

Involvement of community urologists in research in Canada

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While the Canadian Urological Association, through its Office of Education and Scientific Foundation, provides several community research grants, there is room for improvement when it comes to community-driven urologic research.

Community urologists treat a diverse patient population and can contribute valuable data on treatment impact; however, they face challenges in conducting research. These include:

- Time constraints: Community urologists often have busy clinical schedules, which can limit their availability for research activities.
- Research expertise: Some community urologists may require additional training or mentorship to effectively participate in research projects.
- Administrative burden: Data collection and reporting can be time-consuming for community urologists.

The following strategies are suggestions for both potential researchers, collaborators, and supporting organizations to engage community urologists in research.

Build collaborative networks

Establishing strong networks between academic institutions, hospitals, and community practices is essential. These networks facilitate seamless collaboration and communication. Consider the following steps:

- Organize regular meetings and conferences to discuss potential research collaborations; and
- Create a directory of community urologists interested in research;

Provide training and support

Community urologists may not have extensive research experience. Providing them with training and

ongoing support can make a significant difference. Key areas to focus on include:

- Research methodology and design;
- Data collection and analysis;
- Ethical considerations and patient consent; and
- Grant writing and funding opportunities.

Ensure adequate funding

Securing funding for research projects is often a challenge. It is important to explore various funding sources and ensure that community urologists are adequately compensated for their time and effort. Potential funding sources include:

- Federal and provincial research grants;
- Pharmaceutical and medical device company sponsorships;
- Private foundations and non-profit organizations; and
- Collaborative grants with academic institutions.

Streamline administrative processes

Administrative burdens can be a major deterrent for busy community urologists. Simplifying administrative processes can encourage their participation. Strategies include:

- Providing administrative support for paperwork and regulatory compliance;
- Using electronic data capture systems to streamline data collection; and
- Ensuring clear and concise communication regarding project expectations and timelines.

Foster a culture of recognition and appreciation

Recognizing and appreciating the contributions of community urologists can foster a positive research environment. Consider the following approaches:

- Highlight their contributions in publications and presentations;
- Offer opportunities for professional development and advancement; and
- Provide financial incentives and awards for outstanding contributions.

Promote patient and community engagement

Engaging patients and the broader community in research can enhance its relevance and impact. Community urologists can play a key role in this process. Strategies include:

- Involving patients in the design and implementation of research studies;
- Organizing community outreach programs to raise awareness about research initiatives; and
- Using patient registries and databases for recruitment and data collection.

Use technology and innovation

Using technology can greatly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of research initiatives. Consider incorporating the following:

- Telemedicine for remote consultations and followups;
- Wearable devices and mobile apps for real-time data collection; and
- Advanced data analytics and artificial intelligence for data analysis.

Establish clear goals and outcomes

Setting clear goals and outcomes for research projects ensures that all participants are aligned and motivated. This includes:

- Defining specific research questions and objectives;
- Establishing measurable outcomes and benchmarks; and
- Regularly reviewing and adjusting goals as needed.

Encourage publications and dissemination of findings

Sharing research findings with the broader medical community and the public is crucial. Encouraging community urologists to publish and present their work can have a significant impact. Consider:

- Providing support for manuscript writing and submission;
- Organizing symposia and conferences to present research findings;

- Using social media and online platforms to disseminate results.

Monitor and evaluate progress

Regular monitoring and evaluation of research projects ensure that they stay on track and achieve their goals. This includes:

- Conducting periodic reviews and progress reports;
- Identifying and addressing any challenges or barriers; and
- Adjusting strategies and approaches as needed.

Clinical trial recruitment

Actively recruit community urologists to participate in clinical trials by providing training, support, and streamlined processes for patient enrollment.

Observational studies

Leverage the existing patient data from community practices to conduct observational studies on disease trends and treatment patterns.

Patient registries

Establish patient registries where community urologists can contribute data on patient demographics and treatment outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

Involving community urologists in research in Canada requires a multifaceted approach that includes building collaborative networks, providing training and support, securing funding, simplifying administrative processes, and fostering a culture of recognition and engagement. By implementing these strategies, researchers can effectively engage community urologists and enhance the quality and impact of their research

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