Introduction

In 2008, Boston Scientific implemented a 'Tiger Team' approach for driving the timely publication of high priority clinical trial results. Each 'Tiger Team' was a multidisciplinary team composed of members from Medical Sciences, Scientific Communications, Biostatistics and Clinical Operations. Each team was focused on the logistics of a single publication or a group of related publications.

Objective

To evaluate the effectiveness of the 'Tiger Team' approach and identify areas of improvement.

Methods

A questionnaire was distributed and discussion engaged with Boston Scientific employees previously involved in the publication of clinical data. Publication metrics from 2008 were evaluated.

Results

Implementation of the 'Tiger Team' approach has increased the efficiency of the publication process by prioritizing key publications and strengthening cross-functional collaboration among the team members.

Advantages and Disadvantages to the 'Tiger Team' Approach

Advantages

- Increased cross-functional communication between team members
- Increased visibility to project timelines
- Identification of roadblocks and solutions
- Enhanced engagement of Medical Directors and upper management
- Cross-functional resource alignment
- Increased visibility of priority publications

Disadvantages

- Increased meetings for select individuals (those on multiple Tiger Teams)
- Scheduling conflicts of individuals can delay overall team progress
- Meetings can be unproductive if certain key members are not in attendance

Current Refinements

- Adding project managers to Tiger Teams
- Combining individual publications for a common study into one Tiger Team

Potential Role for External Authors on the 'Tiger Team'

- Provides better alignment with ICMJE guidelines/BSC authorship policy by encouraging external authors to participate earlier and more often in the manuscript development.
- External author participation especially beneficial at 'Tiger Team' kick-off meeting to help identify data analyses, key communications, and timelines.
- This is only likely to work with highly-engaged authors

Conclusion

Implementation of the 'Tiger Team' approach has increased the efficiency of the publication process by prioritizing key publications and strengthening cross-functional collaboration among the team members.