Benefit to Research Recruitment at the Preanesthesia Clinic: Learning from the Liver Transplantation Frailty Study

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Introduction: The utility of the preanesthesia clinic (PAC) for surgical patient care and improved outcomes is well recognized. An additional benefit is the opportunity to enroll patients in research studies. Informed consent for participation in a research study necessitates explanation of the purpose of the study, the logistics and the risks/benefits, in a language that a lay person can understand. This discussion is time consuming and requires a relaxed, non-coercive environment. The patient has more time to ask questions and to consult with their physicians or family about potential participation. Approaching patients on the day of surgery to enroll them in a trial is challenging and not ideal because there is need to share time and space with other health professionals and limited time and opportunity for private discussion. However, a patient’s visit to a PAC scheduled 3-7 days before the day of operation provides a great opportunity to initiate recruitment for clinical research. We used our PAC to recruit patients for participation in a liver transplantation frailty study.

Methods: We utilized PAC practice for recruiting patients for the liver transplantation frailty study.[1]

Results: From July 2015 to July 2017, 68 transplantation clinic patients were approached to participate in a low-impact frailty study. In total, 41 patients (60%) consented to participate in the study. Out of 27 patients who did not participate, only 2 (3%) declined to participate. From the rest of the research candidates, 16 patients (24%) were determined to be ineligible because of their inability to speak English and 9 patients (13%) because of health issues. On average, each patient spent 25-40 min with a recruiter. In observational reports, 97% of all patients were found to be satisfied with their study recruitment experience at the transplantation clinic.

Conclusion: A patient’s visit to a PAC presents an opportunity to improve current medical study recruitment practices. We achieved excellent results recruiting liver transplantation patients to a frailty study. At the PAC, clinical investigators have more time to explain the purpose of a study to the trial candidates who, free of the DAS anxiety, devote their full attention to researchers. Recruitment at the PAC is a chance to increase a consent rate for study participation as well as raise patience satisfaction with the entire process.

References: