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Informed consent documents sometimes contain confusing academic and legal language that can be off-putting for potential participants. HRP recently developed tips to help researchers simplify consent language to make documents more understandable to the lay audience:

1. **Plain language**: use simple words for medical/scientific jargon - do not use the word and the definition in parentheses. Just use plain language.

2. **Simple words**: use words with less than three syllables; for example, use “about” instead of “approximately.” See word replacement sites below.

3. **Active voice**: this means the noun subject does the action: “We will measure your blood pressure,” not passive, e.g., “Your blood pressure will be measured by...”

4. **One thought sentences**: break sentences with multiple thoughts into one thought per sentence.

5. **Font**: use size 12, Sans serif fonts such as Arial, Calibri, Tahoma.

6. **White space**: use margins of minimum of one inch; squeezing content to minimize consent length does not help readability.

7. **Format**: use left justified, right ragged format – this gives reader visual cues.

8. **Emphasize**: use italics, bold or all small caps to emphasize important points, but not all at once, in other words, do not do this: **THIS IS IMPORTANT**.

9. **Reviewer**: have a lay person read your document and ask them comprehension questions.

10. **Lists**: use bulleted or numbered lists when three or more are items are included in text.

Word replacement websites help translate complicated/medical jargon into simpler terms; some helpful sites include: [University of Michigan Library Plain Language Medical Dictionary](http://www.lib.umich.edu/med/); [Multi-Regional Clinical Trials Glossary](http://mrcct.gatech.edu/glossary/); [National Comprehensive Cancer Network Informed Consent Language Database](http://www.nccn.org). See the HRP [website](http://www.hrp.org) for more information.

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**Alzheimer’s Association Research Grant (AARG)**

The AARG grant program seeks early career investigators, meaning those who are less than 18 years past their doctoral degree or post residency. Funding will support gathering pilot data, testing procedures, and developing hypotheses. The intent is to support early-career development that will lay the groundwork for future research grant applications to federal or other funding entities.

**The Steven D. Manners Research Development Award**

The University Center for Social and Urban Research (UCSUR) is accepting applications for the Steven D. Manners Research Development Award, which supports pilot research in the social, behavioral, and policy sciences. Proposals must align with UCSUR’s mission of working collaboratively to conduct interdisciplinary research that improves communities and addresses social, economic, health, and policy issues most relevant to society.

**Patient-Clinician Relationship: Improving Health Outcomes in Populations that Experience Health Care Disparities**

This opportunity from the NIH aims to support innovative multi-disciplinary and multi-level (e.g., patient, clinician, interpersonal, health care system, community) research designed to understand how optimizing patient-clinician relationships affects health care outcomes in patients from populations that experience health disparities, and to identify best practices and interventions that improve patient-clinician relationships leading to improved health outcomes.
**CTSI UPDATES**

**CTSI’s Katelyn Collinger Recipient of Chancellor’s Award for Staff, Research Support**

CTSI’s own Katelyn Collinger, Recruitment Facilitator, was recently awarded the Chancellor’s Award for Staff, Research Support. Katelyn’s dedicated work building the STRicklAnd Research Training (START) program from the ground up resulted in the accolade. The START program is a collaboration with the Manchester Bidwell Corporation; it offers a free training program that provides the experience and education necessary for students to become entry-level clinical research assistants. The program also connects interested graduates with externship opportunities at Pitt. Speaking about her award and her involvement with START, Katelyn noted, “I am so fortunate to work on a project that I am truly proud of and that has allowed me to have a front row seat to the inception of research careers of incredible people. I am truly honored to be recognized for this work.” Kudos, Katelyn!

**CTSI Announces Virginia Kaufman Pain Challenge 2023**

The Pain Challenge is back! Funded by the Virginia Kaufman Endowment Fund and administered by CTSI, this opportunity seeks researchers investigating solutions to challenging pain problems. Proposals may address either the physical or mental aspects of pain, including dynamics, causes, and alleviation of pain, and/or treatments to prevent or mitigate pain. Study teams must be led by a Pitt faculty PI, but cross disciplinary collaborations with other institutions, industry, and community partners are encouraged. Recipients will receive $50,000 for direct costs to cover a 12 month project period. Awardees will also receive in-kind project management support from CTSI.

Letters of intent are due February 24; select candidates will advance to a second round of submission. Notification of award is expected in June 2023. Please see our [website](#) for detailed application requirements.

**Orientation to Research Fundamentals Returns in the Spring**

CTSI will hold our bi-annual Orientation to Research Fundamentals training May 8-10. These half day sessions cover the concepts required to successfully coordinate a research study and provide an overview of the resources and regulatory requirements for conducting clinical research at the University of Pittsburgh and UPMC. Expert speakers from research related offices throughout the University will speak on diverse topics like regulatory compliance, recruitment and retention, working with the Human Research Protection Office, and developing standard operating procedures. This training is especially helpful for new research professionals but are also open to experienced staff/faculty looking for a refresher training. Registration will be open on our website in April and announced through our [CTSI e-blasts](#).

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**REGULATORY NOTES**

**Updates from the National Institutes of Health (NIH)**

On January 12, 2023, the National Institutes of Health announced an increase to its salary cap from $203,700 to $212,100 for Executive Level II of the Federal Executive pay scale. NIH grantees may re-budget to accommodate the new salary cap for awards issued in specific years that were restricted to Executive Level II, but no additional funds will be provided to the grant awards to accommodate salary increases.

PERIS™ MyFunding has been updated to reflect the new salary cap.

See NIH Notice [NOT-OD-23-056](#) and the [Salary Cap Summary](#) for more details.
DEAR CTSI,

Question:
Recently I have been hearing more about Dissemination and Implementation Science. Can you explain more about what that term means?

Answer:
Researchers want their innovations/interventions to have lasting impact. There is a growing realization that even the most innovative interventions quickly fade away if they are not developed and implemented with scale-up/spread, real-world barriers, and long-term sustainability in mind. Dissemination and Implementation (D&I) Science is a discipline that encourages investigators to consider how past discoveries, or their own proposed research, could translate into impact on the health of individuals and communities. It is about thinking carefully, and posing research questions throughout the study process regarding the uptake and everyday use of health interventions.

D&I Science asks investigators to engage all types of stakeholders who may be affected by a scientific discovery in considering its potential implications for patients, providers and policy makers. It also asks them to consider how scientific findings could reach providers and the community in a meaningful and actionable way.

CTSI’s IMPaCT Core provides D&I support, including:

- Consultations on applying D&I concepts, frameworks, and tools to specific projects
- Pilot funding for innovative and high-risk D&I research ideas
- Didactic opportunities for investigators, clinicians, and students interested in D&I research
- Cross-disciplinary connections of researchers who share an interest in D&I research

The IMPaCT Core is happy to share more about D&I Science; more information can be found here.

Questions for us?
We’d love to hear from you: ctsi@pitt.edu
Pitt+Me questions: ASKPPM@pitt.edu