IN THIS ISSUE

- Funding Opportunities
- CTSI Updates
- Regulatory Notes: Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) to Commemorate 50th Anniversary of the National Research Act
- Dear CTSI: Community Engagement

Public Responsibility in Medicine and Research (PRIM&R) is a non-profit organization that works to promote ethical standards in research by providing education and professional resources to the research community.

One of PRIM&R’s recently added resources is a ConsentTools Toolkit developed by a team of NIH-funded researchers at Washington University in St. Louis led by James DuBois, DSc, PhD. Based on the 2018 updates to the Common Rule, the Toolkit emphasizes best practices for increasing participant understanding and ability to consent.

Per the PRIM&R website, some key points from the Toolkit include:

- **Optimizing key information using plain language**: plain language involves writing in a way that is clear, simple, and easily understood. Choices like using simple words and phrases, avoiding technical jargon, keeping sentences and paragraphs short, and writing in the active voice help facilitate participant understanding.

- **Formatting choices**: formatting choices that enhance understanding include using large fonts, bulleted lists, and headers that are one size larger than the body text. Increasing white space in the areas of the document that do not contain text can also improve readability. Additionally, using bold text is recommended for emphasis instead of underlining or italics.

- **Assessment**: Using a validated instrument to assess participants’ understanding of consent information can help ensure participants have and understand all the information they need prior to deciding whether to participate in a research study. The Revised University of California, San Diego Brief Assessment of Capacity to Consent (UBACC) is a validated instrument used to assess whether a participant understands informed consent information. It has 10 items and takes about five minutes to administer and score. The Toolkit provides guidance on how to administer the Revised UBACC, including the Revised UBACC with instructions and scoring, brief videos demonstrating how to administer and score the assessment, and a sample assessment.

- **Legally Authorized Representatives (LAR)**: Designating a LAR for participants with cognitive impairment can be a sensitive issue. The Toolkit provides information on how to navigate the complexities of appointing a LAR, including guidance on whether participants need a LAR and how to help participants appoint a LAR.

---

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

**Focus Grants: Reaching 20% by 2025**

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) has set a goal to reduce the nation’s suicide rate 20% by 2025. This Focus Grant seeks applications that address potential biological, psychological, social and/or environmental pathways and interventions that can significantly reduce the national suicide rate if ultimately implemented on a large scale.

This is a yearly opportunity and it is expected that a call for LOIs will be announced shortly with an August 1, 2024 deadline.

**The William T. Grant Foundation: Research Grants on Reducing Inequality**

The William T. Grant Foundation supports research to build, test, or increase understanding of programs, policies, and practices to reduce inequality in the academic, social, behavioral, or economic outcomes of young people ages 5-25 in the United States.

Proposals can be descriptive studies that clarify mechanisms for reducing inequality or elucidate why a specific program, policy, or practice reduces inequality; intervention studies that examine attempts to reduce inequality; or studies that improve the measurement of inequality.

**March of Dimes Research Discovery Grants**

The March of Dimes seeks proposals that have the potential to improve clinical care and decrease the rate of maternal and infant morbidity and mortality. Proposed research should focus on one of the following priority areas: diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of disorders leading to spontaneous pre-term birth; racial inequities as they relate to morbidity, mortality, and access to care; or cardiovascular conditions related to pregnancy.
REGULATORY NOTES
Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) to Commemorate 50th Anniversary of the National Research Act

The 50th anniversary of the of the National Research Act will occur on July 12, 2024. The Act was instrumental in creating federal rules to protect human participants in research, and led to the establishment of the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects in Biomedical Behavioral Research. The Act helped identify ethical standards to guide human research, and OHRP will sponsor a virtual event on this anniversary to reflect on the passage of the Act and contemplate the implications of future scientific advances for research participants and public trust in research.

Topics will include the history of public responsibility in medicine, respecting cultural values, community engagement in research, listening to participant voices, and the potential impact of scientific advances in the coming years: the challenges they may present to human research protections and what the scientific community can do to prepare.

CTSI UPDATES
Save the Date! Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) Research Community Forum: Collaboration, Community and Connection: Partnering to Advance Research

Pitt’s CTSI is joining forces with the University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University, and OHRP to sponsor this year’s OHRP conference on September 9th and 10th. We will be welcoming local and national speakers for this virtual event. We look forward to presentations on e-consent technologies, artificial intelligence as it relates to research and research ethics, synthetic data sets, Human Centered Design, and more! Please save the date and join us for this virtual event. See our website for registration information.

Implementation Lab Pilot Award

CTSI’s Implementation Lab is now seeking applications for the Implementation Lab Pilot Awards (ILPA). The Lab aims to facilitate connections between Pitt researchers and organizational Health Operations Partners (HOP) that enable them to conduct Dissemination and Implementation (D&I) research aimed at getting priority evidence-based practices into clinics and communities.

D&I research aims to translate evidence to positively impact individuals and communities, healthcare delivery, financing, and policy and to engage essential partners with relevant experience such as patients, the public (e.g., families, informal caregivers), providers, payers, and policymakers. Learn more about this award on our website.

Upgrades to CTSI Online Research Guidance

We are pleased to announce that CTSI recently upgraded our online research Playbooks/Virtual Facilitator guidance and we hope the changes will make the search for information easier for all! Our I.T., marketing, and research facilitator teams worked closely together to upgrade existing web-based guidance to provide a more comprehensive and user-friendly experience. Filters are in place to help narrow searches by topics like regulatory assistance, participant recruitment and community engagement, data management, funding opportunities, and more. Users can also filter by study phases, like study planning and development, start up, conduct, and close out. We hope the added filters and search functions will simplify the quest for information, but as always, we are here for in-person or virtual consultation as well; reach out to ctsi@pitt.edu with any and all research related questions.
DEAR CTSI,

Question: Our research group is looking to engage community members to inform our research. Does CTSI have resources that can help?

Answer: CTSI’s Community PARTners Core strives to integrate community voices in research, with a focus on research reciprocity, including populations who have traditionally been underrepresented in research, and dissemination of health and research information. The PARTners Core offers programming for researchers to promote these goals, including:

- **Community Engagement Studios:** Studios gather people with lived experience to meet with researchers to provide feedback on study design and recruitment; unlike a focus group, conversations are relatively unstructured and center participant voices.

- **Community Partner Research Ethics Training:** The Community Partner Research Ethics Training (CPRET) and certification is intended to educate community partners who are actively involved in research with human subjects about conducting research that is ethical and safe. Developed in collaboration with the Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) and the Community Research Advisory Board (CRAB), this training takes the place of CITI training for community members joining research teams.

- **Language Equity Services:** The Community PARTners Core can support researchers who are interested in including non-English speaking participants or who have any questions about multilingual research methods (e.g., translations, interpretation, recruitment).

- **Speaker’s Bureau:** the Speaker’s Bureau invites researchers to register to disseminate health information to community groups who request presentations, and provides a great opportunity for research reciprocity.

To connect with Community PARTners and learn more, email ctsi@pitt.edu.

Questions for us?

We’d love to hear from you: ctsi@pitt.edu

Pitt+Me questions: ASKPPM@pitt.edu