Delivering Successful Outcomes for Patients: Strengthening recruitment to clinical trials

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Research and clinical trials are an everyday part of work in NHS Scotland. Approximately 1,400 clinical trials are active in any given month providing access to new treatment and therapy options. They are an important part of the process the NHS goes through in making decisions about prevention, diagnosis or treatment of illness, and ensures NHS resources are used in the most appropriate ways.

INTRODUCTION
NHS Research Scotland is a partnership of Scottish NHS Boards and the Chief Scientist Office (CSO) of Scottish Government. Our role is to ensure NHS Scotland provides the best environment to support clinical research. Recruitment to clinical trials is an essential part of this as failure to recruit suitable patients in a timely manner can lead to serious outcomes such as investigator fatigue and disengagement, and even trial abandonment at great expense to the NHS.

To facilitate effective management of activity, and the production of detailed, up-to-date study and site level information for both commercial and non-commercial studies, NRS Central Management Team (NRS-CMT) have developed automated reporting procedures.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
- Increase viability of clinical research studies
- Increase the accuracy of the data collected
- Accurately track the total number of studies
- Accurately track the type of studies.

METHODOLOGY
NRS-CMT have developed a system that:
- Allows all critical trial staff members – Health Boards, NRS Performance Managers, Clinical Leads – access to key information
- Clearly and visually shows the status of recruitment against target using a RAG (Red-Amber-Green) traffic light system
- Tracks overall study recruitment and individual site recruitment with the ability to drill down into individual facility information
- Automates analysis of raw data replacing manual and time-consuming analysis previously completed by NHS Research Scotland and Health Board staff.

PERFORMANCE OF NON-COMMERCIAL STUDIES, APRIL 2018

| 36% | 12% | 52% |

Statistics published correct at the time of printing.

OUTCOMES AND RESULTS
- Better targeting of resources to support site recruitment - as a result of stronger, more transparent data with granular drill down options
- Significant resource savings – automated systems examining raw data enables analysis to be completed in a matter of minutes, rather than hours previously needed for manual analysis
- More informed staff – simple access to data allows relevant staff to be better informed, improving ability to react and adapt
- Identify struggling studies – the visual RAG system allows underperforming studies to be identified, and necessary resources allocated to support.

CONCLUSION
Scotland operates a centralised system to support clinical research in Scotland and improve quality, efficiency and coordination. Working on a pan-Scotland basis, NHS Research Scotland has implemented developed automated reporting procedures which empowers NRS and researchers across Scotland to better manage and support clinical trials taking place, boosting cost effectiveness, and ensuring that patients have efficient access to ground-breaking medicines, treatments, and medical devices.