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Fox Trial Finder (FTF): Online clinical trial matching to connect subjects with Parkinson's trials

M. Frasier, S. Chowdhury, C.C. Meunier, D. Brooks (New York, NY, USA)

Objective: (1) To provide Parkinson's patients and control subjects with a way to identify and connect to trials they may qualify for (2) To provide coordinators with qualified leads and an way to connect with potential subjects for trials.

Background: The greatest obstacle to timely trial recruitment is access to information about relevant trials for patients and access to motivated volunteers for trial coordinators. A 2003 NIH survey found that 85% of trials finish late due to low patient accrual. Historically, clinical trial Web resources have been information aggregators and don't offer a way for motivated volunteers and trials seeking subjects to connect online. Improvements in Web technology enabled the development FTF, a next generation tool that enables trial matching.

Methods: FTF is a trial matching tool, connecting trial teams that seek subjects with Parkinson's patients and control volunteers who may match to their trials. FTF uses a PD-specific algorithm to match leads to trials based on key traits, including meds, location, and Hoehn and Yahr stage. A volunteer saves a profile that is matched to a trial submission. The tool returns a subset of matches to the volunteer, simultaneously highlighting leads for coordinators. FTF enables users to connect through a de-identified messaging interface on the site. A sophisticated alert system tells volunteers when new trials they match to are added to the site.

Results: FTF launched in the US in July and already has 2,000 volunteers registered. Users are being actively matched to 107 trials posted to the site. 100 coordinators are connected to trials and using the messaging interface and search functionality. While FTF has no formal way to measure matches made through the tool, we know of 19 anecdotal reports of matches made to trials through FTF. FTF is launching internationally in January 2012, adding over 100 new trials and enabling patients and researchers globally to use the tool. Our goal in 2012 is to register 5,000 volunteers. Continued technology enhancements and promotional partnership are expected to occur throughout the year.

Conclusions: FTF seeks to help speed trial recruitment by bridging the gap between motivated volunteers and recruiting trials.