

Job Description
Research Program Leader
Duke Center for Health Policy & Inequalities Research
Open through September 28, 2018

Research Content

Most of us have never stopped to think about the health of pastors, who, after all, are generally well-educated with access to health insurance, and also participate in religious communities – something which for many people is related to better health. However, the Duke Clergy Health Initiative conducted ground-breaking studies in 2008 that definitively pointed to worse chronic disease and obesity rates in North Carolina clergy compared to non-clergy North Carolinians, as well as higher depression rates compared to US adults. What is going on? At least on the surface, some of the issues are that clergy are caregivers who over-extend themselves, partly because they are so devoted to their sacred calling. As for obesity, the structure of pastors' workday offers many opportunities to eat unhealthy food (breaking donuts -- rather than bread -- with parishioners) and often requires a lot of driving to distant hospitals and meetings, with an average of 4 evenings out per week and fast food being a ready solution for dinner. In the ten years since these initial studies, the Clergy Health Initiative has developed and tested several health and well-being interventions, with success in improving pastors' physical health, but unfortunately not in decreasing depression rates. Also, many pastors still struggle with stress symptoms.

The Duke Endowment, our constant funder during these years, enabled us to study clergy flourishing and positive mental health and then plan a new intervention study with the goal of decreasing stress symptoms in clergy and improving heart rate variability. To this end, we are hiring a Research Program Leader to oversee the data collection, compilation, and documentation, as well as liaise with the interventionists and document the intervention for this intervention study. In addition, the Research Program Leader will plan and direct activities across the multiple clergy health studies in place and anticipated. These include a longitudinal panel survey that has five waves to date since 2008; a prospective survey and qualitative interview study of seminary students; multiple dissemination groups and activities; and potentially a 'rapid research response' effort.

Our research and intervention work is exciting and ever-changing. Our team members are both in Duke Divinity School and the Duke Center for Health Policy & Inequalities Research. We work hard to be good partners with many United Methodist Church and other denomination leaders at national, state, and local levels; this partnership includes learning from them and feeding back research findings. Our research is on holistic health in that we are interested in the mind, body, and spirit, and the prospective seminary study seeks to identify how clergy can sustain their holistic health long-term in ministry, in a day and age in which church work and parishioner involvement is changing.

Occupational Summary

The research management includes planning, performing, and overseeing a variety of complex duties involved in the collection, compilation, documentation and analysis of research data; assisting with the content and the direction of the research portfolio; and assisting with efforts to manage study funding. The individual will also frequently interact with our many stakeholders who include researchers and users of our research, serving as a liaison and public relations lead to the research program. The individual will coordinate the wider program activities with the responsibility for results in terms of costs, methods, and reporting requirements.

Work Performed

Program Portfolio, meaning here work across a set of research studies:

1. Research program/portfolio management and development.

Assist in formulating and implementing the short and long-range goals for the operation of the research across studies. Assist with monitoring and evaluating the research implementation and implement modifications to improve effectiveness.

2. Research program operations.

Coordinate and manage the day-to-day operations within research studies, ensuring timely communications and adherence to regulations and guidelines. Develop research milestones and timelines. Revise and implement operation strategies as appropriate.

3. Research program/portfolio communications and dissemination.

Assist with or develop publications and presentations; represent program at conferences and meetings. Serve as the primary point of contact for program(s). Work with the Communications Director on content for external communications.

4. Research Program financial management.

Look across studies in the research portfolio to anticipate staffing and other expenditures and plan for wise use of funds across the portfolio. Utilize strategies for long-term management of funds. Recognize allowable expenses based on financial guidelines. Serve as a resource to help monitor, verify, and reconcile expenditure of budgeted program funds as appropriate. Coordinate with others to monitor and report on financial program milestones. Serve as a liaison with sponsors, subcontractors, and/or vendors. Assist with financial forecasting of staff.

5. Institutional liaison.

Liaise with other programs, offices and departments at Duke to coordinate program business and to accomplish program objectives; interface with external organizations to ensure cooperative efforts are enhanced and resources are utilized.

Research studies:

1. Clinical research operations.

Provide oversight and training to study team members who screen, schedule, consent, maintain subject/study level documentation, and collect adverse event information for participants in a variety of studies. Serve as a resource and train others regarding preparation and conduct of study visits, creation of SOPs, and in implementing operational plans. Evaluate processes to identify issues related to recruitment and retention rates, and implement innovative solutions to maximize recruitment and retention.

Develop IRB documents and train other staff in these tasks. Provide direction for preparation of study monitoring/audit visits. Correct audit/monitor findings.

2. Data management and informatics.

Use and train others in Electronic Data Capture (EDC) systems, technologies, and software. Independently design Case Report Forms to collect data according to protocol. Select methods of data capture and implement at the unit level. Investigate incomplete, inaccurate, or missing data/documents to ensure accuracy and completeness of data. Oversee the creation and use of queries, summaries, and reports. Make determinations regarding complex data contracts and agreements.

3. Scientific concepts and research design.

Conduct and synthesize literature reviews, and independently develop protocols. Assess and determine solutions for operational shortcomings of protocols. Identify and collaborate with various stakeholders to ensure adequate design, implementation, and testing of study aims. Summarize and interpret study results, and determine application to future study procedures.

4. Leadership and professionalism.

Assist colleagues in identifying efficiencies and improving process. May provide significant contribution and influence upon research work, activities, or productivity of project teams. Encourage leadership opportunities for staff within a small work group. Actively seek out continuing education opportunities for self and study team members. Train staff and multiple study teams in various work responsibilities. Employ escalation and performance plans as needed. Maintain training requirements. Develop solutions to proactively ensure unit, department, or division compliance with training requirements. Create strategies that enhance cultural diversity and cultural competency in the design and conduct of clinical research.

5. Study and site management.

Provide expert guidance to study team members to ensure participant expenses are handled; troubleshoot, escalate, and resolve issues. Develop study budgets. Coordinate operational plans for multiple research studies. Develop systems and documents including data collection flow, training manuals, and standard operating procedures to be used across studies. Develop and implement closeout procedures for multiple studies.

Inform investigators and oversight organization regarding appropriate feasibility, recruitment, and retention strategies. Determine and implement alternative solutions to accomplishing recruitment and retention milestones. Oversee study teams' compliance with training and maintenance of Delegation of Authority Logs.

6. Communication and team science.

Lead team meetings. Include others in decision-making, and escalate issues appropriately. Communicate with sponsors, subcontractors, or vendors. Take action when communication has stalled with sites, CROs, or sponsors. Act as an expert resource to junior staff liaising with sponsors, subcontractors, or vendors.

Requirements

Education and Training:

1. Completion of a bachelor's degree plus a minimum of four years of research experience
2. Completion of a master's degree plus a minimum of two years of research experience

Preferences

A research-focused master's degree such as an MPH plus 5 or more years of research experience preferred

Skills

Can easily use Word, Excel, and data entry databases / data capture systems

Strong attention to detail

Strong interpersonal skills

Able to program data capture in REDCap or Qualtrics is a plus

If interested, please email Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell at rae.jean@duke.edu and copy Nneka Molokwu at nneka.molokwu@duke.edu.