METRICS FOR EVALUATING IRB PERFORMANCE

Short Term Metric: Action within 21 days of submission in Dec 2015

Action is defined as reviewing a submission by a staff member or a member of the IRB and informing the investigator of the result of the review within 21 days.

Submission is defined as a new protocol; an application for continuing review; an application to amend a protocol; a response to a request for additional information; a response to a stipulation to modify a protocol; or a notice of closure of a protocol.

Efficiency. The figure of merit we use to measure processing efficiency in a given month is:

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\frac{\text{all actions within 21 days}}{\text{all submissions in the month}}.
\]

Discussion. Submissions dropped sharply from 80 in November to 40 in December 2015 and processing efficiency increased slightly from 0.70 to 0.73. The drop in submissions is likely due to significant time constraints on faculty as the semester ended. We remain concerned about the relatively low processing efficiency, and we will be watching it closely.

We have changed the mode of presentation slightly and now show data for the most recent month in relation to data for the previous 12 months. Analysis of data accumulated in last 18 months suggests that the best estimate for our processing efficiency lies in a band defined by 80 ± 10%

Figure 1. Submissions and Processing Efficiency.

Upper panel. Total submissions for latest month in relation to previous 12 months

Lower panel. Processing efficiency. The points show actual processing efficiencies for each month. The red and green lines represent the upper and lower bounds of our processing efficiency as estimated from data for the last 18 months.
Long Term Metric: Time from submission to approval

Total processing time of an application comprises processing by IRB staff; review by IRB members; and revisions by investigators in response to IRB requests for information or changes. Figure 2 shows distributions of total processing times for new applications, continuation applications, and amendments approved in January 2016.

Figure 2. Distributions of approval times.
The 58-day approval time for one new protocol was due mainly to lateness by reviewers; contributing factors were investigator delay in responding to request for information and the Thanksgiving break.

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