METRICS FOR EVALUATING IRB PERFORMANCE

Short Term Metric: Action within 21 days of submission in March 2016

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. The result may be approval or a request for modifications. (Note: the calculation of days to process took account of the 9-day spring break.)

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 increased from 72 in February to 94 in March 2016 and processing efficiency increased from 0.72 to 0.87.

We present 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 the range 70%-90%.

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 March 2016. Median approval times are less than 3 weeks for all submission categories. The long delays (>30 days) for some new submissions are due largely to lack of reviewer capacity to handle the workload.

Figure 2. Distributions of approval times.

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