

The CRF Academy - a learning program for aspiring Clinical Research staff: An evaluation from the perspective of new staff members.

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Introduction

Multiple new staff members were employed to facilitate the expansion of the Clinical Research Facility (CRF) and the re-starting of non-covid clinical trials. The majority of new staff had no prior experience in the field of Clinical Research. Due to the complex nature of clinical trials, a lack of experienced staff can create a challenge for CRFs and can overburden existing staff members with training responsibilities¹. In addition, the role transition period experienced by staff entering a clinical research position has previously been described as 'prolonged' and 'uncomfortable'². Therefore, 'The CRF Academy', an innovative training and induction program, was developed. The CRF Academy aimed to equip new staff with the skills necessary to fulfil the demands of their new roles and to develop quality practice. Thus, alleviating the strain on existing staff. During this 4 day interactive program new staff were trained on the following topics; Study Set Up, ICH-GCP, SAEs, Pharmacy (IMP) and Monitoring. The success and perceived benefits of the CRF Academy were assessed using a post-program questionnaire.

Aims and Objectives

- To evaluate the effectiveness of The CRF Academy in improving Clinical Research Practice knowledge from the perspective of new CRF staff members.
- To provide new staff members with an opportunity to reflect on their learning.
- To receive feedback from new members of staff that may help advance the CRF training program in the future.

Methods

- **Sample:** All new staff members who attended the CRF Academy training program in February 2022.
- **Sample size:** n=8
- **Research Design:** Post intervention Likert and descriptive survey design.
- **Tools and techniques:**
 - Questionnaire comprising of open ended and close ended questions..
 - The CRF Academy. The content of this training program included:
 - History of research (ethics and regulations).
 - ICH-GCP.
 - Local regulatory requirements.
 - Interactive workshops.
 - Study set-up & close out.
 - Serious Adverse Event reporting.
 - Protocol Deviations.
 - IMP

References

1. Herena, Pamela S., and R. N. Bernadette Pulone. *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing* 22.4 (2018): 450-452.
2. Tinkler, Linda, et al. *Journal of advanced nursing* 74.2 (2018): 318-328.

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Results

When asked 'overall how useful did you find the information provided in the CRF Academy?' 6 (75%) of the attendees answered 'excellent', 1(12.5%) answered 'Very Good' and 1(12.5%) answered 'Good' (Fig 1.).

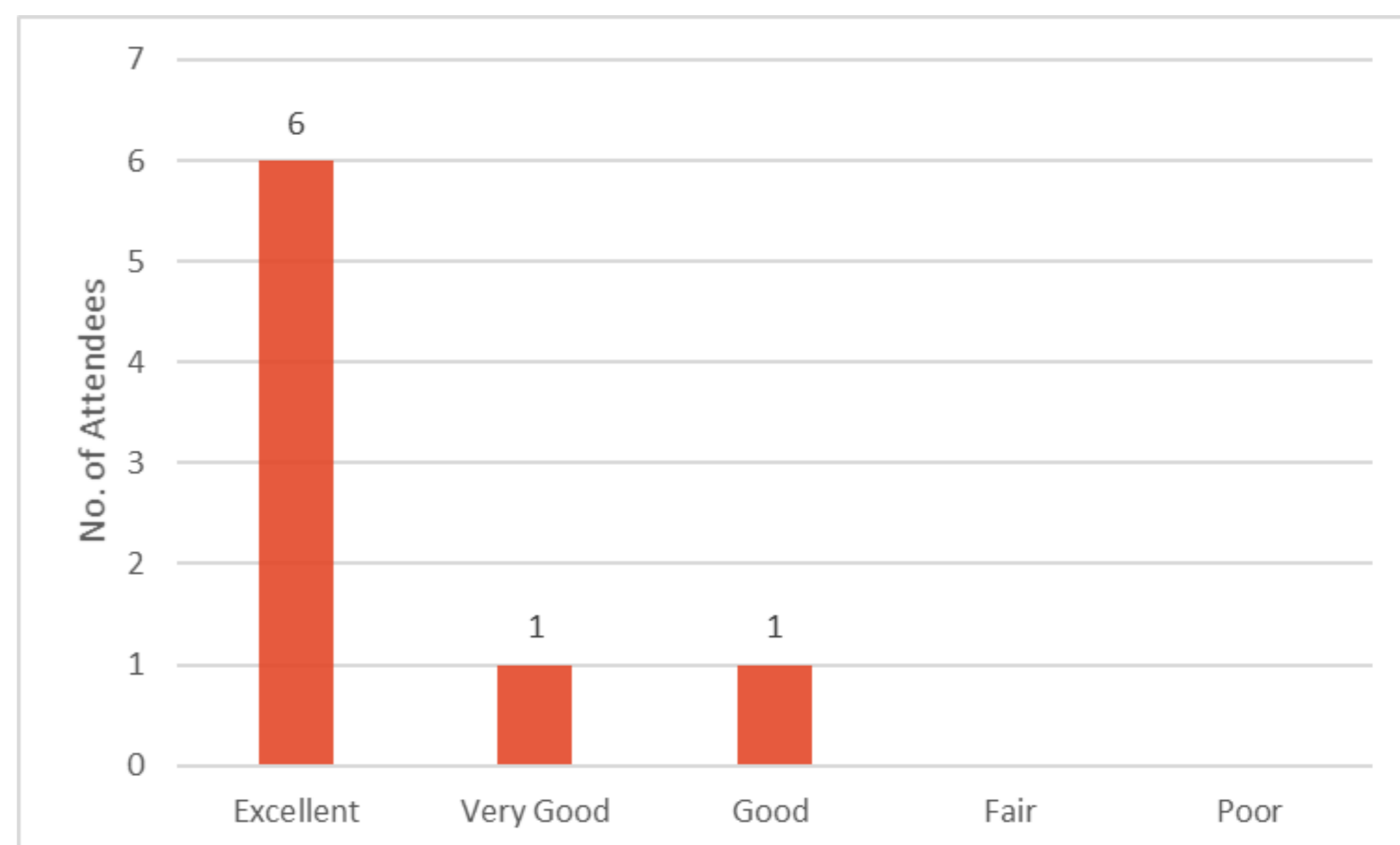


Fig.1 Responses of attendees when asked how useful they found the information provided in the CRF academy.

Of the 6 attendees who had previously attended GCP training 5 said that they had learned new information. Of those 5, 2 attendees said that the information provided in the CRF academy was more relevant to their current role while 2 others said that the inclusion of real life examples and scenarios was new and beneficial.

Overall, the interactive workshops were received very well by attendees, 5 of whom said they would like to see more workshops included in the program. 2 attendees rated the Informed consent workshop 'excellent', 3 'very good' and 1 'Good'. One new staff member was unable to attend.

Below (Fig.2.) are some of the responses received from new staff members when asked for feedback on the program.

"I find it easier to learn by interacting. All content was excellent and relevant, but it was a lot to learn and workshops help retain it."

"It was excellent, CRF Academy would be very helpful if done the first week of joining the team."

"More info on managing workload: email management, vendor access, ISF maintenance."

Fig 2. Excerpts from responses of attendees when asked what they would like to see more of in the CRF Academy/what could be improved on.

Conclusion

Overall the development and delivery of the CRF academy was perceived as beneficial by all new staff members, validating some of the main course objectives. The interactive workshops were received well by attendees and were identified as a component they would have liked more of.

Although the current sample size is small, going forward a similar survey will be administered after each delivery of the program. Hence, the CRF Academy will continue to evolve over time. In the future, we expect the CRF academy to be fundamental in educating new staff within the Facility.