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8 Best Practices for Site Identification

It's important to start site identification as early as possible, and following best practices will ensure you find the right number of suitable sites for your study. Below are some best practices for identifying your sites:

1. Know what type of sites you want

Have a clear definition of what kind of site(s) you need for your trial. Consider the following:

- **PI clinical trial experience** Clearly, the experience of the investigator is important. But, don't rule an investigator out based on limited clinical trial experience. S/he may be affiliated with a site that does have significant experience in conducting trials, and the site could still be a good match.
- **Hospitals vs. private clinics** The distribution between hospitals and private clinics may be important to your study, or it may be something that is dictated by the therapeutic area. So, keep this in mind when selecting your sites.

2. Define 'must have' criteria

Try not to include too many items on this list, because you might not find any sites. Also be careful not to include too few criteria, as this could result in unqualified sites. Common 'must have' criteria includes:

- Patient population
- Equipment requirements
- PI previous expertise

3. Consider geographic spread

Too many sites in a specific geography may cause investigators to compete for patients. Review patient prevalence data with patient recruitment information from investigators to estimate the saturation point in a region and consider setting maximum numbers of sites in a particular geography.

4. Give sites as much study information as you can initially

A recent investigator survey by DrugDev demonstrated that the number one reason why investigators want to be involved in clinical studies is to be at the forefront of research. Provide sites as much study information as possible when asking them

to be involved; if you can't provide a protocol synopsis, then provide the study information on clinicaltrials.gov, which is public and can be shared without a CDA.

5. Provide the full protocol to allow sites to fully assess the trial

When you're asking investigators to give you an opinion about their participation in a study, it's important to give them access to all inclusion criteria so they can make an informed decision. Ask for completion of an initial interest survey with a few key questions to determine whether or not the investigator meets your 'must have' criteria. This avoids wasting sites' time answering long surveys when the study is not really for them. For interested and suitable sites, put a CDA in place and provide him or her with the study protocol for review.

6. Consider who sends the correspondence

You may wish to send correspondence on behalf of a lead investigator, the country lead investigator, or someone in your medical department who is well known if they have experience in that therapeutic area. This can sometimes help improve the response rate.

7. Answer questions from sites promptly

Investigators put a lot of effort into completing a survey for you and providing their feedback. As such, it's common courtesy to answer their questions as quickly as possible.

8. Keep sites informed about progress

It can be extremely frustrating if an investigator puts effort into completing a survey or reviewing your trial information and they do not receive any update at all on the trial. Even if the site is not qualified for the trial, you should let them know so they can explore opportunities for other trials.

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About DrugDev

DrugDev simplifies life at the clinical trial site through technology and services that enable sponsors, CROs and investigators to do more trials together. By providing study startup solutions, global payments by CFS Clinical, and a clinical trial optimization platform by TrialNetworks, DrugDev creates and drives standards to improve quality, shorten timelines and reduce cost. In addition, DrugDev maintains the industry's largest global network of opt-in sites actively seeking new trial opportunities, and serves as the third-party host of the pre-competitive Investigator Databank sponsored by Novartis, Janssen, Merck, Lilly and Pfizer. Learn more at drugdev.com

1 King Street, London, W6 9HR | uk.office@drugdev.com | +44 208 741 0918
1000 Madison Ave, First Floor, Audubon, PA 19403 | us.office@drugdev.com | +1 888 650 1860