIH

³Recruitment intensity: **High** = research personnel access appointment schedule, conduct address look-up and approach address-eligible patients during visits; **Low** = research personnel provide practice staff with NCS brochures and permission to contacts (PTCs) to distribute to patients.