

# Guidelines for Registering in a Clinical Trials Registry

## WHY REGISTER?

### Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS 2) Ethical Conduct for Research – Article 11.3

***“All clinical trials shall be registered before recruitment of the first trial participant in a publicly accessible registry that is acceptable to the World Health Organization (WHO) or the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).”***

TCPS 2 outlines several compelling ethical reasons for the registration of all clinical trials:

- Registration improves researchers’ awareness of similar trials so that they may avoid unnecessary duplication and thereby reduce the burden on participants.
- Registration improves researchers’ ability to identify potential collaborators and/or gaps in research so that they may pursue new avenues of inquiry with potential benefits to participants and to society.
- Researchers or sponsors may only report trials with favorable outcomes. Failing to report the outcome of a trial or withholding negative findings is more difficult when all trials must be registered.

### Obligation to register clinical trials by International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)

- The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) announced that in order for clinical trial results to be considered for publication in journals that adhere to ICMJE standards, **all clinical trials** that start recruiting patients or volunteers **on or after July 1, 2005** must be registered with a public registry before the enrolment of the first participant. Ongoing trials not registered at inception will be considered by the ICMJE for publication if they are registered before September 13, 2005. All trials with recruitment completed before July 1, 2005 need not register.
- Details of the ICMJE requirement are described at the [ICMJE website](#)

## DO I NEED TO REGISTER MY CLINICAL TRIAL?

Yes, if as described below, your clinical trial:

- Meets the definition of a clinical trial.
- You meet the requirement of the “responsible person” for registering the trial

## WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF A CLINICAL TRIAL FOR REGISTRATION PURPOSES?

Three similar definitions of a **“clinical trial”** are provided below. If your study meets any one of these definitions, the trial must be registered.

### TCPS 2 defines a clinical trial as:

- *A form of clinical research (also known as patient-oriented research), is any investigation involving participants that evaluates the effects of one or more health-related interventions on health outcomes. Interventions include, but are not restricted to, drugs, radiopharmaceuticals, cells and other biological products, surgical procedures, radiologic procedures, devices, genetic therapies, natural health products, process-of-care changes, preventive care, manual therapies and psychotherapies. Clinical trials may also include questions that are not directly related to therapeutic goals – for example, drug metabolism – in addition to those that directly evaluate the treatment of participants. (TCPS 2, Chapter 11)*

### ICMJE definition of a clinical trial includes:

- "Any research study that prospectively assigns human participants or groups of humans to one or more **"health-related interventions"** to evaluate the effects of health outcomes."
- **"Health-related interventions"** include any intervention used to modify a biomedical or health-related outcome (for example, drugs, surgical procedures, devices, behavioral treatments, dietary interventions, and process-of-care changes). Health outcomes include any biomedical or health-related measures obtained in patients or participants, including pharmacokinetic measures and adverse events.

### FDA (Food and Drug Administration) requires registration of applicable "clinical trials" defined as follows:

- For any trials of drugs and biologics: controlled clinical investigations, other than Phase I investigations, of a product subject to FDA regulations
- For trials of biomedical devices: controlled trials with health outcomes of devices subject to FDA regulation, other than small feasibility studies, and pediatric post market surveillance.

Purely observational studies (those in which the assignment of the medical intervention is not at the discretion of the investigator) will not require registration.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR REGISTERING A TRIAL?

The **"Responsible Party"** must register a clinical trial. The Responsible Party is defined as:

- The **Sponsor** of the clinical trial
- OR**
- The **Principal Investigator (PI)** of the clinical trial if so designated by a sponsor, grantee, contractor, or awardee.

In most cases, registration will be the **responsibility of the Sponsor** and will not require the researcher to complete any extra work. For clinical trials that do not have a Sponsor and/or are funded by a grant, the **lead PI** is responsible for registering. If the trial is a single study site, this responsibility will fall to the **local PI**. In general the following applies:

- **Industry-sponsored trials** should be registered by the sponsor. These are trials in which there is a contract between the industry sponsor, the host institution, and the PI. Before enrolling study participants, every PI should ensure the industry sponsor has registered the trial. The PI should also check the registry to ensure that all ICMJE minimal data set elements are included in the registration.
- **Investigator-initiated trials**, whether or not there is industry funding or, in fact, if there is no funding, the PI is considered the sponsor and is responsible for registering the clinical trial.
- For **clinical trials that are being performed at multiple institutions**, the lead sponsor should take responsibility for registering the trial. If the University of Saskatchewan PI is not the lead sponsor, he or she should work with the other investigators and sponsors to ensure that the trial is registered only once for the entire project.
- **CIHR-funded randomized controlled trials**- The PI is advised to contact CIHR. CIHR may prefer the trial be registered in the ISRCTN registry rather than Clinical trials.gov.
- **NIH sponsored trials** are usually registered by the Institute that is funding the research. They may delegate this responsibility to the lead PI.

## WHEN DO I REGISTER MY CLINICAL TRIAL?

- **Register a trial before any participants are enrolled.** TCPS 2 and ICMJE require registration be completed before the first participant is enrolled to avoid publication restrictions

**Does the local Research Ethics Board need to grant final approval of the study before it is registered?**

- The ClinicalTrials.gov registry allows for trials to be registered '**pending**' ethics final approval. However, once a trial has been approved by the REB, the registry must be updated with the REB approval number.
- In most instances it suggested that you wait to register the **trial following receipt of your letter of conditional approval** from the initial review of the study by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board.

**WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO REGISTER A STUDY IN CLINICALTRIALS.GOV?**

Most clinical trials are registered on **ClinicalTrials.gov** via a web-based entry system called the **Protocol Registration System (PRS)**. The University of Saskatchewan has an organizational account and recommends this registry as they are most familiar with its processes.

1. **Obtain a User Account.** Following the initial review of your clinical trial by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board, please send an e-mail to the University of Saskatchewan Protocol Registration system (PRS) Administrator, Darcie Earle, at [darcie.earle@usask.ca](mailto:darcie.earle@usask.ca) with the following information:
  - **Ethics reference #**
  - **Investigator's name**
  - **Investigator's email address**
  - **Investigator's telephone number**

An account will be created for in ClinicalTrials.gov. The Investigator will receive an **e-mail confirmation from Clinical Trials.gov** within **two business days** when the user account has been created.

2. **Login to PRS.** Once your account has been created go to <https://register.clinicaltrials.gov/> and complete the following three fields on the Login screen:

**Organization:** "usaskatchewan" as provided in e-mail

**Username:** *as provided in e-mail*

**Password:** *as provided in e-mail*

3. **Create a Protocol Record.** A trial is registered in the system by creating a "**protocol record**." Click on the **Create** link under **Protocol Records** on the Main Menu and fill in a series of data entry screens. Clicking on the various fields will allow you to access instructions for that field. If you still have questions, send an email to [register@clinicaltrials.gov](mailto:register@clinicaltrials.gov).

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Using an electronic version of your protocol, you can copy and paste information into the requested data fields.

4. **Review the Protocol Record.** After filling in the last data entry screen, the **Edit Protocol** screen will appear. Review the information for accuracy and completeness and address any **ERRORS, ALERTS, WARNINGS, or NOTES** in the protocol record. If you fail to do so, you will not be able to complete the registration process.
5. **Mark the Protocol Record as Complete.** If you fail to mark your record as complete, it will not be approved and released for publication and your trial will not be properly registered.
6. **Releasing and Approving the Record:** The "**Responsible Party**" ( i.e. PI) may assign/delegate another individual to complete and update the record, however the PI must still "approve" and "release" the record on receipt of the e-mail prompt from Clinical Trials.gov.

7. **Keep your Protocol Record Up-To-Date.** For protocols that have not been closed or terminated, an **affirmative verification** or update of the data is required every six months. *Failing to login to the PRS and confirm or update your record(s) every six months, regardless of whether there has been a change to the trial or not, may result in a loss of funding and/or the inability to publish the results of a trial in an ICMJE associated journal.*

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You should receive a reminder e-mail notification from clinicaltrials.gov once every six months to update your study information.

### Some suggestions when completing the “Protocol Record Template”:

As a **PRS user** you are responsible for ensuring that the information you provide on your trial is correct, complete, readily understood by the public, and updated in a timely manner.

- **Pertinent Source Information:** It will be helpful to have the protocol, the informed consent document, the REB application and REB approval letter on hand
- **Data definitions:** The definitions are available by clicking on the element. Please be clear and specific and choose appropriate and meaningful key words
- **Unique protocol ID:** Consider using the **REB Ethics Reference Number** as your unique protocol identifier (e.g. Bio XX-XXX)
- **Review Board Approval Number:** Use the **REB Ethics Reference Number** ( e.g. Bio XX-XXX)
- **Oversight Authorities:** Generally this should be Country: Canada: Research Ethics Board
- **Sponsor:** This will be the organization for which you register through.
- **Research Ethics Board Affiliation:** University of Saskatchewan
- **Research Ethics Board Chair:** Indicate “Bonnie Korthuis” rather than the name of the person currently serving as the Chair. This will ensure that all queries regarding ethics approval are responded to quickly and consistently.
- **Research Ethics Board Phone:** (306) 966-2975
- **Research Ethics Board Email:** [bonnie.korthuis@usask.ca](mailto:bonnie.korthuis@usask.ca)
- **Research Ethics Board Address:**  
Research Services & Ethics Office  
University of Saskatchewan  
223 Thorvaldson Building  
110 Science Place  
Saskatoon, Sk S7N 5C9
- **Records Verification Date:** The date the record has been verified/approved by the “**Responsible Party**” (i.e. PI). This date requires updating with each change and at a minimum every 6 months. We also suggest it is **updated** with each **annual approval**. This serves as a date alert for the public as to whether the information is being kept current, particularly with reference to recruiting status and contact information.
- **Study Start Date:** Use the date enrollment began, not the date of REB approval
- **Last Follow-up Date:** Actual date when the last participant was examined/treated or the anticipated date for when the last follow-up date is expected.

## Are updates required?

- **Yes.** The “**Responsible Party**” must enter the Clinical Trials PRS to verify, review and update the study record when any changes are made to a study protocol and/or at a **minimum every 6 months**. The records should be updated when the trial is completed.

## WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT REGISTERING A TRIAL?

There are penalties for responsible parties who fail to register clinical trials, keep the information up to date, or submit false or misleading information:

- The inability to publish the results of a trial in an ICMJE associated journal.
- For US federally-funded trials, the penalties could include withholding or recovery of grant funds.

## REFERENCES

### Clinical Trials.gov Registry

- [ClinicalTrials.gov Registry](#)
- [Clinical Trials.gov Protocol Registration System](#)
- [Clinical Trials.gov Fact Sheet](#)

### ICMJE Initiative

[Ottawa Statement on Trial Registration](#). The Ottawa Statement aims to establish internationally recognized principles for trial registration.

[Health Canada – Drugs and Health Products - Clinical Trials: Registration and Disclosure of Information](#)

[Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\) Registration Requirements](#)

[International Clinical Trials Registry Platform \(ICTRP\)](#) The mission of the WHO International Clinical Trials Registry Platform is to ensure that a complete view of research is accessible to all those involved in health care decision making. This will improve research transparency and will ultimately strengthen the validity and value of the scientific evidence base.