

Panel 1: Communications channels and materials

HTPN
STREAM

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Introduction to the topic

The Challenges

Deciding on the appropriate communications channels and materials is influenced by numerous challenges, including:

- There are usually multiple audiences, all with different levels of knowledge, and different levels and types of interest in the work.
- There is a communications life cycle to the project with different messages at each point, from telling people the project has started and recruiting those who will be involved, to disseminating results and advocacy.
- Changing situations – both within a project and from external forces – can mean communications need to be reactive and quick yet usually involve multiple stakeholders and complex messaging.
- Clinical trials can be technical in language and content, yet they need to be understood by every day people – particularly those taking part in the trial. How to deliver information that is accurate can be challenging.

Examples from HTPN

- The need to identify and establish stakeholder advisory mechanisms at the beginning of a trial
- A common example of a stakeholder advisory mechanism is the community advisory board (CAB), also referred to as community advisory group (CAG). CABs are ordinarily composed of stakeholder representatives and, as such, facilitate broader involvement in the research process
- Develop material to improve community stakeholders' understanding of TB drug research and development, knowledge of the specific trial being conducted, and understanding of the role of stakeholders in TB drug trials.
- When communicating to stakeholders who are not routinely engaged in the clinical research enterprise, ensure that the information is accessible by disseminating through the phases of a clinical trial and patient engagement across the different phases
- Building collaborations with community stakeholders through honest, open dissemination of study results and discussions of future research steps establishes trust between the lay and scientific communities

Examples from STREAM

- Several settings for dissemination activities. Focus group participants, *recognized gate keepers in the communities, Local health workers , Advocacy groups*
- The media is an important channel for advocacy and reaching the scientific community – in addition to journal publication. For STREAM we use pre-briefings as a way to place key announcements and to control the messaging.
- The website and blogs is a valuable tool for informing stakeholders and the broader research community.
- Sessions at conference are an important channel not only for dissemination and amplification of findings but for building discussion.
- Printed materials have been invaluable for reaching the communities involved with STREAM as well as face-to-face briefings.

Concrete Tips

- Always walk in the shoes of the audience – don't just tell people what you want to say, consider what is relevant to them and how they will best understand. For example, it is important to translate into relevant languages and for different settings.
- Develop core key messages and communication objectives – don't try and do everything in one leaflet, have clear messages for the audience and develop materials around that.
- Content is king – develop engaging content, use imagery, use storytelling, theatre, use film, use illustration and good design.
- Listen – don't just broadcast out. Community meetings and social media make this easier than ever. Good communications should be adjusting to what people say.

Questions for discussion

Discussion

- What are the roles and responsibilities of the sponsor, the trial team, and other trial stakeholders for developing and ensuring impactful dissemination?
- What methods have people used to reach trial participants and community members? What are the best practices?
- What channels and materials are the best to reach each group of stakeholders?

Summary and Q&A