

## Employment Climate in the Clinical Research Industry

By Norman M. Goldfarb

The author conducted a survey of 15 staffing firms at the Association of Clinical Research Professionals (ACRP) Annual Meeting in April 2013. The firms represent a broad cross section of the clinical research industry. Their focus, in general, is on permanent and contract pharmaceutical and contract research organization (CRO) employers. The largest part of the market is for clinical research associates (CRAs).

The survey question was:

"Compared to this time last year, in clinical research, for your firm, roughly what percentage increase or decrease have you seen in the number of open positions and the number of people looking for new positions?"

Results of the survey (Figure 1) show that median demand for personnel increased by 8% and median supply was unchanged. The data points are bimodal in both dimensions: demand clusters around 2% and 20%, while supply clusters around 0% and 15%.

Perceptions of supply are influenced by perceptions of demand. For example, when demand increases, there may be *relatively* few people available fill the positions, even if the absolute number has increased.

Over the previous seven surveys, demand has increased 20-30% per year, except in the 2008 survey, when it was flat. Over the same period, supply has been basically flat, except in the 2012 survey, when it increased by 20%. In other words, this year, demand increased at about half the normal rate, while supply was flat, as normal.

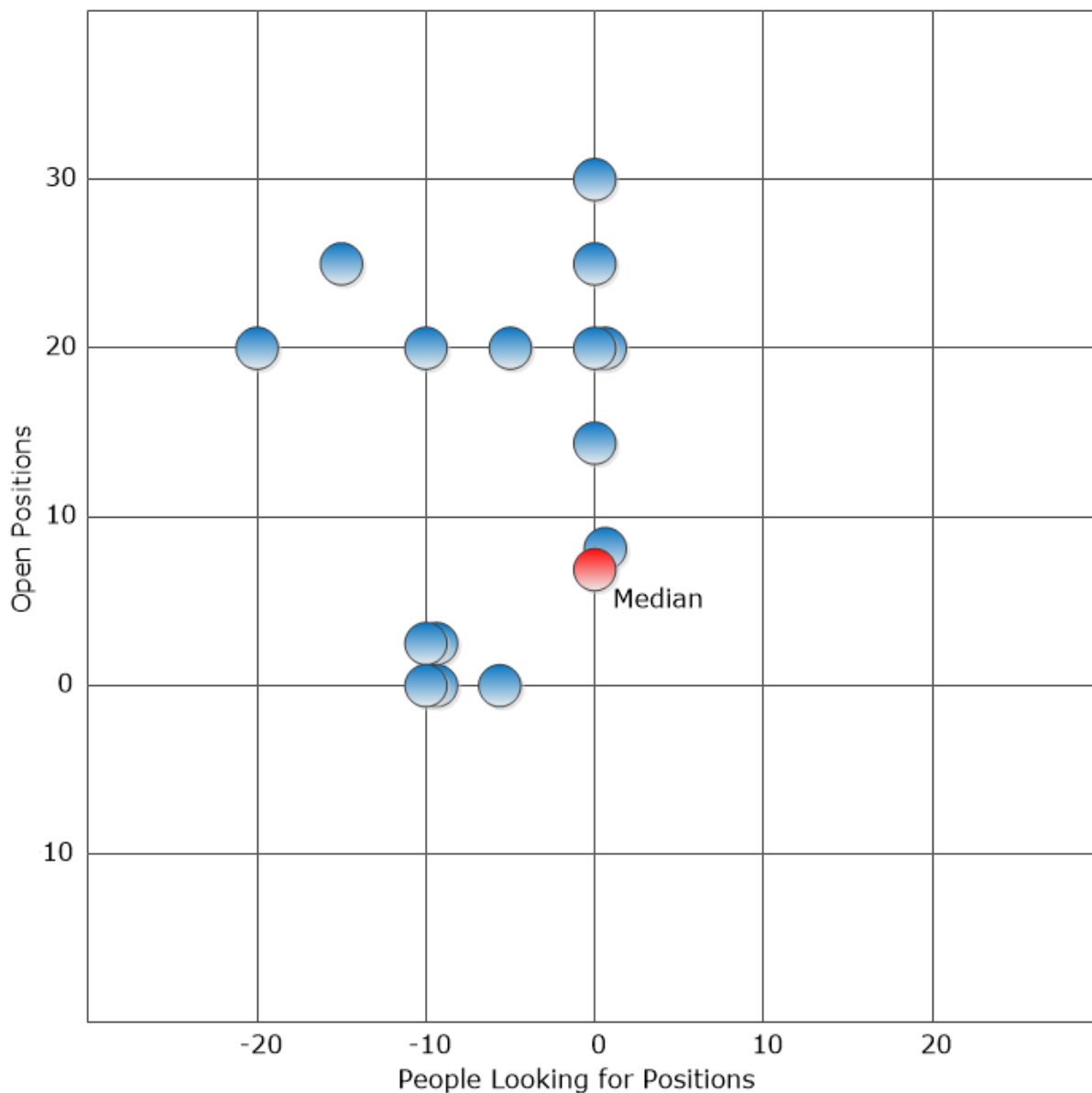
Since the initial survey for the 2005/2006 period, employment has shown healthy growth (except in 2007/2008), while supply has struggled to keep up (except in 2011/2012).

The following staffing firms participated in the survey:

- Advanced Clinical
- Aerotech
- Barrington James
- Brunel Life Sciences
- DOCS
- Execupharm
- Kelly
- Life Science Staffing
- Medical Staffing Network
- Mindlance Clinical
- Novella Clinical Resourcing
- Randstad Pharma
- The Clinical Resource Network
- Trio Clinical Resourcing
- Valesta Clinical Research Solutions

Website addresses for these firms are available at <http://www.firstclinical.com/directories/staffing.html>.

**Figure 1. Supply and Demand for Clinical Research Personnel (2012/2013)**



**Author**

Norman M. Goldfarb is Managing Director of First Clinical Research LLC, a provider of clinical research best practices information services. Contact him at 1.650.465.0119 or [ngoldfarb@firstclinical.com](mailto:ngoldfarb@firstclinical.com).