

CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE BUSY COORDINATOR

August 2023

Use of Social Media As a Recruitment Tool

Scenario

Clinical Research Coordinator (CRC), Dawn posted a recruitment poster on her personal social media account to boost recruitment for a more than minimal risk research study. The research study's Principal Investigator (PI) is alerted by another study team personnel of Dawn's actions and immediately told her to remove the recruitment poster from her personal social media account as this mode of advertising has not been approved by IRB.

What went wrong, what should be done?

- PI was not consulted on the proposal to use social media to boost recruitment. Consult / discuss with PI on the other potential types of recruitment strategies to be used to boost recruitment, e.g., use of social media.
- Personal social media account should not be used.
- Seek IRB's approval for use of new recruitment strategy, if it is different from initial approved recruitment strategy.

What should the PI and CRC do prior to utilizing social media as a recruitment strategy?

Consideration when using social media for study recruitment

- The PI and/or study team should refer to the institution policy on the use of social media and consult the institution's corporate communications department if required.
- A social media account may be created as a recruitment strategy for the specific research study. The PI and/or study team may leverage on the institution's social media account, if applicable.
- The PI is required to submit to the IRB for approval prior to the use of social media as a recruitment mode. The mode and content of the new recruitment strategy should also be included for approval to the IRB and/or institution's corporate communications department, if necessary.

Some reminders on use of social media as a recruitment strategy

- Specify how gatekeeping is done. The study team should delegate a specific study personnel to disseminate the information in the social media, manage comments or questions. The PI could discuss with the institution's Corporate Communications Department to triage the comments to the study team.
- Restrict the social media post being shared by private accounts.
- Ensure an end date for the social media post to be removed or deleted; for example, when the research study's recruitment period has ended or when research study's recruitment target is met.
- Ensure the use of recruitment posters on the various social media platforms are compliant with the institution SOPs and/or guidelines.

References:

NHG Proper Conduct of Research Standard Operating Procedures 501-C02, Subject Screening and Enrolment

REMINDER: Readers are advised to comply with their institutions and approving IRBs guidelines and/or SOPs relating to the use of social media for their research studies.

Article Contributed By: Jaclyn Ong, Senior Clinical Research Coordinator (IMH), Michelle Yeo, Clinical Research Coordinator (IMH)

Edited By: NHG Group Research, OHRPP

**Disclaimer: All characters appearing in this article are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons is purely coincidental. Best practices may differ between institutions. Readers are encouraged to follow their institution's policies/guidelines relating to the above scenarios/case study.*