

Notable Gender, Racial Disparities Exist among U.S. Clinical Investigators, According to the Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development

BOSTON – Nov. 5, 2007 – Although the overwhelming majority of physicians in the United States have high interest in participating in clinical research studies, the actual participation rate of minority and female physicians is relatively low, according to a study recently completed by the [Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development](#).

The study, which investigated minority and gender disparities among clinical research investigators, found that 16.9% of white physicians participate as principal investigators in clinical studies, compared to 14% of Black physicians, and 10.8% of Hispanic and 9.6% of Asian doctors.

When examined by gender, only 10.9% of female physicians participate as principal investigators, compared to 16.9% of male physicians, the study found. Moreover, minority and female clinical investigators initiate far fewer clinical trials annually than do their White or male counterparts.

“More than 70% of all physicians, regardless of race or gender, tell us they have a strong desire to participate in clinical research, but a number of factors are dissuading them from doing so,” said Ken Getz a senior research fellow at the Tufts Center, who conducted the study.

He said that time constraints and lack of infrastructure, such as dedicated personnel and office space, are key barriers that minority physicians said prevent them from participating as investigators at the same level as White physicians. Female physicians cited time constraints and infrastructure needs as the major obstacles for them.

The study, based on surveys of nearly 1,400 physicians, assessed the incidence of participation as clinical investigators and gathered descriptive and attitudinal data on clinical trial participation. Physician race was determined by self-report, and survey choices were consistent with U.S. Census Bureau classifications.

The results, reported in the *November/December Tufts CSDD Impact Report*, released today, also found that:

- * More than half of Black (51%) and Hispanic (57%) physicians consider a physician’s race an important factor in influencing minority patient participation in clinical research, compared to White (9%) and Asian (21%) physicians.
- * Minority physicians are less likely to refer their patients into clinical studies than White physicians (38% vs. 47%, respectively). Of physicians who refer patients, White and Black physicians, on average, refer twice as many patients to studies as do Asian and Hispanic physicians.
- * Female investigators, who annually initiate one-third the number of studies that male investigators initiate, report that distrust of the health care system and child care issues are major factors limiting their patients’ participation in clinical research.

About the Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development

The Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development (<http://csdd.tufts.edu>) at Tufts University provides strategic information to help drug developers, regulators, and policy makers improve the quality and efficiency of pharmaceutical development, review, and utilization. Tufts CSDD, based in Boston, conducts a wide range of in-depth analyses on pharmaceutical issues and hosts symposia, workshops, and public forums, and publishes the *Tufts CSDD Impact Report*, a bi-monthly newsletter providing analysis and insight into critical drug development issues.

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