

Guidelines: Leveraging Communications for Study or Project Recruitment

Using communication tactics, like posters, websites and social media, to recruit participants in a study or project can be an effective and useful tactic. To best help researchers and streamline the approval process, the WCH REB Office and Strategic Communications have developed a series of guidelines and best practices.

General Guidelines & Best Practices

- Reach out to Strategic Communications during the initial planning stage. They can provide guidance on which communication tactics are likely to be most effective for your specific study or project
- Consent, via a media consent form, is required when using photos/video of WCH patients, community members, care providers, staff, learners, and volunteers in any communication materials
- Stock images or artistic property (e.g., videos, infographics, graphics) must either have been purchased or have explicit permission to use
- Communication materials should be user-friendly, easy to read and understand. So, avoid language that is wordy, vague or difficult to understand. Keep text to the point
- Consider accessibility – avoid low-contrast colors and text that reduce reading visibility. Avoid small print as it may be difficult for some to read
- Avoid language that is overly coercive or sensationalized (e.g., “Do you want to make some cash? Join this research study!”)

Web, Posters, Brochures and other Print Material

Web

A website or webpage is particularly useful for driving viewers to learn more about the study or project. As a result, web is often used in conjunction with social media, posters and print materials. Additionally, web also enables for a more detailed overview of the study or project with complementary graphics, images etc.

- Teams are strongly encouraged to develop study or project pages within the womensresearch.ca site (under active studies). See: www.womensresearch.ca/all-studies
- Separate or independent websites can be developed for projects or studies with multiple outside/non-WCH partners as is appropriate and at the expense of the study team
- All web content must be reviewed by both Strat Comms and REB as part of the approval process

Posters, Brochures and Other Print Material

- Posters can be posted on each floor within the glass enclosed cases by the elevators through Strategic Communications

- Teams are responsible for printing study or project materials themselves and should factor in the costs for doing so
- Due to COVID-19, teams should confirm with Occupational Health and Safety before distributing print materials or leaving print materials in patient waiting areas. Currently it is not allowed

Recommended Information

It is recommended that all study or project materials should contain the following information:

- Person whom to contact with questions or study e-mail, full study version date (DDMMYYYY) and REB number.
- The WCH logo, and all other relevant site or partner logos, should be visible
- What is the study about?
 - e.g., “We are doing this research study to ...”
- Who can participate?
 - e.g., “We are looking for ...”
- A brief summary of what participants will have to do as part of the research study in an easy-to-read format, preferably in bullet form
- A statement that participation is voluntary
 - e.g., “Participation in this research study is voluntary.”
- Compensation information may be included but should be stated in a manner which should not influence the decision to participate
 - e.g., “Participants will get a gift card in appreciation of their time” but no statement of the amount.
 - If participants will be provided reimbursement of costs, this should also be stated on the flyer.
- What are the benefits of the research study?
 - e.g., “There are no direct benefits to you for participating, but may help researchers to X, Y”.
- A statement regarding the use of email, if email is listed as the primary method of reaching out to the study team
 - e.g., “As e-mails are not secure, please do not use email to send sensitive information”
- A statement that the study has been reviewed by the WCH REB
 - e.g., “This study has been reviewed by the WCH Research Ethics Board”

Templates

A series of templates (posters, brochures/handouts only) are available for teams to complete and submit to the REB Office for review as part of their study application package. We encourage you to use the pre-developed templates as they will help to ensure ease of use and save time.

However, if your team would prefer to create their own poster, brochure etc. please contact Strategic Communications via Jordan.benadiba@wchospital.ca for review and assistance with design.

Social Media

Research teams can leverage WCH social media channels (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) to recruit participants and raise awareness about their study or project. There are two avenues for social media recruitment: organic or non-paid posts and paid social or targeted social media ads. Both organic and paid social posts require a URL to drive prospective participants.

If you have questions about social for recruitment, please contact Katie Fraser at katie.fraser@wchospital.ca

Organic Social

- Study or project recruitment posts should always come from WCH channels. Scientists, researchers, and team members can re-post/re-tweet the WCH post, but they should not look to recruit using their personal accounts
- Strat Comms will work with teams to:
 - determine which social platforms are best for their project or study
 - outline recruitment campaign logistics (e.g., duration, frequency of posts etc.)
 - finalize social copy in advance of submission to REB (with teams providing the initial draft copy to Strat Comms for review)
 - develop an accompanying social graphic

Paid Social

- WCH utilizes Facebook and Instagram for paid social
- The standard recommendation is to develop two different ads with accompanying imagery. These ads are tested against each other for a week to determine which resonates best
- Strat Comms will work with teams to:
 - determine campaign duration and budget, both total budget and daily budget
 - determine socio-demographic targets including age and gender, as well as key words to best reach the desired recruitment population
 - finalize social copy in advance of submission to REB (with teams providing the initial draft copy to Strat Comms for review)
 - develop an accompanying social graphics
- Teams interested in using paid social will be asked to complete Strat Comms' paid social template document
- Due to the nature of the platforms, some projects or studies that contain topics that may be viewed as contentious could be subject to multiple reviews/copy edits within Facebook and Instagram. Although Strategic Communications will work with you to ensure we minimize the chance of this happening, we ask that your timelines account for a potential delay in recruitment.
- Paid social media ads cannot be prepaid. Charges are made daily, and teams are billed monthly. Cost centers must be provided at before recruitment can begin.

For both organic and paid social, the REB may require additional revisions to be made following their review. The revised copy and graphic should then be sent back to Strat Comms to ensure that the approved versions are then used on WCH social platforms.