METRICS FOR EVALUATING IRB PERFORMANCE

Short Term Metric: Action within 21 days of submission in November 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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\text{(all actions within 21 days)}/(\text{all submissions in the month}).
\]

**Discussion.** Submissions decreased from 89 in October to 79 in November and processing efficiency fell from 0.81 to 0.70. The drop in efficiency is likely due to time constraints on reviewers as the semester was ending. We will be conducting more in-depth analyses on the data and watching for a trend in decreasing efficiency. Cumulative data for the period March ’14 to present are shown in Fig 1 along with a “best fit” regression curve. Although caution should be exercised in interpreting regression calculations, the graph suggests that the maximum attainable processing efficiency with current procedures and resources is 80 ± 10%.

![Figure 1. Submissions and Processing Efficiency.](image-url)

*Upper panel.* Total submissions for each month since March 2014.

*Lower panel.* Processing efficiency. The solid points show actual processing efficiencies for each month. The data points have been fitted to a simple, 2-parameter exponential curve of the form \( y = a(1-e^{-b\cdot x}) \) that approaches a maximum value of 81%. It is recalculated as new data are added each month. The dashed curves are best fits to the upper and lower bounds of the 95% confidence intervals for each value of efficiency.
Long Term Metric: Time from submission to approval

Total processing 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 December 2015. The very long approval time for one amendment (45 days) was due to the reviewer.

Figure 2. Distributions of approval times.

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