Research Professionals’ Experience and Perspectives on Women’s Participation in Clinical Research

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Clinical research.

To identify research professionals’ attitudes, barriers and potential facilitators to enrolling women in clinical research.

Fear of unknown side-effects and unavailability for follow-up visits were the most significant perceived patient barriers to women’s participation, both with a median score of “4” (IQR=1) (Table 2a). Respondents were neither hesitant nor listed any factor as a significant barrier to enrolling women (all with a median score of “1,” IQR=1) (Table 2b).

Women over child-bearing age were considered more likely to participate in research (median “3,” IQR=0). A majority indicated that DVDs demonstrating how to approach female candidates might be useful in enrollment training (median “3,” IQR=1) (Table 3).

Out of 13,541 recipients, only 1,007 (7.4%) responded. After excluding those 374 who were not involved in enrolling patients, 633 surveys were analyzed. Of these, 409 (64.6%) were from investigators, 473 (74.7%) were enrolling in federally funded studies, and 335 (52.9%) were from institutions that received NIH and/or AHRQ funding in 2013.

Despite continued focus and federal funding requisites, significant gender and racial disparities persist in clinical research participation. Although understanding regarding research professionals’ perspectives about barriers to minority participation has improved, their perspective regarding women’s enrollment remains understudied.

Research professionals perceive that women over child-bearing age are more likely to participate in clinical research than younger women. Although they expressed no hesitance in approaching women for participation, a majority responded that DVDs demonstrating how to approach women for research might improve their comfort with enrolling women.