

# UCSF experts highlight need for innovation in recruiting participants for clinical trials

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(Medical Xpress) -- In a commentary published in the November issue of *Academic Medicine*, top recruitment experts at UCSF urge academic medical researchers to embrace new methods for recruiting participants into clinical trials.

The commentary, Improving Participant Recruitment in Clinical and Translational Research, addresses the findings of an Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) report on The Prevalence and [Economic Impact](#) of Low-Enrolling Clinical Studies at an Academic Medical Center. Defining “low enrollment” as having zero or one participant, the report found that one third of all studies terminated between 2005 and 2009 at OHSU had low enrollment, costing the institution nearly \$1 million annually.

“Unfortunately, the findings of the OHSU study are not unique,” says Nariman Nasser, one of the commentary authors, and director of the UCSF Participant Recruitment Service. “The recruitment of research [participants](#) is critical to conducting clinical and translational research, and if we cannot recruit adequately, we simply cannot carry out successful clinical research.”

This warning is echoed by co-authors Deborah Grady, MD, professor of medicine and co-director of UCSF’s Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI); and C. William Balke, MD, professor of [medicine](#) and director of CTSI’s Clinical Research Services program, of which the Participant Recruitment Service is a part.

The commentary notes that despite published reports showing that the challenge of recruiting into clinical studies is widespread, with both academic and independent sites currently experiencing dismal enrollment rates, “little attention has been given to developing innovative methods or implementing best practices for achieving successful participant recruitment.”

The authors recommend major initiatives for improving recruitment rates at academic medical centers, including greater attention to designing study protocols, better overall planning, and investment of more resources early on to assess recruitment potential.

“Rather than rely on a study team for recruitment tasks, centers need to professionalize, centralize, and automate the recruitment process,” says Nasser, who is leading efforts to do just that at UCSF, where clinical researchers can now access centralized recruitment resources.

Provided by University of California, San Francisco

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