

Online Study Monitoring for Large Multi-Center Trials via a Data Dashboard

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Increasingly, the NIH and Industry sponsors are establishing large multi-center collaborative research efforts that implement multiple studies simultaneously through a network of investigators. This presents a challenge for the sponsors and leadership teams who are responsible for monitoring activities across studies. The business world has addressed this need for complex information monitoring systems with a high-level summarized overview called a dashboard.

We created a web-based dashboard for the Inner City Asthma Consortium (ICAC), a large, federally-funded, multi-center research consortium. The consortium has eight active studies that are being conducted across ten clinical centers with total projected enrollment of over 3500 participants.

Many research programs provide web-based resources to aid stakeholders with study supervision. Unfortunately, traditional study portals can be hindered by an overabundance of information and tedious top-down navigation. These characteristics make them an inefficient resource for large multi-center programs.

Our dashboard avoids the typical information-dense, hierarchical construction of traditional websites in favor of a comprehensive single-webpage display that is easier for stakeholders to access and use.

Dashboards summarize and display critical information on a single page, with an emphasis on graphical, rather than text-heavy displays. Our dashboard has a main page for the consortium, which provides comparative enrollment graphs for the active studies, and displays pertinent deadlines and announcements. Each study also has a dedicated page that follows this same “dashboard” approach. We update the dashboard data weekly.

Sponsors have responded positively to the ICAC dashboard, voicing appreciation for the system’s efficient presentation of data and ease of use. Given the success of the dashboard, we plan to expand the system to other federal and commercial programs.

Our experience suggests that multi-center or multi-study programs would benefit from creating a dashboard to provide sponsors and network leadership teams with key study monitoring information in a quick, succinct manner.