WHO? WHAT? → WOW!

CLINICAL RESEARCH PROFESSIONALS SPEAK THEIR MINDS ON SUCCESSES AND SETBACKS

A Brief Look at First-Ever Survey of the Clinical Research Workforce on the State of the Clinical Research Enterprise: Respondents cite improved data quality, a growing role for tech providers, and the fulfilling nature of this career, while highlighting continued inefficiencies

The conduct of clinical research has improved over the past five to 10 years, according to 52% of respondents to the Association of Clinical Research Professionals' *Transformation of the Clinical Research Enterprise Survey*. Many cited improvements in diversity, equity, and inclusion and more of a focus on diverse recruitment as key reasons for this improvement.

Of those surveyed, most believe that data quality is high (67%), and predict that technology providers will have the most positive impact on clinical trials in the next five to 10 years (73%). They also feel strongly that clinical research will continue to be a fulfilling career (77%).

Still, only one-third (33%) believe that clinical trial operations are efficient. What's driving that assessment?

52% say that hiring and retaining clinical research staff is **worse today than five to 10 years ago**; only 19% believe that the hiring and retention of clinical research staff has improved

From this predominantly site-based pool,

41% do not believe that sponsors have the resources to run clinical trials successfully or report a neutral view of sponsor resourcing

36% state that the skills and experience of contract research organization (CRO)/sponsor staff have worsened

Successes and setbacks were the themes that emerged from the first-ever national survey to gauge ACRP community viewpoints on the clinical research enterprise. ACRP partnered with Continuum Clinical to develop and deploy the survey to thousands of clinical research professionals as part of the Association's goal to advocate for—and amplify the voices of—the clinical research workforce.

The survey was fielded from December 2024 through February 2025. Of the 735 respondents who qualified and completed the survey:

- **46%** represented research sites
- **33%** represented academic research organizations
- **10%** came from CROs
- **58%** have worked in the clinical trial industry for six years or more
- Among research sites, **30%** function as clinical research coordinators, **23%** as research managers/directors, and **13%** are site directors, managers, or the equivalent
- **56%** of the total sample consider themselves individual contributors; **44%** are managers with direct reports
- **58%** of the total sample have earned at least one clinical research certification

In an industry that drives a market estimated at more than $27 billion in the U.S. and projects substantial growth in the coming years, the perspectives of professionals who run clinical research matter. Findings from the survey will be discussed at **ACRP 2025** and a full report will be released later this year.

ACRP

A Sense of Progress

- 52% believe clinical research has improved over the past five to 10 years; 50% say that data quality is now better, with 46% reporting improved regulatory processes

Work is High Quality, But Hampered by Resource Constraints

- Industry-wide, 67% say that clinical trial data today are of high quality; and 44% believe that trial data quality is the single most important area for improvement
- In the trials they work on, only 31% say budgets are sufficient to support good operations

Future Gains Expected, But Also Looming Threats

- Over the next five to 10 years, enhancements are expected in clinical trial design (62%), operations (60%), and data quality (60%); most respondents expect clinical research to continue to be a fulfilling career (77%) and are likely to still be working in the field in five to 10 years (70%)
- Technology providers were predicted to have the most positive impact on clinical trials in the next five to 10 years by 73% of respondents, followed by individual clinical research professionals or trade groups (72%), and then by site networks and organizations (65%)
- Less than half expect the skills and experience of CRO/sponsor staff to improve (42%) or site/CRO collaboration to get better (46%)

What's Next? Five Investments for the Future

According to clinical research professionals who responded to ACRP's survey, the top five areas of investment that would yield the most improvement for the clinical research enterprise were identified as:

1 → **Clinical research being thought of as a care option (40%)**

2 → **Increased funding for clinical trial operations (38%)**

3 → **Time and effort required to start-up clinical trials (36%)**

4 → **Ease of use of platform technology (34%)**

5 → **Skills and experience of site staff (33%)**

About ACRP:

From new clinical research professionals just starting out to industry veterans who are looking for ways to move ahead in their career, the Association of Clinical Research Professionals (ACRP) is where success starts—and grows. With more than 17,000 global members, ACRP is the strongest advocate for clinical research professionals—amplifying their voice throughout the research industry and elevating their position by providing gold-standard education, rigorous certification, and strong community connections. Learn more at **ACRPNET.ORG**

ACRP