

Job title

Clinical Research Coordinator

General overview

Clinical research coordinators are research professionals responsible for organizing and directing clinical research projects. These are studies that analyze new medicine or treatments and how they work on people (“What’s a clinical research study?” 2005). Under the direction of a principal investigator, this job involves acting as an administrator for workers involved in clinical research projects, and for patients or research participants, to ensure compliance with protocols and objectives (“Clinical Research Coordinators,” 2011). Clinical research coordinators are responsible for many aspects of clinical studies including assisting and organizing workers, completing and submitting paperwork/proposals, and performing data analyses. They are essential for all research-related aspects of a study and preparing and implementing ethics, procedures, protocols, and consent (“Clinical Research Coordinator,” 2013). Clinical research coordinators are responsible for managing the daily operations of research projects within the federal government, hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, private research firms, or universities (“How to Become a Clinical Research Coordinator,” 2014).

Job duties and responsibilities

Clinical research coordinators are responsible for filling out paperwork and records of a clinical study including informed consent, case reports, scientific proposals, and budget proposals (“Clinical Research Coordinator,” 2009). They are also responsible for overseeing participant enrollment by assessing their eligibility and implementing informed consent, screening interviews, and medical records. They also regulate and monitor the study to make sure protocols and procedures are being followed, as well as recording any side effects, errors, or confounds and reporting them to the principal investigator (“Clinical Research Coordinator,” 2013). Clinical research coordinators may also be responsible for collaborating with the investigator to prepare study materials, analyze results, and construct documents to be submitted to applicable agencies (“Clinical Research Coordinator,” 2009). Clinical research coordinators may be responsible for monitoring multiple research projects and so are expected to implement adequate levels of coordination so that all projects are adhering to the conduct of quality research (“Clinical Research Coordinator,” 2009).

Typical workday

A typical work environment for clinical research coordinators is within a clinical setting, usually spending most time at an office desk during an eight-hour period. Work hours are typically forty hours a week for five days a week (“Job Description,” 2011). This job involves low physical effort with the work schedule depending on the research activities being conducted (“Clinical Research Coordinator,” 2011). However, it is often expected that clinical research coordinators work overtime hours by staying late, or coming in on weekends, to ensure all of their duties are fulfilled. Activities may include word processing, entering data into databases, conducting literature reviews, producing scientific manuscripts, conducting interviews, recruiting participants, developing estimates, ensuring application of methodology, facilitating teamwork, analyzing data,

communicating to multiple parties via e-mail and face-to-face interaction, and preparing other study-related documents (“Job Description,” 2011). These tasks involve mental effort, dealing with different personality types, juggling requests from multiple sources, and encouraging participants or team members. The workday may include the use of computers, telephones, analytical software, database user interfaces, mail software, spreadsheet software and word processing software (“Clinical Research Coordinators,” 2011) This job requires oral and written communication in order to ensure compliance, as well as understanding, of subjects and workers with schedules and protocols.

Educational requirements and other qualifications

Most clinical research coordinator jobs require the completion of a four-year bachelor’s degree in a health or science-related discipline (“How to Become a Clinical Research Coordinator,” 2014). The required degree is usually specific to the research conducted. In competitive agencies, a master’s degree may be required or considered an asset. Most employers look for work-related experience including part-time jobs or volunteer work. Ideally, this experience would be in a clinical research setting that required understanding and knowledge of clinical procedures and research (“Clinical Research Assistant: Salary, Requirements and Job Outlook,” 2014). Many employers are looking particularly for individuals with good written and verbal communication skills, as well as organizational and time management skills. Advanced skills with word processing, spreadsheet software, and PowerPoint are also considered assets. Specific clinical settings may also require knowledge of certain terminology or procedures (Indeed.com, 2014).

Related skills, interests, and abilities (“Clinical Research Coordinators,” 2011):

This career is ideal for individuals who are interested in starting up and carrying out projects. Individuals should be interested in critical thinking and problem solving, as well as following set procedures and routines. Individuals should be interested in detail-oriented activities and being able to follow a clear line of authority. This job does not involve a lot of creativity, but rather following direction and paying attention to detail. This job involves being reliable and responsible, honest and ethical, flexible and open to feedback, tolerant of different stress levels, and a leader. This is an ideal job for individuals who value independence and making decisions on their own, achieving results and feeling accomplished, job security and good working conditions.

Relevance of Psychology undergraduate degree

Clinical research coordinators are crucial for clinical research projects. Many medications targeting receptors in mood, anxiety, and psychotic disorders require numerous clinical trials in order to be marketed to those effected. Clinical research coordinators organize and implement the necessary steps in order to get these medications onto the market. Psychologists, physicians, and other professionals require clinical research coordinators to coordinate all aspects of their studies. The knowledge and skills learned as a psychology student are very important for this job. Classes taken as a psychology student equip individuals with these skills in order to succeed. For example, research methods and statistics provide individuals with the knowledge and skills to design and carry out experiments, as well as analyze data. Honours students

writing a fourth year thesis papers learn how to write APA style manuscripts, use databases to extract journal articles, how to recruit and interview participants, organize and implement psychological experiments, and how to work as part of a research team. Many classes taken as an undergraduate also helps individuals learn both oral and communication skills. These classes teach psychology students to get information from outside sources, develop constructive working relationships, analyze and evaluate information, and construct papers or presentations; all of which clinical research coordinator employers are looking for in potential employees.

Salary potential

Clinical research coordinators earn an average salary of \$50,259 per year in Canada (Salary.com, 2014). Pay is expected to increase in the first five to ten years of employment, but then stay at a constant rate. Starting salaries range from about \$39,000 to \$50,000 and after year of employment can increase to approximately \$70,000 (Payscale, 2014). Salary is very dependent on the educational achievements and work-related experience of the applicant.

Job outlook

Clinical research coordinators have a bright job outlook for the next several years due to the fact that it is an emerging occupation (“Clinical Research Coordinator,” 2011). There is always going to be clinical trials taking place, so therefore there will always be a need for clinical research coordinators (“Clinical Research Assistant: Salary, Requirements and Job Outlook,” 2014). New jobs are always opening up as they are now trying to find ways to alleviate the job responsibilities of clinical research coordinators. This means that new jobs specific to particular duties of a clinical research coordinator may appear in the future as well. Currently, there are over 150 jobs posted on Indeed, with a large amount located in hospitals or health service and pharmaceutical companies (Indeed.com, 2014).

To apply

Job ads are posted periodically on online job sites such as Indeed, Workopolis, or SimplyHired. Most of these applications are performed online via submission of a resume, cover letter, and references to an e-mail provided. Jobs may also be posted by Universities or hospitals on their own websites and require the same online application process. Applications can also be submitted in person to the agency of interest.

To know more

For more information, you can visit agencies’ websites directly. For a brief overview of this job visit <http://job-descriptions.careerplanner.com/Clinical-Research-Coordinator.cfm>. For recent job posting and job opportunities, visit Indeed.com. For specific and current information, contact a local Clinical Research Coordinator working in a local hospital or agency.

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