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CU I&E Submission: Redesigned Research Studies Website Boosts Access and Engagement [1]

Category

Sponsored Projects/Research
Technology

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Project Description

Research shows that increasing awareness of clinical trials improves participation, yet only 16% of people report finding studies through clinical trial registries, despite nearly half preferring this source. This gap suggests that recruitment websites are underused but could be powerful tools with intentional design, strong content, and centralized management. CU Anschutz launched an institutionally managed recruitment website in 2020, but 60% of study teams with a webpage still failed to meet their recruitment goals. To address this, we undertook a comprehensive improvement project focused on enhanced search features, clearer navigation and organization, and standardized review and approval of study webpages. Our aims were to increase completed webforms (from 0.5 to >1 per study) and improve webpage readability from a grade level of 15 to 8 by January 2026.

Project Efficiency

We added over 100,000 words to the keyword search and included an autocomplete feature. We created a dedicated ‘Find a Research Study’ webpage that allowed us to add a ‘Filter Results’ menu. This allows people to search by category (health conditions or indications), healthy volunteer (yes or no), age group, compensation (yes or no), and location. Additionally, our team reviewed 251 study webpages. Of those, 150 study webpages have been updated and now meet our language requirements. The average reading level prior to our review was

14.5. After our review, the average reading level was 7.7.

Project Inspiration

Our inspiration was to make clinical research more accessible to our community. Participation depends on awareness—people cannot enroll in studies they do not know exist. To achieve this, we must ensure that visitors to our website can easily find relevant studies, clearly understand the information they read, and confidently take action. Improving navigation, readability, and clarity is essential to helping more people discover and consider participating in clinical research.

What Makes You Happiest about this Project?

We are excited that improvements to the CU Anschutz Research Studies Website increased both overall traffic and, more importantly, the number of people completing webforms to express interest in participating in research. Providing study teams with a multipronged recruitment strategy that includes passive methods can enhance study success. To our knowledge, this project is the first to improve an institutionally managed recruitment website by focusing on user experience and clarity, leading to more than a twofold increase in individuals submitting webforms to join a clinical research study.

Source URL:https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-redesigned-research-studies-website

Links
[1] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-redesigned-research-studies-website [2] mailto:kiley.vanderwyst@cuanschutz.edu [3] mailto:benjamin.echalier@cuanschutz.edu [4] mailto:megan.3.lane@cuanschutz.edu