



# Allowable Strategies for Successful Research Recruitment, Screening & Retention at UVM and UVMMC

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How can  
researchers  
approach  
potential  
participants?

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A photograph of a doctor in a white lab coat with a teal stethoscope around their neck. The doctor is holding a clipboard and a pen, writing on it. A patient is partially visible on the right side of the frame. The background shows a window with a view of a city.

## Most common recruitment method

Study investigators who are health care providers (clinicians) providing direct care can recruit their own patients



Study investigators with *no treatment relationship* may send a “Dear Doctor” letter asking for referrals of eligible patients who are interested in research participation



COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION AND MOVEMENT SCIENCE

**Effects of Attentional Focus and Switching on Gait Stability  
in Adults with Multiple Sclerosis**

Dear Dr. Solomon,

As a faculty member in the Department of Rehabilitation and Movement Science at the University of Vermont, my research efforts focused on examining balance and mobility and how these underscore functional outcomes and health in people with MS. I would like to share a research study we are currently undertaking to examine the effects of attentional focus on mobility in adults with MS and ask for your assistance in recruiting potential participants.

The purpose of the study is to examine the effect of attentional focus on cognitive-motor interference or dual tasking while walking in adults with MS. Subjects will be assessed on specific indices of postural control during gait while walking back and forth between two taped lines 25 feet apart at a self-selected pace and then at a fast pace. Gait will be assessed under the following conditions: (1) walking with no attentional instruction, (2) walking while focusing internally on walking, (3) walking while talking, and (4) walking while switching attention between focusing on walking and focusing on talking.

To qualify, participants must meet the following inclusion criteria: (1) doctor diagnosed MS, (2) ability to ambulate with or without the use of unilateral support (i.e., score of 0-4 on the Patient Determined Disease Steps (PDDS) scale), (3) not have experienced a severe exacerbation of symptoms requiring medical intervention in the previous one month, (4) not have any health condition or neurodegenerative diseases besides MS for which physical activity is contraindicated, and (5) be able to understand and sign a consent form.

I would appreciate you sharing the accompanying information handout about this research with your patients and asking them to contact me if they wish to know more or would like to participate.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Susan Kasser, PhD  
Rehabilitation and Movement Science  
802-656-7742  
Susan.Kasser@med.uvm.edu

# Example of a recruitment handout to correspond with the “Dear Doctor” Letter

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Treating physicians can opt to  
distribute this info to their patients.

Treating physicians are not  
participating in the research but just  
the conduit between researcher and  
potential participant.



The  
UNIVERSITY  
of VERMONT

COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES  
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## Attentional Focus and Walking in MS

### Research Participants Needed

The goal of this project is to examine balance during gait while focusing attention internally, externally, or back and forth between the two in adults with MS.

- In this study, you will complete a variety of questionnaires on your fatigue, balance confidence, cognitive functioning, walking ability, and physical activity.
- We will also observe you walking and turning. You will be asked to walk while doing the following: (1) walking with no instruction, (2) walking while focusing on your walking, (3) walking while talking, and (4) walking while switching your attention back and forth.

To qualify for the study:

- You must have doctor-diagnosed MS
- Be able to walk with or without the use of unilateral support (e.g., a cane)
- Volunteer for one 60-75 minute testing session
- Complete a brief 10 minute screening to assure you are eligible to participate

**If interested, call Dr. Susan Kasser at (802)656-7742 or  
email [Susan.Kasser@med.uvm.edu](mailto:Susan.Kasser@med.uvm.edu) for more information**

305 Rowell Building, 106 Carrigan Drive, Burlington, VT 05405-0068, Telephone (802) 656-3252, Fax (802) 656-6586

# Screening Script



Hi *[Insert Patient Name]*,

My name is *[Coordinator Name]* and I work in clinical research for the Vermont Lung Center. I am reaching out because you indicated to your Clinic provider, *[Insert Provider Name]*, that you may be interested in hearing about a research study. I have attached the study consent form for your review. I would be happy to speak with you in more detail about what the study entails and if you have any questions or concerns. Please let me know if you are interested in hearing more from me. My contact information is as follows:

E-mail: *[fill in coordinator e-mail]*

Phone: *[fill in office line]*

Fax: *[fill in fax number]*

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

*[Coordinator Name]*

Study investigators  
recruiting potential  
participants who are  
unknown to them for  
behavioral or  
non-clinical research  
(no PHI)

Examples:

- include snowball sampling (existing study participants recruit future participants from among their acquaintances),
- use of social networks,
- direct approach to unknown people in public situations,
- and random dialing
- UVM Psychology Participant Pool

# Advertisements

- Ads should include information such as:
  - Name and address of the research facility;
  - The condition or disease that will be the focus of the research;
  - A clear statement that the study is research; (**required**)
  - Summary of criteria for eligibility to participate;
  - Time and commitments that will be required of the participant;
  - Location of the study and the contact for information.

## VOLUNTARY APP-BASED HEALTH PROMOTION RESEARCH STUDY



### ELIGIBILITY

The study is open to all full-time, first-time first year UVM students between the ages of 18-25 who own an iPhone 5 or newer or Android device

### EXPECTATIONS

Participate through completing online and daily surveys through the WE App and wear the provided Apple Watch

### PURPOSE

Help study the use of technology to incentivize wellness behaviors and reduce risk in college students



FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ON THE STUDY  
AND HOW TO ENROLL  
VISIT  
GO.UVM.EDU/WERESEARCH  
OR EMAIL  
WE.RESEARCH@UVM.EDU



### University of Vermont needs smokers!

Want to quit smoking cigarettes? **We can help!**

Must be between the ages of 18-29 and use both cigarettes and e-cigarettes to participate.

Eligible participants will be provided with **FREE** quit smoking **treatments** for 3 months and answer weekly online surveys.

Compensation up to **\$500.00** provided for completing study activities.

**Visit our website to learn more and find out if you are eligible:** [uvmsmoking.edu](http://uvmsmoking.edu)

## Recruitment advertisements should NOT:

Contain	Contain explicit or implicit claims of safety and efficacy or equivalency or superiority to other approved treatments
Emphasize	Emphasize the amount of reimbursement that subjects will receive. The ads may state that reimbursement may be provided
Promise	Promise a favorable outcome or benefit
Promise	Promise "free treatment" when the intent is only to say participants will not be charged for taking part in the research
Use	Use terms such as "new treatment," "new medication" or "new drug" without explaining that the test article is investigational

# Using Social Media to Recruit Research Participants

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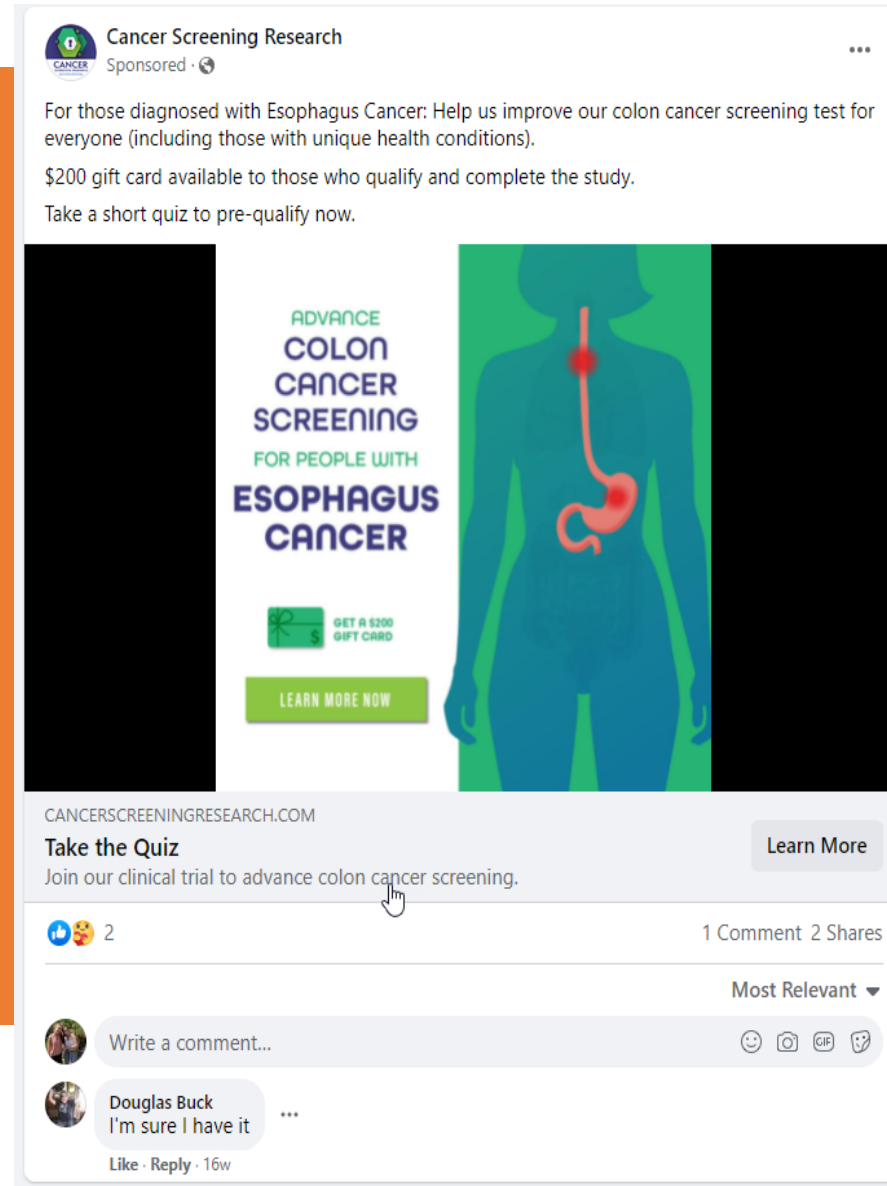


## Terms of Use

- Researchers should be aware of any research or recruitment-related restrictions on the social media sites through which they intend to conduct their recruitment activities. This includes a site's advertising, privacy and prohibited content policies.

# Direct Social Media vs. Interactive Social Media

- Direct social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok etc.) paid ads that do not involve direct communication with potential subjects
- Can be submitted and reviewed according to existing IRB policy under the Advertisements.
- Interested participants must contact the researchers with the contact info listed



- Interactive social media where the study team develops an account specific to the recruitment and retention of study participants
- Direct messaging through the platform
- May be best suited for retention of study participants enrolled in long term protocols.



# Recruiting via Social Media

## Public and Private Groups Considerations

- Any site restrictions on the forum?
  - Check the terms of use
- Is there a group moderator?
  - researchers may need to gain permission or have an introduction prior to recruitment
- How will researchers contact potential participants?
  - Private direct message or public conversation
  - Perhaps a separate study email could be set up to direct potential participants once screening start

# Use of Amazon Mechanical Turk as recruitment venue

- Explicitly mention the study (survey) is “research” and not a “job.” This can be in the title of the request
- Address whether the compensation is contingent upon certain conditions.
- Ensure the complexity of the task and the amount of time expected for completion is reasonable and communicated clearly in the consent process.



# Undue Influence and Protections in Participant Recruitment



Payment should not be contingent upon completion of the entire study, partial or prorated payment be offered

Special attention is needed when recruiting students and employees or colleagues

# How can a researcher recruit students and employees and ensure valid consent is given without undue influence?

Posting IRB approved advertisements/posters throughout the university to recruit participants from a broad base;

Avoiding any personal solicitations of students by faculty, graduate assistants, or fellow students. In seeking potential participants among employees, the best strategy is to **utilize a third party** unassociated with the work relationship;

Providing several research projects from which to **choose**, if enrolling as a participant is a course requirement.

**Providing alternative** and equal methods for meeting course credit (or extra credit) requirements, such as attending a series of research presentations by faculty, writing a brief paper, conducting one's own research;

Making it clear in the consent form that refusal to participate **will not** affect class standing, grades, status on an athletic team, or job standing.



# Retention materials

Any items such as money, small tokens, gift certificates, etc., which are given to the participant to retain their participation in research is considered a form of compensation and needs prior approval by the IRB.



# Participants Needed

The FDA, OHRP and the UVM IRB considers direct advertising for potential research participants to be the start of the informed consent and subject selection process

