

Distrust, doubt, and disparities: Barriers to recruitment in a clinical research study.

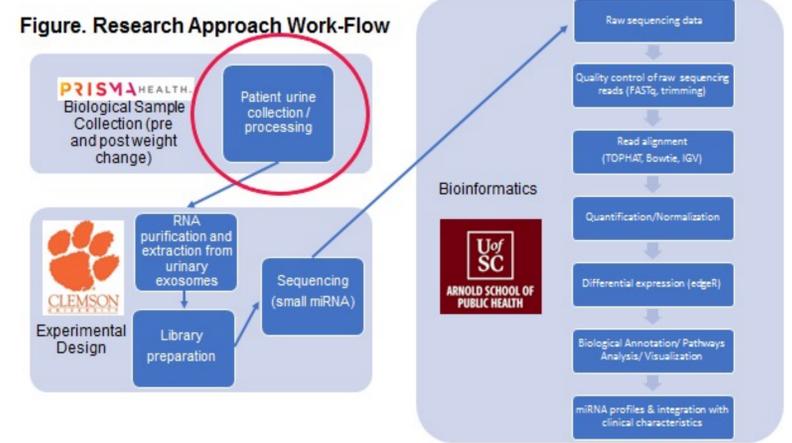
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Intro

In clinical research, recruitment is a critical step in starting a project. However, many barriers exist in this process that make recruiting participants both difficult and time consuming. To successfully enroll participants, it is crucial that these barriers are diagnosed and understood.

Methods

The various barriers to enrollment were identified through studying the recruitment process of the WeLCKME research project (SEED grant). This project aims to study the microRNA profile longitudinally in the urine of children who have attempted to lose weight. Originally recruitment efforts included flyers and a website to direct patients from an obesity clinic to the study. Later, in-person recruitment began at a Medicaid clinic in Greenville, SC. The study involved monetary incentives plus a free Fitbit and was designed to avoid blood work to increase compliance in pediatric patients.



Work-flow of the WeLCKME research project: Recruitment data was gathered from the step circled in red

Results

419 children were screened. 200 met study criteria. 80 attended clinic, 60 agreed to talk to recruiter, 37 agreed to participate, 15 attended first visit. We identified three potential barriers to participation in clinical research. First, Socioeconomic barriers (transportation, parental job restrictions) Second, racial barriers centered around mistrust of the healthcare system, caused hesitancy to participate in research. Third, language barriers made effectively communicating the nature of the study difficult. These factors lead to significant impediments that cause low yield recruitment even with a large population of potential recruits.

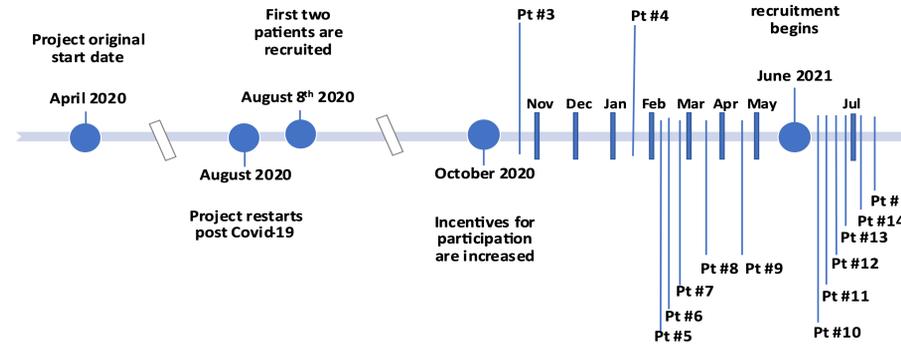
Discussion

Several systemic barriers exist to prevent effective recruitment in clinical studies. Study design should incorporate solutions to these issues to conduct effective and equitable research.

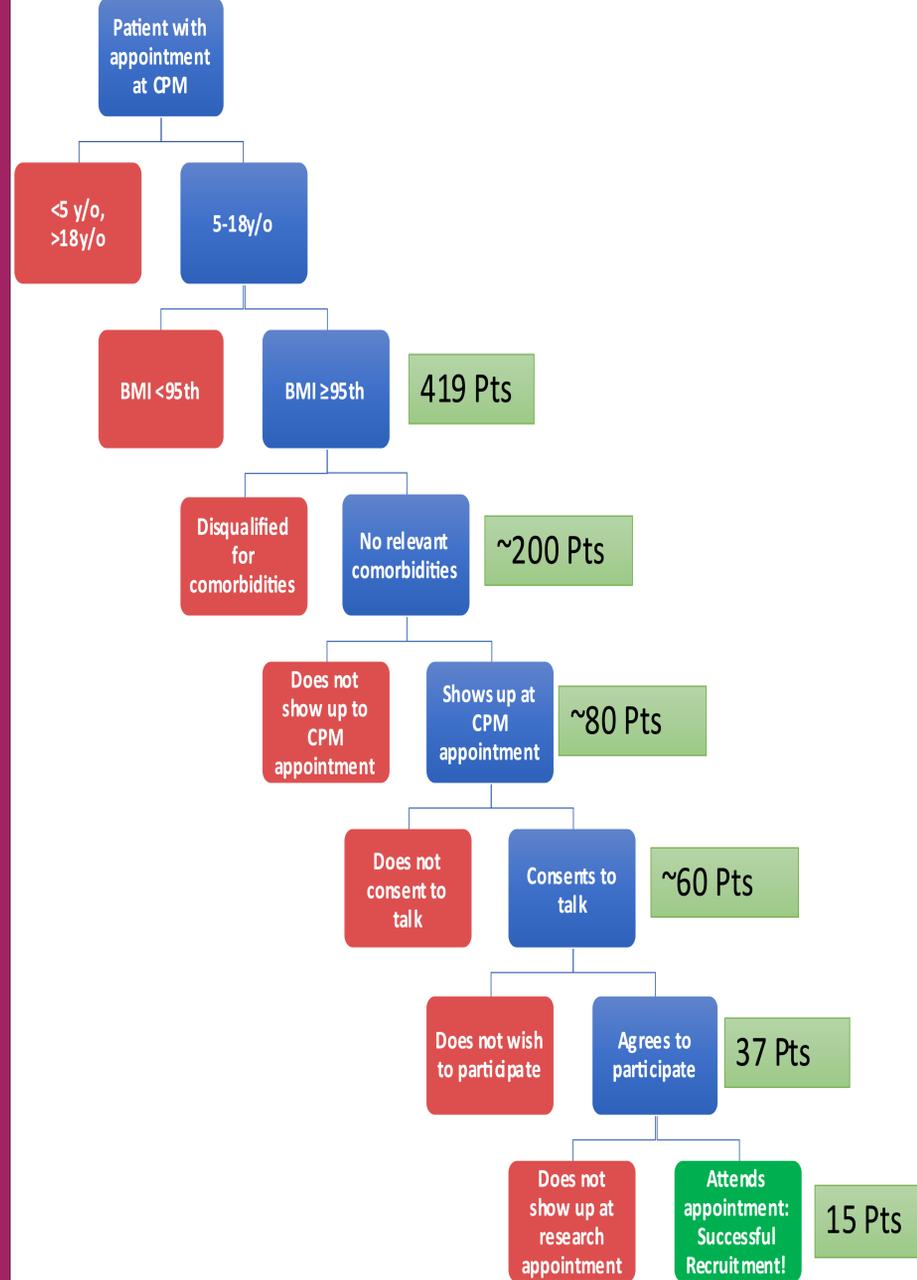


Barriers to recruitment in clinical study:

- A. Socioeconomic factors such as **access to transportation** and **lack of time** due to having multiple jobs/inability to take time off.
- B. **Mistrust of healthcare system** in minority populations, based in past research abuses
- C. The **Language barrier** often present between recruiter and patient



Timeline of the WeLCKME study and the recruitment efforts



Flow-chart of the recruitment process highlighting the various steps to successfully recruit a patient

