

The Coordinator's Guide to Seamless CRO Collaboration

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In the complex world of retinal research, study coordinators are the steady hands guiding the process from behind the scenes. At InFocus Clinical Research, we know firsthand how essential it is for study coordinators and CROs to work together seamlessly—not just for efficiency and protocol compliance, but to ensure patients are truly cared for throughout the trial journey.

This post is part of our "Hidden Heroes of Retinal Research" series, where we shine a light on the real-life experience and insight of study coordinators across our network. These aren't just best practices. They're field-tested tips from coordinators who live and breathe clinical trials every day.

Here is what study coordinators have to say about building strong site-CRO partnerships.

1. Establish Clear Communication Channels

Clinical trials thrive on clarity. That's why one of the first things our coordinators recommend is keeping communication channels open and proactive. Regular check-ins, clearly defined roles, and space for honest feedback all help sites and CROs move in sync.

When expectations are transparent and communication is respectful, both sides can anticipate needs and reduce friction. This makes the whole process smoother for everyone involved.

2. Invest in Specialized Training

Retina research isn't one-size-fits-all. According to our team, training that's tailored to the complexities of ophthalmology, especially around imaging, visit timing, and visual acuity protocols, can make a world of difference.

> "Understanding the why behind procedures helps build buy-in. Not just from coordinators, but also from the techs and ancillary staff supporting the trial." — Sarah Moss, Bradford Institute for Health Research (UK)

Providing CRO partners with that same level of retina-specific training builds trust and keeps everyone aligned. When the monitor understands the site's day-to-day reality, collaboration becomes second nature.

3. Use Integrated Data Management Systems

Study coordinators rarely have time to spare. Intuitive, well-integrated data systems can support timely updates, minimize duplicate work, and reduce data discrepancies.

> "Prompt (same day) entry of data and imaging. Stay on top of your inbox. Keep a system in place so that queries don't pile up." — Sarah Sneddon, Albury Eye Clinic (Australia)

At the site level, effective tools allow coordinators to spend more time supporting patients and less time managing administrative tasks.

4. Build a Collaborative Culture

We've all experienced those moments where collaboration feels like an afterthought. But when CROs and study sites take the time to listen to each other and solve problems together, it leads to better outcomes.

> "I'm extremely detail-oriented, which I feel is a necessity in a field where protocol deviations and patient safety risks are so high. But collaboration makes it all work." — Abby Sharp, University of Michigan Kellogg Eye Center (US)

> "Have a questioning mind. Utilize initiation visits to get clarity and advocate for what's realistic at your site." — Sarah Moss, Bradford Institute for Health Research (UK)

> "Everyone brings value to the table—from techs to monitors. When CROs approach conversations collaboratively, it sets the tone for the entire trial." — Angela Callaghan, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center (US)

Mutual respect, flexibility, and a shared commitment to the protocol strengthen site-CRO relationships. A collaborative mindset helps both teams address challenges together.

5. Keep the Patient Experience Central

This theme came up over and over—never lose sight of the human being behind the protocol. The best partnerships, and the most successful trials, keep the patient experience front and center.

> "You can be the most knowledgeable and organised, but if you forget the person behind the protocol, it all falls apart." — Danika Corless, Retina Specialists Victoria (Australia)

From clear visit scheduling to minimizing patient burden, putting people first supports a better trial experience.

At InFocus Clinical Research, we recognize study coordinators as essential partners in trial delivery. The insights above reflect practical lessons from coordinators working on the front lines of retinal research.

Whether you are a CRO partner, sponsor, or fellow site, these coordinator-led strategies can help you build stronger partnerships and better trials.

Explore more perspectives in The Hidden Heroes of Retinal Research series.