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Revitalising Oncologist Recruitment for Research: A Data-Driven Approach

Addressing the Challenges in Oncologist Recruitment

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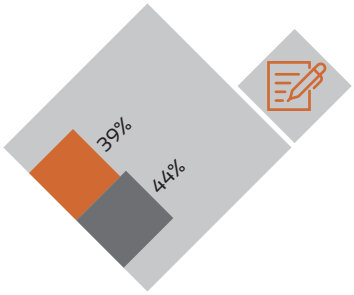
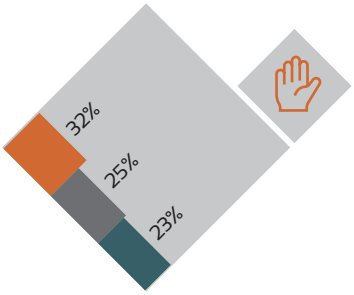
Addressing the Challenges in Oncologist Recruitment

Recruiting oncologists for online primary research has become increasingly difficult due to survey fatigue, inadequate incentives, and poor user experiences. Understanding and addressing these barriers is essential to improving participation rates and ensuring high-quality research outcomes.

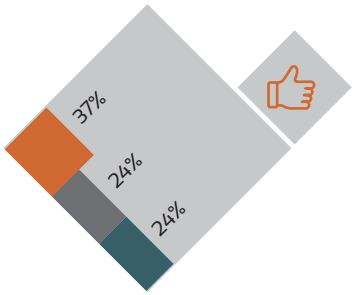
Instar's latest survey of 142 oncologists highlights **key challenges:**



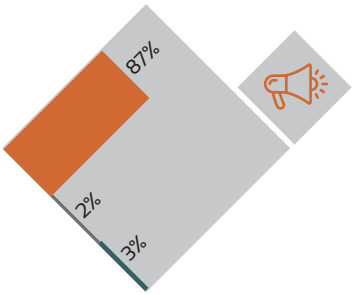
Survey Fatigue: 39% of oncologists receive research requests daily, and 44% receive them weekly. Excessively frequent invitations can frustrate oncologists and inhibit participation



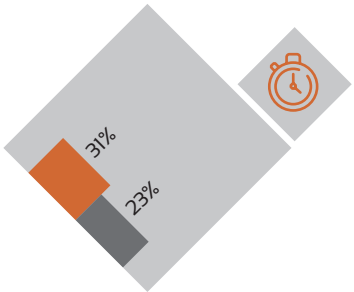
Primary Demotivators: Insufficient compensation (32%), length of surveys (25%), and lack of relevance to their practice (22%) deter engagement. Lack of relevance has been compounded by the increasing fragmentation and specialisation of oncology



Preferred Incentives: While financial rewards (37%) remain the primary motivator, many oncologists also value professional development opportunities (24%) and knowing there is a potential positive impact on patient outcomes (24%)



Optimal Engagement Methods: The overwhelming majority (87%) prefer email invitations, while phone calls (2%) and social media outreach (3%) are far less effective



Ideal Survey Duration: Most oncologists (31%) are willing to commit 11–20 minutes per survey, with 23% open to 21–30 minutes, highlighting the need for concise and engaging survey design

With oncologists facing increasing time pressures, it is critical to tailor research invitations and survey experiences to their preferences, ensuring both efficiency and value for participants.

Instar's Solution: A Multi-Faceted Approach

At Instar, we've redefined oncologist recruitment through a data-driven, physician-first strategy. By building it around the preferences and needs of oncologists, we optimise participation rates and data quality. Our approach includes:

1. Smart Targeting & Personalisation:

- Utilising our proprietary LiMA member profiles to ensure that invitations reach oncologists who are both qualified and likely to participate, without frustrating them.
- Optimising outreach using AI, adjusting messaging and timing based on individual engagement behaviors to maximise response rates.

2. Multi-Channel Recruitment:

- Integrating research invitations with P\S\L Group medical education content and AI-powered platforms like Dougall GPT that clinicians find valuable, and avoiding social media or SMS invitations.
- Collaborating with third-party networks to increase visibility and appeal, positioning surveys within relevant professional contexts.

3. Enhanced Incentive Structure:

- Offering a flexible compensation system that allows oncologists to choose from a variety of honoraria options, enhancing perceived value.
- Ensuring faster-than-industry-standard honorarium payments, reducing delays and improving overall satisfaction.

4. Optimised Survey Design:

- Structuring surveys to maintain a median completion time of 25 minutes, balancing research depth with participants' convenience.
- Leveraging participant profile data to minimise redundant screening questions, reducing drop-off rates and improving physicians' experience.

Case Study: Driving Higher Engagement Through Personalisation

In a recent oncology study, we applied our proprietary SoundBoard recruitment process, creating a community of relevant oncologists from P\S\L Group's in-house clinician directory, LiMA, to provide longitudinal results over multiple survey waves. The recruitment process was carefully structured, based on personalised, concise messages transparently setting out a multi-stage, long term research process. This messaging ensured clinicians knew what would be expected and helped secure their participation in multiple surveys. This approach included:

- Engaging oncologists with **highly relevant educational content based on their specialism**, achieving a considerable increase in survey completion rates vs. ad hoc recruitment across waves
- **AI-driven engagement strategies** based on the profiles of clinicians in our directory, ensuring invitations were seen at optimal times by appropriate respondents, maximising participation
- **Flexible and cumulative honoraria structures** allowing participants to select the most attractive compensation options, with most participants paid within 1 hour of completion

This enabled tracking of changes in physicians' behaviour and perceptions over time, and maintained longer-term participation. By refining our approach based on real-world oncologist feedback, we continue to enhance both research participation, and ultimately, data quality.

Reactions from participants have been positive:

"Very smooth transaction. Love doing your surveys. Have been for years. Thanks for the invitations!!"

"I appreciate a rapid response and payment for my time and work. Like the choices. A good experience."

The Future of Oncologist Engagement

While we currently do not share detailed research results with participating oncologists due to confidentiality constraints, the potential benefits of providing anonymised insights are clear. Sharing generalised insights—when feasible and ethical—could enhance engagement by contributing to oncologists' broader professional knowledge.

Instar's commitment to innovation in oncologist recruitment ensures high-quality research participation while respecting the time and expertise of medical professionals. By continuously refining our strategies through data-driven insights, we remain at the forefront of effective, efficient partnership with research participants.

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