

Analyzing Referral Influx Patterns Over a 24-Hour Period and the Impact of Timely Responses on Referral Engagement in Depression Trials

Submitter Jeffrey Apter

Affiliation Global Clinical Trials, LLC

SUBMISSION DETAILS

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Methodological Issue Being Addressed During standard work hours, recruiters observed that the voicemail-to-successful-contact ratio was significantly higher, making it harder to follow up effectively on referral inquiries compared to after-work hours. This issue is critical to address, as patient recruitment is time consuming and costly. Being able to understand how to mitigate this issue could lead to more strategic financial and operational planning.

Introduction Recruitment for depression clinical trials often fails due to missed follow-up opportunities, especially as inquiries peak outside standard business hours. This analysis investigates referral patterns throughout a 24-hour period and assesses whether immediate outreach (within three minutes of inquiry) improves recruitment efficiency compared to traditional office-hour follow-ups.

Methods The study was conducted over four weeks, tracking referral inquiries and engagement results based on two follow-up strategies: office-hour-only outreach (9 AM - 5 PM) and 24-hour outreach with immediate response. Metrics included the number of successful contacts, failed contact attempts, scheduled in-person visits, and loss of interest. Data comparisons were made between the first two weeks (office-hour outreach) and the last two weeks (24-hour outreach).

Results Results indicated a significant increase in engagement with the 24-hour outreach protocol. Successful contact attempts rose from 31% to 87%, while failed contact attempts dropped by 56%. Additionally, the number of "No Longer Interested" referrals decreased by 11%, and the number of scheduled in-person visits quadrupled. Although "Failed Phone Screen" cases increased by 60%, this outcome facilitated more definitive participant assessments.

Conclusion The findings demonstrate that immediate, 24-hour follow-up substantially enhances recruitment outcomes in depression clinical trials by reducing missed opportunities and improving participant engagement. Implementing a rapid-response approach around the clock may serve as a best practice for optimizing recruitment strategies in clinical trials, ultimately enhancing operational efficiency and return on investment in participant outreach.

Co-Authors

Jeffrey Apter¹, Thibaud Belleface²

¹ Global Clinical Trials, LLC

² Global Medical Institute, LLC

Keywords

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