

Call for Posters for the ACRIN Fall Meeting

Clinical research is advancing, research associate responsibilities are increasing and changing, and you have to master new skills to keep pace. At the ACRIN fall meeting RA session, you'll find a wealth of opportunities to meet other RAs and network with other professionals with similar interests.

RAs have an exciting opportunity to share their expertise with others through our poster session. Posters are ideal for presenting an introduction to interesting, innovative work in an informal and interactive setting. Posters provide authors and participants with the opportunity to connect with each other and to engage in discussions about the work. Successful posters are carefully designed to attract the attention of attendees as they stroll past the displays. The goal is to develop a poster that encourages and facilitates small groups of individuals interested in a technical area to gather and interact.

Posters will be reviewed by a panel of experts in clinical research. Award winners will be asked to give a short oral presentation during the RA session on

September 27. The author of the abstract receiving the highest score will be recognized at the RA luncheon.

A submission form is attached to the newsletter email and can be downloaded from the ACRIN website at www.acrin.org/RAcommittee.html

Abstract submissions must be post-marked by July 31 to be included in the poster abstract evaluation and award process.

Mail or fax the abstract submission form along with a printed copy of the poster abstract to:

**ACRIN Headquarters
Attention: RA Poster Abstract
1818 Market Street
Suite 1600
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Fax: 215.717.2769**

Abstract submissions must be postmarked no later than July 31 to be included in the evaluation and award process.

Calling for Nominations: Jo-Ann D'Amato Award of Excellence

Last year at the ACRIN Fall Meeting in Washington, DC, the first Jo-Ann D'Amato Award of Excellence was presented to Diane Evans, RN, BSN, at St. Elizabeth Medical Center. The selection of a winner was difficult for the committee due to the submission of several strong nominations. Diane stood out thanks to her hard work, her dedication to the field of clinical research, her compassion for patients, and her involvement in community service.

The award was established in memory of Jo-Ann D'Amato, an ACRIN senior research associate who passed away in a tragic automobile accident in May 2005. Although she is no longer physically with us, we want to memorialize her contributions to ACRIN and make certain that her tireless compassion and devotion for others will not be forgotten.

Each candidate will be judged based on four categories:

- Professionalism in their role
- Performance as a research associate
- Compassion
- Community service

Nominations for this year's award will be accepted from June 20 to July 16, 2007. Applications and instructions for submission can be found on the ACRIN web site (under Research Associate Committee) and forward to ACRIN Headquarters.

Reporting In!

Executive Committee Report

The Research Associate Executive Committee members met at ACRIN Headquarters in Philadelphia on March 21 and 22 to plan our activities for 2007.

Our work began with planning for the fall meeting, including the RA session on Thursday, September 27. Please put this day-long symposium on your calendar and look for a meeting announcement in July. We hope to see

you there! We have used RA feedback both from the evaluation forms from last fall and from direct suggestions to set up an information-packed session. The agenda includes some new items, including poster presentations, breakout sessions for new RAs, and updates from the imaging world. We are planning a wonderful luncheon and the presentation of the 2nd annual Jo-Ann D'Amato Award of Excellence. It should be a full day, and as usual we will have a reception on Thursday evening so that we can mingle and catch up.

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IMAGING NETWORK

A Day in the Life of a Research Associate

Thanks go to Monene M. Kamm, AS who contributed this article about her reflections as an ACRIN RA. Monene is a clinical research coordinator at UC Physicians in Cincinnati, Ohio.

A day in the life of a research associate can be hectic and complex, but also very rewarding. There are many responsibilities for an RA, and tasks may (and do) vary every day. I would like to share with you a somewhat typical day for me. My approach is matter-of-fact with a dose of humor.

Every day starts with a protocol (and for me a latte). That may seem simple enough, but fitting all the responsibilities of a protocol into a day can be a challenge. Of course the protocol and informed consent form have already gone to the IRB for approval. Once you have IRB approval the real fun starts. To juggle the fun-or, in other words,

multi-task-on a daily basis, even the simplest tasks are helpful...like actually looking at my appointment book and organizer. This allows me to know when I need to recruit, consent, or follow up with scheduled patients. Undeniably this tends to be the most time-consuming of daily activities because it requires coordinating the research and the clinical aspects of patient care with reliability and empathy. Only then can I try to fit the rest of my responsibilities into the balance of my day.

One of the biggest responsibilities that I handle during the hiatus between patients is data review and entry. Admittedly, the great thing about ACRIN is the online data entry. At our facility we systematically review all data as it is being entered online and before it is submitted. This allows us to catch errors and return the forms to the responsible person (and we know who they are) before actual submission. Some other daily responsibilities include scheduling patients' appointments and follow-up, calling patients with results, reminding docs that we are waiting on

forms, checking email, reminding docs that we are waiting on forms, pushing images to ACRIN, and reminding docs that we are waiting on forms. (Oh, did I say that already? Third time's a charm!) Of course there are a few occasional tasks that I do not do on a daily basis, but look forward to with unbridled anticipation (smirk, smirk), such as sorting through forms due reports and answering Z1 or Z5 queries. Honestly, even though I say this in jest, I know that these queries ultimately help RAs keep their data clean and the study successful.

The hours tick by each day, and the little wheels in my brain spin (almost off their axes) to keep studies running smoothly. My days as an ACRIN RA have turned into years. As the day (or the study), ends, the most important thing to me is that I have done my best with honesty and integrity. Without a doubt, this is what makes my days as an RA successful...and ultimately it is what makes each and every study a success too!

Auditing and Monitoring Tips

ACRIN's department of Protocol Development and Regulatory Compliance provides the following tips to help sites successfully implement protocols:

1. All site personnel involved in an ACRIN trial should read and understand the following documents (the first three available on the ACRIN web site):
 - [The protocol](#)
 - [The ACRIN Adverse Events Manual](#)
 - [The ACRIN Audit Manual](#)
 - [The ICH E6 Good Clinical Practice Guidelines \(available at \[www.ich.org/cache/compo/276-254-1.html\]\(http://www.ich.org/cache/compo/276-254-1.html\)\)](#)
2. Site personnel are encouraged to use the protocol-specific regulatory and participant case checklists designed for monitoring review and site audits to perform quality reviews at their site.
3. Site personnel are encouraged to perform direct web entry; however, they need to be aware that the detailed instructions for form completion on the paper forms is not always available as part of the web based form.
4. All eligibility criteria must clearly be supported by source data.
5. Careful review of the adverse events section of each protocol is imperative because ACRIN protocols frequently have very specific instructions for AE reporting.

Experience the Rewards of Networking

The ACRIN Research Associate Executive Committee continues to grow. We are looking for RAs who are interested in becoming members of one of the following RA subcommittees:

- Education
- Mentoring
- Networking/Communication
- Quality Assurance

Members of these subcommittees meet annually at the ACRIN fall meeting and have 2-3 conference calls a year. Anyone who is interested in joining one of these committees can complete an "ACRIN RA Subcommittee Questionnaire" available on the ACRIN web site (under Research Associate Committee) and forward to ACRIN Headquarters.

Name Change for RA Core Committee

The members of the ACRIN Core RA Committee play an important role in providing direction for the activities of the RA Committee as a whole. In addition, the RA Core Committee ensures that key ACRIN committees and protocol teams have a RA member bringing the perspective of the day-to-day operations of ACRIN research to the committees.

To better reflect the committee's important work, the RA Core Committee's name is changing to the RA Executive Committee. "The work of the RA Core Committee is a reflection of their leadership, says Bruce Hillman, MD, ACRIN's Network Chair, "and the name change better reflects the importance we place on their participation."

New Tool Helps RAs Manage Studies

The ACRIN Ops Tool Calendar utility was introduced in October 2006 to provide RAs with self-generated real-time reports. Now, based on feedback from users, the tool has been improved to include the following sorting options:

- Reports can now be sorted by case, due date, assessed date, or received date.
- Reports can be generated for only forms received or only forms due (and not received).

If you have not used the Ops- Calendar Tool for managing your ACRIN studies, please take this opportunity to explore the options available to you. Prospective and retrospective reports of case and study data can assist you with managing your forms due and calendar time points. The Ops Calendar Tool can be accessed on the ACRIN home page by clicking on "Data Center Login" and using your ACRIN user name and password.

An ACRIN Operational Tool Manual is posted on the ACRIN Web site at www.acrin.org/resources.html. Questions or issues regarding technical support should be e-mailed to:

websupport@phila.acr.org. Questions or issues regarding data form calendar discrepancies should be addressed to the ACRIN data manager assigned to the specific study.

ACRIN will be requesting formal feedback on the features of Ops Calendar Tool via Survey Monkey in the near future. Your feedback and input are appreciated.

The ACRIN Research Associate Newsletter is developed in cooperation with the RA Executive Committee and ACRIN Headquarters and distributed to ACRIN's research community.

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Pictured from left to right: Diane Evans recipient of the first Jo-Ann D'Amato Award of Excellence, with ACRIN's staff Maria Oh, Irene Mahon, and Donna Hartfeil

A New Face at ACRIN: Pamela Harvey

Although the science of imaging research is new to Pam Harvey, ACRIN's director of data management, she has enjoyed applying the expertise she has acquired in her more than 27 years in the field of data management and clinical trials to ACRIN's data management processes. Pam comments about her experience thus far at ACRIN, "The science behind imaging research is fascinating and learning about this area of research has been very motivating."



Data management director Pamela Harvey

Pam emphasizes that fielding questions from ACRIN RAs across the country has been a significant help in becoming familiar with both global challenges ACRIN RAs face and those related to specific trials. "I am especially appreciative that the RA Committee provides a structure for helping to support ACRIN RAs," she says, "and am anxious to further their efforts to help RAs new to ACRIN enhance their knowledge about medical imaging trials and to develop tools to assist all RAs in their day-to-day work." Now Pam is looking forward to interacting face to face with many ACRIN RAs at the fall meeting, "We want to make research associates feel comfortable providing us with feedback so that we can better help them do their jobs."

RA Executive Committee Members

Members of the RA Executive Committee welcome your questions and comments.

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Subcommittees Reports

The RA subcommittees are active and planning activities for 2007. The Education subcommittee, chaired by Lorna Beccaria, is continuing its work on training tools for RAs new to research and/or to ACRIN, as well as other educational opportunities for all RAs, including information about professional certification through SoCRA or the ACRP. The Mentoring subcommittee, chaired by Tracy Petro, is working on putting processes in place that will allow experienced RAs to reach out to new RAs with help and information. The Networking/Communication subcommittee, chaired by Lynn Werner, is concentrating on producing and delivering a quarterly RA newsletter and updating the ACRIN RA website. The Quality Assurance subcommittee, chaired by Cindy Cobb, is focusing on data forms and standardized information that can be used across protocols. Each subcommittee will hold quarterly conference calls and meet during the fall meeting in Pentagon City.

Other Staff Changes at ACRIN

Two very familiar members of ACRIN's staff have moved on to new challenges. Sophia Sabina, the ACR's diagnostic imaging data standards administrator and former director of data management, has moved to the informatics department where she will apply her expertise to organization's informatics efforts. After many years of leading ACRIN's data management department and playing a major role in the establishment of the ACRIN RA Committee, she is now working on new projects, including an initiative from the National Cancer Institute called the Cancer Biomedical Informatics Grid (caBIG). More information about Sophia's new role will be featured in the fall issue of the ACRIN Newsletter. Working with her will be Karan Boparai as the clinical trials informatics specialist. Karan has been a familiar face and voice to ACRIN RA these past several years and we look forward to her continued contribution to ACRIN's research.

With Karan's move to informatics, the Research Associate Executive Committee has a new staff liaison - ACRIN data manager Tina Taylor. Tina served as an ACRIN RA for the IBMC and DMIST studies at the University of Virginia, and enjoyed the experience so much she decided to work full-time for ACRIN Headquarters. Now she looks forward to helping other RAs. Tina says, "I know what's expected of an ACRIN RA and I appreciate the opportunity to share my experience." Of the ACRIN research associates' role she emphasizes, "It is an essential ingredient of ACRIN's clinical research. Ensuring the quality and integrity of research data is what ACRIN RAs do best."