

Fact Sheet

Clinical Research Training at the NIH Clinical Center

Yesterday

- Historically, clinical researchers learned by doing and through collaborations and interactions with mentors and colleagues.
- Several recommendations in the 2004 NIH Director's Blue Ribbon Panel on the Future of Intramural Clinical Research focused on the NIH Clinical Center's (CC) role in improving the conduct of clinical research by providing education in the discipline.
- Re-engineering the clinical research enterprise is one of the NIH Roadmap of Medical Research's key elements because there is a growing urgency to safely, efficiently, and effectively translate medical research into medical practice. Clinical research—especially translational clinical research—is the critical link.
- Sessions under way in 2006-2007 comprise nearly 1900 enrollees, including about 800 at various locations around the world.
- Included in the formal training is a curriculum in clinical research with three core courses: Introduction to the Principles and Practice of Clinical Research, Principles of Clinical Pharmacology, and Ethical and Regulatory Aspects of Clinical Research. A graduate degree program is offered in collaboration with Duke University School of Medicine.
- Because it's important to expose young investigators to clinical research early in their careers, the NIH CC hosts the annual Clinical Investigator Student Trainee Forum. It provides an intensive educational experience for medical and dental students who have taken a year off from their home schools to participate in mentored research programs at NIH and other medical centers nationally. The forum and students' training programs are aimed at helping the students prepare for careers in clinical and translational research. In 2006, approximately 250 medical and dental students from 73 U.S. schools participated in the forum.

Today

- Clinical research and medical advancement depend on having enough investigators who are prepared to effectively translate promising discoveries in the laboratory to improve health and save lives.
- Clinical research is an increasingly complex enterprise, and clinical researchers in all disciplines are in short supply.
- Training clinical researchers—and building a national infrastructure of training in the field—is a top priority at the NIH CC.
- The CC's Office of Clinical Research Training and Medical Education develops, administers and evaluates clinical research training and medical education initiatives. Programs and services are available on the NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland, and to the clinical research community worldwide through distance-learning components.
- CC Nursing and Patient Care Services staff support clinical research training for nurses at all levels of career development from student nurses through pre- and post-doctoral fellowships. Education and outreach efforts include national and international collaborations with several NIH institutes. A grant from the National Center of Minority Health and Health Disparities supports collaboration with the Indian Health Service on a project that uses outreach education, online collaboration and long distance mentoring to build a collaborative research program to address health disparities in American Indians / Alaskan Natives.

- CC nurses provide advice and consultation nationally and internationally to facilitate the management of clinical research. Topics include intensity measurement, clinical research competency measurement, outreach strategies to involve minority communities in research and operational consultation for the development of clinical research centers.

Tomorrow

- As the promise of medical discovery expands, so does the demand for a scientific workforce capable of exploring new options and approaches.
- The NIH CC will continue to offer options for clinical research training to help prepare the next generation of medical investigators.

- A new component under consideration is a senior fellowship in research management that would provide a broad educational experience within the CC's unique environment for clinical research.
- CC nurses have launched a four-year strategic plan to define the specialty of Clinical Research Nursing and to collaborate with nursing leaders from throughout the national clinical research enterprise in establishing standards, competencies and a core curriculum that could potentially lead to certification.

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