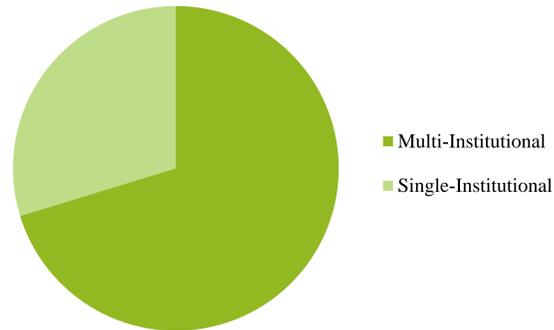


Why Coordinating Centers?

FHCRC Public Health Sciences Division FY 2008 Grants



As collaborative research has increased in size, scope and reach, Coordinating Centers (CCs) have emerged as one solution to the increasing administrative burden on researchers. A well-built CC can ameliorate some of the overhead of collaborative science by managing the administrative aspects, facilitating collaborative activities, and empowering investigators to focus on the science, thus improving every stage of a study.

Although it is tacitly recognized that a good CC is essential to the success of any multi-site collaborative project, little study has been done on what makes a CC successful, why some CCs fail, or how to build a CC that meets the needs of a given project. Moreover, very little published guidance is available, as few CCs outside the clinical-trial realm write about their work.

We believe that the dearth of public discussion about the role and structure of CCs for collaborative cancer-epidemiology research is detrimental to the progress of science.

Core Areas of Support Provided by a CC

A good CC will have the available expertise and resources to facilitate protocol development, ensure timely information exchange, and coordinate data management and statistical analysis. CC staff will also take the lead on bringing all parties to the table and ensuring all participants have an equal voice in the areas of the project appropriate to their expertise. It is these “soft” areas of research that become increasingly important, even mission critical, in collaborative projects and which receive the least attention from research teams.

Four Core Areas of Support

- **Collaboration development:** developing trust, building community, establishing membership boundaries
- **Operations management:** protocol development, IRB, grants management
- **Statistical and data management:** data harmonization, analyses
- **Communications infrastructure and tool development:** collaborative portal, secure data transmission, meeting and conference call hosting

Rolland B, Smith BR, Potter, JD. (2011). Coordinating centers in cancer epidemiology research: the Asia Cohort Consortium Coordinating Center. *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention* 20(10): 2115-2119.

Zheng W, McLerran DF, Rolland B, et al. (2011). Association between Body-Mass Index and Risk of Death in More Than 1 Million Asians. *New England Journal of Medicine* 364(8): 719-729.

The Asia Cohort Consortium Coordinating Center

The ACC seeks to establish a cohort of at least one million healthy people around the world who will be followed over time to various disease endpoints, including cancer. Our work will be done collaboratively by partnering with other cohort studies to create a community of researchers focused on the same goals.

The BMI Pilot Project

The first cross-cohort project of the ACC focused on the question of the relationship between mortality and Body Mass Index (BMI) in Asian populations.

The BMI Working Group requested more than 40 variables from 18 participating cohorts, then harmonized them into one massive dataset.

The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL of MEDICINE

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

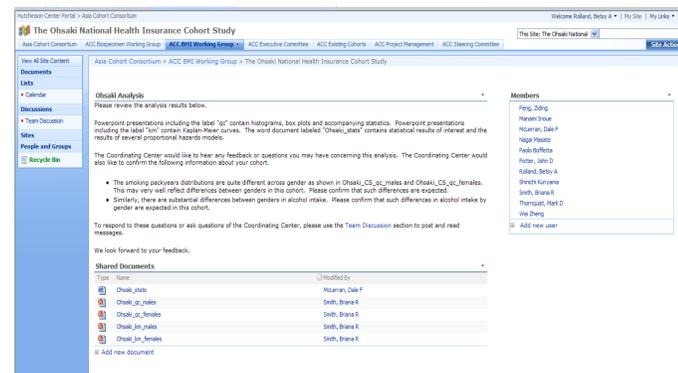
Association between Body-Mass Index and Risk of Death in More Than 1 Million Asians

Wei Zheng, M.D., Ph.D., Dale F. McLerran, M.S., Betsy Rolland, M.L.I.S., Xianglan Zhang, M.D., M.P.H., Manami Inoue, M.D., Ph.D., Keitaro Matsuo, M.D., Ph.D., Jjiang He, M.D., Ph.D., Prakash Chandra Gupta, Sc.D., Kunnambath Ramadas, M.D., Shoichiro Tsugane, M.D., Ph.D., Fujiko Irie, M.D., Ph.D., Akiko Tamakoshi, M.D., Ph.D., Yu-Tang Gao, M.D., Renwei Wang, M.D., M.S., Xiao-Ou Shu, M.D., Ph.D., Ichiro Tsuji, M.D., Ph.D., Shinichi Kuriyama, M.D., Hideo Tanaka, M.D., Ph.D., Hiroshi Satoh, M.D., Ph.D., Chien-Jen Chen, Sc.D., Jian-Min Yuan, M.D., Ph.D., Keun-Young Yoo, M.D., Ph.D., Habibul Ahsan, M.D., Wen-Harn Pan, Ph.D., Dongfeng Gu, M.D., Ph.D., Mangesh Suryakant Pednekar, M.Sc., Ph.D., Catherine Sauvaget, M.D., Ph.D., Shizuka Sasazuki, M.D., Ph.D., Toshimi Sairenchi, Ph.D., Gong Yang, M.D., M.P.H., Yong-Bing Xiang, M.D., M.Ph., Masato Nagai, M.Sc., Takeshi Suzuki, M.D., Ph.D., Yoshikazu Nishino, M.D., Ph.D., San-Lin You, Ph.D., Woon-Puay Koh, M.B., B.S., Ph.D., Sue K. Park, M.D., Ph.D., Yu Chen, Ph.D., Chen-Yang Shen, Ph.D., Mark Thornquist, Ph.D., Ziding Feng, Ph.D., Daehee Kang, M.D., Ph.D., Paolo Boffetta, M.D., M.P.H., and John D. Potter, M.D., Ph.D.

Data Review Workspaces

To ensure the sites correctly interpreted the data request and proper data had been received, we created Data Workspaces on our ACC SharePoint portal where we discussed individual cohort-level results.

These Workspaces were used for virtual review of the data analysis by our collaborators. In order to increase trust, access was private and transparent. The context-rich environment of the Workspace brought the project pieces together.



Future Research

Coordinating Centers remain understudied, despite significant effort and funds being devoted to their creation and maintenance. We propose the following initial topics for investigation:

1. How can we measure the success of a CC?
2. Is there a CC structure that is most effective and efficient for all types of collaborative research or is each CC unique?
3. What are the core functions and who are the core staff of a CC?
4. What are best practices in data harmonization and how can we structure datasets to make it a more straightforward process?
5. Are there differences between CCs for international and domestic collaborations?

Using qualitative research methods, we will further this research through two projects, an NIH-funded R03 and my doctoral research. Both will involve interviewing PIs and project staff at FHCRC-based CCs, as well as those at other comprehensive cancer care centers in the US.

NIH-funded R03 (R03CA150036) – Specific Aims:

1. Identify and describe models of Coordinating Centers (CCs) and corresponding models of collaborative cancer-epidemiology research projects
2. Develop metrics that CCs can use to predict and evaluate their performance
3. Build a downloadable toolkit to help CCs ramp up their operations efficiently and effectively
4. Produce a modular course to develop and train CC staff

Dissertation Research Questions:

How do coordinating centers facilitate collaboration around data harmonization and biologic specimen sharing? How do CCs balance local and global concerns?

Contact and Funding

Betsy Rolland, MLIS

Project Manager
Asia Cohort Consortium Coordinating Center
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center
1100 Fairview Avenue North, M4-B402
Seattle, WA 98109-1024
brolland@fhcrc.org
www.asiacohort.org

PhD Student
Human Centered Design & Engineering
University of Washington
brolland@uw.edu

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