



# Research Rounds

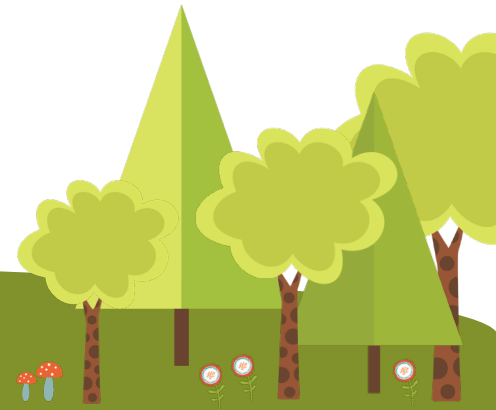
Joslyn Gray, Project Manager  
ACHIEVE Research  
June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022





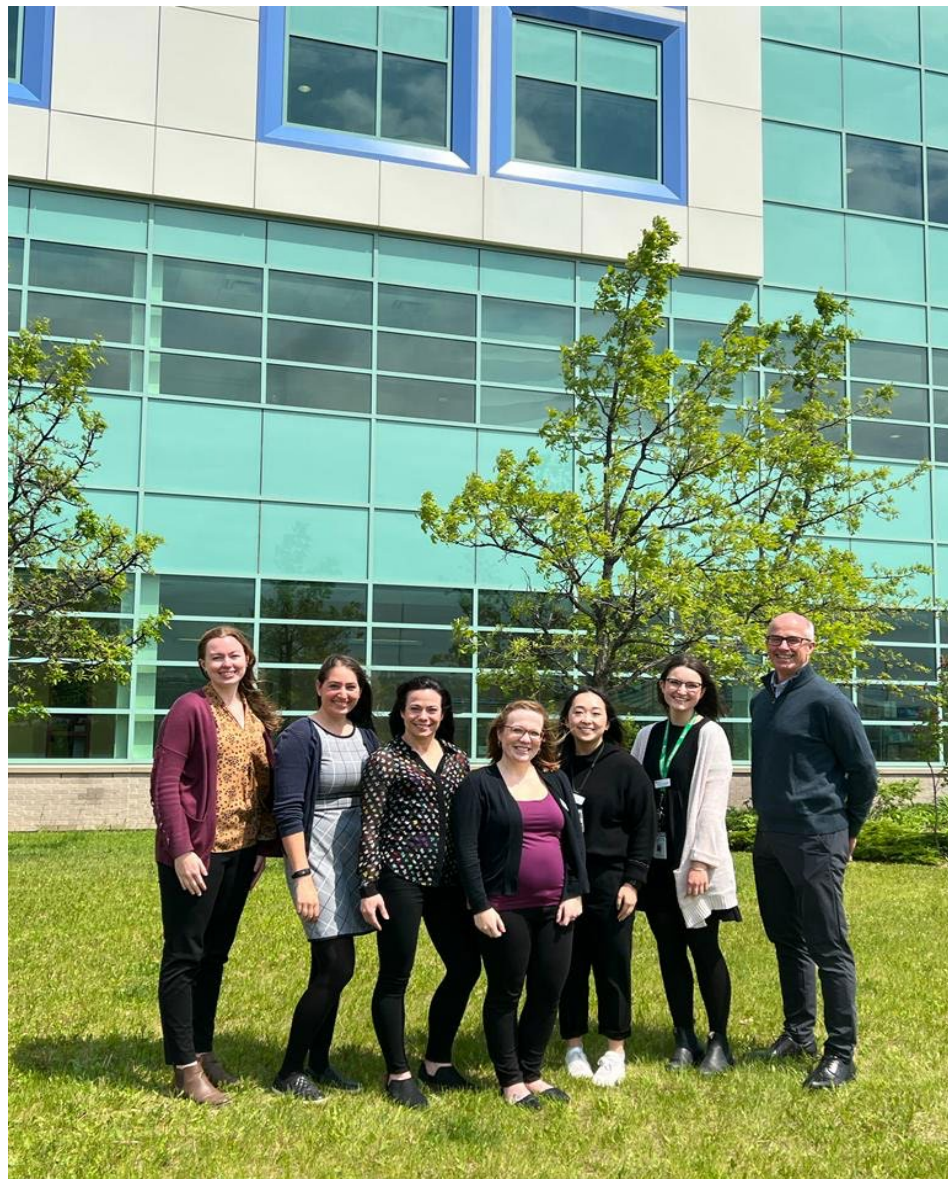
How to:

# RECRUIT FOR YOUR RESEARCH PROJECTS



# Objectives

1. Outline effective methods to promote research projects
2. Discuss recruitment strategies
3. Demonstrate retention practices



## **ACHIEVE Research Team:**

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# ~~Four~~ Five Ps of Recruitment

**Product:** protocol design – considering factors that may affect “recruitability”

**Price:** benefit/barriers of participation

**Place:** site locations

**Promotion:** messages and materials used for outreach to target audiences

**Patient/Participant:** should be considered during all stages

# 1. Project Promotion

## Social Media

### Pros:

- Large audience
- Can use targeted ads
- Cost effective

### Cons:

- Trolls
- Lack of control over information
- Misinformation

### Suggestions:

Build your social media presence now

- Use the UofC research site – free to promote studies
  - Ensure all possible keywords are included





## Example: AB Childhood COVID-19 Cohort (AB3C) Study

Project summary:

- Children aged 0-17
- 4x blood draws at ACH over 18 months
- 4x study questionnaires

Recruited exclusively through Facebook:

- 2 paid advertisements (\$650)
- 57k people reached; over 2,000 expressed interest
- 1,035 participants enrolled
- Had research staff available in the evenings and on weekends



**ACHIEVE Research**

Jun 26, 2020 · 🌐



Attention Calgary families: Are you interested in finding out if your child has COVID-19 antibodies? Learn more and sign up for our serology study here: [ucalgary.ca/covidinkids](https://ucalgary.ca/covidinkids)



RESEARCH4KIDS.UCALGARY.CA

**Home | COVID in Kids**

The purpose of the Alberta Childhood CO...

**SIGN UP**

👍 Charisse Dominski and 96 others

👍 97

💬 45

➦ 137

# 1. Project Promotion

## Raising Awareness in Clinic

Examples:

- Attend rounds to inform clinical team of research projects
- Outline easy ways for clinical team to contact research team
- Be present in clinic if possible

## Inpatient and Outpatient Recruitment

- Get to know the care team (infiltrate)
- Spend as much time as possible in clinic/on the unit (out of sight, out of mind)
- Colourful study box





## Example: Infant Vaccine Clinical Trials

### Project summary:

- Babies aged 2 months
- Randomized to receive licensed or unlicensed pediatric vaccines from age 2-18 months
- 2 studies; 75 babies enrolled



### Recruited through the Post-Partum Public Health Clinic :

- Closest clinic to ACH
- Multiple presentations to clinical staff (with treats)
- Brought promotional materials for distribution and reminders
- Visited the clinic once/week
- Made it easy for clinical team to participate
- Clinical team could distribute *Consent-to-Contact* forms without adding time to their appointments

# 1. Project Promotion

## **Mail Outs / Cold Calls**

- Physical mail outs (via Canada Post) vs email
- Most likely will have to pay AHS staff to phone/mail
- If you can directly send invites to your target population, and it's a wide enough audience, can be very effective
- Generally a <5% response rate
- Those who respond are usually keen and well informed
- Mailing lists from clinics, patient advocacy groups, etc.



## Example: Pneumococcal Vaccine Clinical Trial

### Project summary:

- Babies aged 2 months
- Randomized to receive a 3 dose pneumococcal vaccine schedule or a 2-dose pneumococcal vaccine schedule from age 2-13 months
- Vaccines plus blood work and a nasal swab
- 62 babies enrolled (fastest in Canada)

### Recruited through the Public Health:

- Mass mail out to all babies registered with Public Health
- Addressed the letters directly to the babies
- Clearly outlined the study procedures in the letter
- Effective but at a significant cost and time consuming

## 2. Recruitment

### Direct contact with potential participants:

- Train your team well
- Communicate why your study is so interesting and exciting
- Know your population in advance: working individuals, parents, etc. When are they available?
- Consider what your study offers to them
- Show your appreciation for the participant's time, introduce the study with a brief overview, list pros and cons, and emphasize why the study is important
- Project confidence, competence and friendliness



# Recruitment Script

*"Hi, first, congratulations on your new baby, and thank you for your interest in our study! If you have about 5 or 10 minutes, I can give you some information about the study and you can decide whether you're interested in participating or learning more. **Does that work?**"*

*"Currently, babies in Alberta are given three doses of pneumococcal vaccine – at 2, 4 and 12 months. In this study, we are trying to figure out how to protect babies with the least amount of doses. Participating in this study is the exact same as going to Public Health for vaccines, except there is a 50% chance that your baby will not receive a pneumococcal vaccine at the 4 month visit. At the first appointment, we will find out if your baby is in the 2 or 3 dose group, and it's a random assignment. We also collect about a teaspoon of blood at 5, 12 and 13 months of age. There are no vaccines at the 13 month appointment, just the blood test and a nasal swab. **Do you have any questions so far?**"*

*"I want to tell you that **research is voluntary**, and while we are very grateful for your willingness to participate, if at any point during the study you wish to withdraw, you can simply go back to Public Health and your baby will receive all the same vaccines. Since we use the same electronic system as Public Health, all your baby's information will be visible to Public Health. This can be helpful if you want to do a Public Health drop in for measurements or questions in between study visits. There is no difference in coming to our clinic or Public Health. We will go over your vaccine records too, since that is part of the Public Health visit. **Does this sound like something you would be interested in doing?**"*

## Recruitment Tips & Tricks

- Adjust your strategy when it isn't working
- Provide the research team with answers to possible questions (FAQ section of script)
- Be organized – track if participants have already been contacted
- Give families a deadline
- Consider if any health services can be combined with research appointments
- Emphasize all the motivating factors for participating

### Example:

- For vaccine clinical trials, hire a Public Health RN to combine research appointments with public health visits
- This makes it easier for families to join the study

## 3. Retention

**Now that you have a participant in your study, how to keep them there?**

- Provide a positive experience – to the participant, it isn't just about data collection
- Share interim results (could be newsletters, holiday updates, birthday cards)
- Flexible appointment times help participants adhere to protocol windows
- Awards! Not just for children – stickers, visit passport book, sensory toys, lollies
- Consider pain reduction strategies (needle phobia is common among children and adults)







# Reasons for Retention

## Barriers to Enrolment

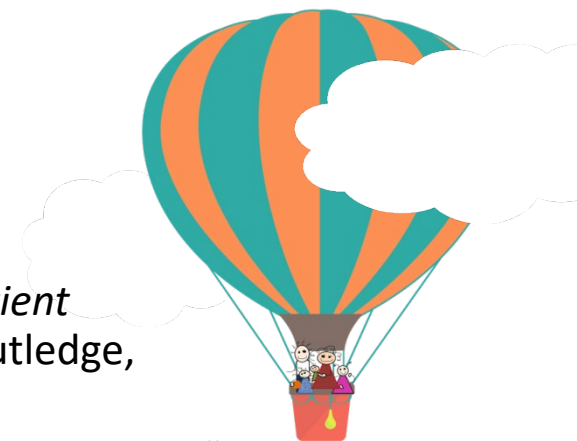
- Avoid magical thinking
  - Re: clinical team performing recruitment activities, timelines, recruitment rate, effort required
- Budget appropriately
- Consider that anything new with AHS requires time (+)
- Passive recruitment (posters, pamphlets) is generally unsuccessful
- Lack of knowledgeable and trained staff
- Attention to detail is important – participants need to feel that their time is valued

# ACHIEVE Recruitment Stats – last 5 years

Study Name	# of Participants Enrolled	Study Type
CANVAS-COVID	70,000	Surveillance (survey)
AB3C	1,035	Serology study
Moderna COVID Vaccine	51	Pediatric vaccine clinical trial
Men ACWY	90	Pediatric vaccine clinical trial
CIRN 23	62	Pediatric vaccine clinical trial
Pneumo 15	25	Pediatric vaccine clinical trial
Rota	50	Pediatric vaccine clinical trial

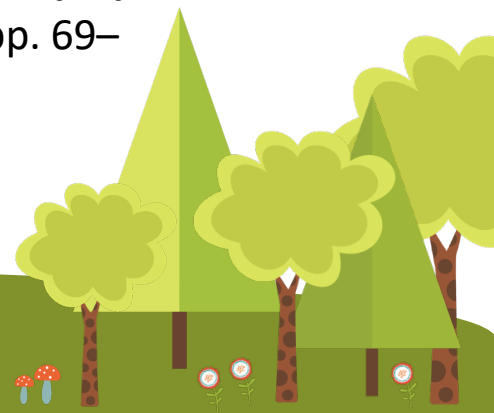
2021: 7 active studies, 2200+ in-person appointments, endless calls and emails





## Further reading:

- Bachenheimer, Joan F., and Bonnie A. Brescia. *Reinventing Patient Recruitment: Revolutionary Ideas for Clinical Trial Success*. Routledge, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315244839>.
- Tramm, Ralph, et al. "Clinical Trial Recruitment - a Complex Intervention?" *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, vol. 22, no. 17-18, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2013, pp. 2436–43, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.12145>.
- Jhund, Pardeep S. "Improving Recruitment for Clinical Trials: The Human Touch." *Medical Journal of Australia*, vol. 210, no. 9, 2019, pp. 401–02, <https://doi.org/10.5694/mja2.50161>.
- Brintnall-Karabelas, Julie, et al. "Improving Recruitment in Clinical Trials: Why Eligible Participants Decline." *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, vol. 6, no. 1, University of California Press, 2011, pp. 69–74, <https://doi.org/10.1525/jer.2011.6.1.69>.



# Thank you

