

## Job Description for Clinical Research Assistant

The responsibilities and qualifications of the individual eligible for the above named position can be separated into three broad categories: patient recruitment, data acquisition, and organizational skills. An elaboration of each category appears below:

- **Patient recruitment.**

One of the many crucial components of a successful program is efficient patient enrollment and follow-up. It is imperative that an individual hired for this position already have a strong foundational knowledge base in general pharmacology and pathophysiology. All of the contracts now being performed have complex inclusion and exclusion criteria for patient eligibility regarding concurrent drug therapy, stage of disease, other co-existing disease, and laboratory abnormalities. The successful candidate is expected to be able to apply his/her previous experience immediately in these areas, because the delayed acquisition of these skills would jeopardize the success of the program.

Additionally, interpersonal communication with patients and other health care personnel is an essential portion of patient recruitment activities. The coordination of testing and isolation of potential research patients from other departments within University Hospitals require that the candidate have a working knowledge of the entire health care system.

The successful candidate should have an appreciation for the importance of clinical drug research and appreciate the intricacies of professional relationships with patients and other health care personnel when recruiting subjects for these activities.

The candidate is expected to isolate potential research patients (in person or by telephone) and prepare them for informed consent by the principal investigators.

- **Procedures and data acquisition.**

The major procedures that are to be performed include, but are not limited to: electrocardiograms, pressure measurements, and blood drawing. Though all of these procedures are technical, the candidates should be able to recognize those situations in which the investigators would be contacted. This ability will require at least some prior experience performing these exact tests or analogous medical experience. The basic understanding of general pharmacology and pathophysiology alluded to in the patient recruitment section is also applicable to this section. The administration of any new drug presents the possibility of side effects. A foundation understanding of physiology and pharmacology is necessary when interacting with patients to try and screen out potential drug-induced problems that require investigator attention.

- **Organizational skills.**

The successful translation of applied clinical research from what appears on paper to eventual reality and useful information requires the efforts of one who is diligent and organized. The proper recording of exact events as they actually occur is germane to the scientific method; needless to say, it is germane also to the Food and Drug Administration. The correct interpretation and recording of clinical information for this research program is essential. Additionally, the ability to work independently and be self-directed is paramount. Records also must be organized, filed, and stored in a systematic fashion that facilitates information retrieval and presentation. The individual also will be responsible for organizing and facilitation, in close collaboration with the investigators, any study-related site visits or audits.

- **Miscellaneous.**

As time permits, the position also may require involvement in the following:

1. Facility with a personal computer (PC) for the purposes of word processing and graphics generation.
2. Familiarity with medical slide processing, using the PC interface.
3. Performing research-related literature searches. Collating and organizing appropriate articles for a given research project.
4. Assistance with getting clinical research protocols through the institutional review board and other approval processes.

## **Summary**

The directors of the clinical research program believe that the most appropriate candidate for the above-described position is a physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, or an RN, BSN (MSN preferred). Experience in critical care or emergency medicine is necessary. Prior experience with clinical research also is very desirable.

*Source:* University of California -- Davis Medical Center, Sacramento, CA.