

"Career Opportunities in Clinical Drug Research"

Rebecca J. Anderson, 2010, 184 pages, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, \$59.00

Review by Norman M. Goldfarb

"Career Opportunities in Clinical Drug Research" clearly explains how to get a job in clinical operations at a study sponsor or contract research organization (CRO). The author may be optimistic about finding a job in the current environment, but the situation should improve over time.

The book strongly recommends first obtaining clinical experience at a research site. The key is to gain experience that will be useful for sponsor and CRO employees. For example, administrative experience with an institutional review board can be relevant to regulatory affairs. Investigator-initiated clinical trials can provide experience for a wide range of sponsor jobs. Clinical research coordinator (CRC) and clinical research associate (CRA) positions both require interpersonal, multi-tasking, regulatory and other skills and expertise, but the jobs are very different in other ways, so a good CRC may not thrive as a CRA.

The book recommends applying for positions at large organizations, which are generally better set up to train inexperienced personnel. CRO experience is especially useful because it can provide exposure to the requirements and systems of multiple sponsors.

In describing the responsibilities of people in each role, the book provides examples of the numerous things that can go wrong during a typical workday. However, it does not mention that they usually all go wrong at the same time, with lots more to follow. It might also overstate the capabilities of the average clinical research site; experience at an inexperienced site could be quite an experience, but perhaps not a strong recommendation to potential employers.

The book consists of 13 chapters:

- What is the Clinical Environment in Industry?
- How are Drugs and Medical Devices Developed?
- What Happens at the Clinical Site?
- Entering as a Clinical Research Associate
- Entering Data Management
- Entering as a Biostatistician
- Entering as a Clinical Quality Assurance Auditor
- Entering Regulatory Affairs
- Entering Clinical Safety
- Entering as a Medical Writer
- Your Future in Clinical Operations
- Helpful Hints for Landing a Product Development Job
- Reference Materials

The report is available in bookstores.

Reviewer

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