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Report on Impact of COVID-19 on Clinical Trials Operations Published in NCI Journal

Leveraging its network of leading North American cancer centers, the Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) circulated surveys to over 100 cancer center members to assess how clinical trial office operations were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A report summarizing the results of the longitudinal series of surveys was published on July 19 in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute (JNCI) Cancer Spectrum*.

The lead authors of "[Quantifying the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Cancer Center Clinical Trial Operations](#)" are **Thomas J. George, MD, FACP**, University of Florida Health Cancer Center; **Tara L. Lin, MD**, The University of Kansas Cancer Center; and **Theresa L. Werner, MD**, Huntsman Cancer Institute, University of Utah. Dr. George is chair-elect of the AACI Clinical Research Innovation (CRI) Steering Committee. Dr. Lin is the steering committee's current chair, and Dr. Werner is the committee's immediate past chair. Steering committee members and AACI staff also contributed to the report.

Data shared in the report show that AACI cancer centers were able to keep oncology trials available to patients while maintaining safety. Survey results demonstrated a sizeable decrease in interventional treatment trial accruals in both 2020 and 2021 compared to pre-pandemic figures.

Though the pandemic significantly impacted the national clinical research infrastructure, cancer centers were resilient, as evidenced by improvements in efficiencies and patient-centered care delivery. The pandemic necessitated rapid adaptation of trial operations to new best practices, including remote monitoring, remote consenting, electronic research charts, and work-from-home strategies for staff.

"While the data clearly show our centers' dedication to providing clinical trial options for patients with cancer, there have been substantial disruptions to the national capacity to conduct cancer clinical trials, which will likely continue to be felt for the foreseeable future," said Dr. George.

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AACI's mission is to accelerate progress against cancer by enhancing the impact of academic cancer centers and promoting cancer health equity. For more information, please visit aaci-cancer.org.