RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS FOR CLINICAL STUDIES USING SOCIAL MEDIA: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, CASE STUDIES, AND LESSONS LEARNED

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Committee:
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- **Cheryl Granto**, Information Security Manager, Information Security, UF IT
- **Peter Iafrate**, PharmD, Chair, UF IRB-01 (Medical)
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Workgroup:
- **Claire Baralt**, Director of Strategy and Planning, UF CTSI
- **Elizabeth Flood-Grady**, PhD, Postdoc Associate, UF CTSI Recruitment Center and STEM Translational Communication Center, UF College of Journalism & Communications
- **Deaven Hough**, Communications Specialist, UF CTSI
- **Janice L. Krieger**, PhD, Co-Director, CTSI Recruitment Center and Director, STEM Translational Communication Center, UF College of Journalism & Communications
- **Tamara Lowrey**, Communication Specialist, HealthStreet, UF CTSI
- **Meghan Meyer**, Associate Director of Communications, UF CTSI
- **Holly Morris**, Director of Research Services, UF CTSI
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- **Lauren Solberg**, JD, MTS, UF CTSI Regulatory Knowledge and Support; Asst Professor and Director, Program in Bioethics, Law and Medical Professionalism, UF College of Medicine
- **Jeff Stevens**, Assistant Director for Web Services, UF Health Communications
- **Lauren Light**, Recruitment Specialist, UF CTSI Recruitment Center
Presentation overview

• Development of institutional guidelines
• Creation of UF Studies Facebook Page
• Evaluating social media recruitment: Pilot phase
• Lessons learned and opportunities to collaborate
Background

• Increased interest in using social media for recruitment among investigators at the university
• Limited guidance at the federal level
• Uncertainty regarding social media protocols
University-wide initiative

In November 2016, CTSI organized institutional stakeholders and subject-matter experts to:

1. Develop institutional guidelines for using social media in research recruitment (most common use case encountered by IRB)

2. Develop a coordinated approach to assess risks, discuss modifications and facilitate decisions on IRB protocols involving complex social media use cases
Committee and workgroup expertise

- Institutional stakeholders represented on committee:
  - IRB (medical and social/behavioral), general counsel, information security, privacy and research offices
- Subject-matter experts included on workgroup:
  - Communication professionals and researchers, recruitment coordinator, community-engagement specialists, regulatory navigator, bioethics and legal expert
Timeline

2017

Stakeholder engagement, peer benchmarking, development of UF guidelines and UF Studies Facebook Page

Fall 2017-Fall 2018

Institutional review and approval, Pilot phase, development of templates/resources, evaluation and refinement

Fall 2018-2019

Rollout
Thematic content identified through benchmarking peer guidelines

- Compliance with platform terms of use
- Social media as a tool for participant recruitment
- Participant privacy, confidentiality and data security
- Social media as a venue for research
UF guidelines

*Scope:*
- Guidelines for research teams using social media to recruit participants

*Sections:*
- Compliance with Social Media Terms of Use
- Participant Privacy, Confidentiality and Data Security
- Procedures and Considerations for Using Social Media to Recruit Participants, including elements of social media management plans
UF guidelines:

*Elements of social media management plans submitted to IRB*

*Elements submitted if UF Studies Facebook page is used (streamlined option)*

**Sites to be used**
- Official UF or UF Health social media accounts (approval of account manager required)
- If applicable: Public or private groups

**Mockup of materials**
- Images
- Text
- Description of placement
- Website materials will link to
- If applicable: targeting criteria for paid ad campaigns

**Personnel & Page Management:**
- Statement describing adherence to site terms and policies
- Who will monitor, post and respond to comments and inquiries
- Process and language for responding to comments or messages

**If applicable:**
- Plan for collection, storage and use of any identifiable data to be collected during recruitment
- Privacy, data security, and identity verification for private messaging
Established in 2016
Co-directed by Dr. Janice Krieger & Dr. Linda Cottler
CTSI Recruitment Center Aims:
• Optimize recruitment and retention of study participants
• Contribute to the science of recruitment and retention of research participants
Multi-level communication strategy to support participant recruitment and retention
• Pre-vetted and approved for use by the IRB, key offices at UF
• Approved by UF and UF Health as an official social media channel
• Managed by CTSI Recruitment Center
  • Offers consults, templates, services
  • Evaluates social media recruitment strategies
• Content Strategy
  • IRB-approved study advertisements
  • Informational posts about research, including dissemination of findings and ways to participate (e.g., ResearchMatch)
  • Shared posts from UF, UF Health, CTSA hubs, NIH and other research-related pages

**Goal:** increase participation in clinical research and assess effectiveness of Facebook as a recruitment channel
UF Studies Facebook Page: Sample Content

**JULY 26, 2018**

**OCOH**

Our Community, Our Health

**National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month**

**Town Hall:** National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

**JANICE and G M**

The University of Florida is looking for participants for a research study to see if turmeric, a spice used in Middle Eastern and Asian cooking, helps improve mental and physical function. Compensation will be provided.

[UFHEALTH.ORG](http://UFHEALTH.ORG)

Join researchers in studying the impact of turmeric on physical and mental health.

**Learn More**

**UF STUDIES FACEBOOK PAGE**

**STUDY FOR MOTHERS**

Study for mothers of toddlers interested in sharing their experiences about motherhood. Moms will receive a free webinar on emotion regulation.

**SURVEY FOR MOTHERS**

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of parents of young children. You will receive a free webinar on emotion regulation.

**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA COLLEGE OF PHARMACY**

Researchers in the UF College of Pharmacy are teaming with Brigham and Women’s Hospital to study medication safety during pregnancy.

**PHARMACY.UFL.EDU**

UF and Harvard researchers secure FDA grant to assess medication safety during pregnancy.
Process for Recruiting through UF Studies

After an initial consultation with study team:

Recruitment Center

With Study Team
- Creates mock ups of study ads
- Includes multiple images, text variations for campaign optimization

Provides Study Team
- Social media plan and template language for IRB protocol
- Metrics when ad run is complete

Through UF Studies
- Facilitates purchasing & placement of ads
- Manages ads and comments per IRB approved plan
Process for Recruiting through UF Studies

After an initial consultation with Recruitment Center:

**Study Team**

- Submits or revises existing protocol to IRB for approval and includes UF Studies as a recruitment channel
- Submits payment for advertisements to CTSI recruitment Center
- Provides data on study recruitment and enrollment to CTSI Recruitment Center
Recruitment Center

Provides Study Team
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Study Team

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EVALUATING SOCIAL MEDIA RECRUITMENT: PILOT PHASE
Measuring success

Engagement
- **UF Studies Facebook Page**: followers, likes, shares, comments
- **Posts**: likes, shares, comments associated with posted content, video views

Account utilization
- Number and satisfaction of researchers at UF who use the UF Studies Facebook page as a channel for recruiting participants

Paid campaign tracking using Facebook advertising metrics (*per study*)
- Reach, clicks, impressions, cost (per ad, click, etc.)
- Google Analytics goal tracking on UFHealth.org & UF study pages to determine page views & unique visitors generated from the UF Studies Facebook page

Science of Recruitment
- Message effectiveness (language, photos, etc.)
- Recruitment & enrollment results
Pilot phase evaluation & case studies

- UF Studies Facebook page: audience engagement metrics, staff time/cost required to manage page
- Pilot campaigns (approved by IRB): advertising and recruitment metrics for 7 study-specific paid ad campaigns, staff time/cost required to manage campaigns

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of studies recruiting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intervventional ( (n = 3) )</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observational ( (n = 1) )</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey/interview ( (n = 3) )</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Range of target participant demographics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Parents of toddlers, preschoolers, preteens, teens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthy adult volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pregnant women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Older adults (&gt;65)</td>
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Pilot phase evaluation & case studies

Science of Recruitment:
Identify effective message strategies to increase recruitment and enrollment in clinical research

- Recruitment message development
  - Content and visual strategies in study advertisements
    - Linguistic strategies
    - Emotional appeals

- Recruitment message evaluation
  - User engagement
  - Recruitment results
  - Enrollment results
LESSONS LEARNED & OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION
Facebook recruitment

Developing & placing ads
- Facebook offers free images for ads
- Multiple placement options
- Create multiple text variations

Disseminating ads
- Facebook allows you to select times
- Choose times when target audience is likely to see ads
- Run when a staff are available to answer calls

Managing expectations
- Reach for specialized populations may be limited based on search terms or recruiting parameters (e.g. location)
Institutional guidelines for social media recruitment

1. Benefits to engaging multiple stakeholders
2. Start with targeted focus on social media recruitment
3. Benefits to establishing a central channel for hosting study recruitment and templates for research teams
4. Social media recruitment “process” is ongoing
Opportunities to Collaborate
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