

The CenterWatch Monthly

May 2014

A CenterWatch Article Reprint

Volume 21, Issue 05

Keeping trial participants engaged

By Jennifer Ross

Keeping patients engaged and involved in clinical trials is essential to success. With average patient costs estimated at \$37,000 per patient, sponsors cannot afford non-compliant patients—or worse, dropouts.

Almac's research on patient preferences (n=405) yields critical success factors to apply when designing protocols, including those with diaries. The survey's goal was to better understand how to effectively implement reminders during clinical trials and identify patients' perceptions of the optimal reminder strategy.

In general, patients want to be reminded of study visits, ePRO/diary events and treatment schedules. Patients typically would like to receive reminders for visits one to two days in advance. They check text messages immediately more often than email (patients check text messages immediately 60% of the time versus 10% for email), indicating that text message reminders will be more quickly viewed.

Second, patients who are dissatisfied with their experience are less likely to be



Jennifer Ross is senior biostatistician at Almac Clinical Technologies, providing statistical consultancy on randomization methodology and IXRS implementation. Ross also provides electronic patient reported outcome (ePRO) study implementation consultancy and is a representative of G-Path's ePRO Consortium, as chair of the publications and presentations subcommittee. Previously, she held research roles at the University of Pennsylvania and Philadelphia Veterans Affairs Medical Center.
www.almacgroup.com

compliant. Therefore, it is important to keep patient burden in mind when designing trials and implementing reminder strategies—reminding study participants with enough frequency to be effective, but not too much so as to irritate them. Optimal reminder strategies can affect the patient experience and positively affect compliance.

Third, patients prefer electronic diaries to paper. Of those participants who had previously used both ePRO and paper diaries, the favorite mode reported was ePRO (77%) versus paper (23%). Patients also find

it more difficult to remember to fill out paper diaries than electronic ones (likely because reminders can be implemented easily on electronic devices).

Overall, patients may benefit from a reminder strategy that takes their preferences into account. Using an effective reminder strategy is important for keeping patients engaged, preventing negative experiences and optimizing compliance. A trial cannot function without patients, and it is in sponsors' best interests to keep them actively involved for the duration of the trial.