

7 lesser known advantages of eCOA over COA

Clinical Outcomes Assessment (COA) data in clinical and epidemiological studies can be collected using traditional paper questionnaires or increasingly using electronic COA (eCOA) tools, including smartphones or tablets and associated applications or a dedicated internet resource. Both allow the collection of data from patients, physicians, third-party observers (often parents), or caregivers with the same exactitude.

As well as the commonalities between COA and eCOA systems, there are several advantages of eCOA:



1

The user has a unique ID code so it is clear who has completed the questionnaire. The use of passwords further improves patient confidentiality, and patients prefer eCOA to the paper equivalent.

2

The use of electronic time stamps removes any doubt over adherence to a planned schedule and encourages the user to complete on time.



3

Logic-checks and real-time edit checks reduce the amount of missing, incomplete, and inconsistent data. Additionally, there is a reduced number of questions since those not applicable based on earlier responses are automatically skipped. This reduces human error and means that fewer consultations are needed to ensure accurate completion.

4

The improved accuracy of data collection means that the variability of study endpoint parameters is reduced, leading to better statistical power and the need for fewer patients to reach the same statistical endpoint and resulting in overall cost savings.



5

An electronic system allows automatic calculation of diagnostic and other patient scores, and provides reassurance to both the patient and the physician that any worsening of a score is flagged up immediately. In this way, eCOA systems can be integrated into routine clinical practice in addition to being used in clinical and epidemiological studies.

6

Issues over legibility of handwriting or contradictory responses are eliminated.



7

The use of automated servers and electronic back-up systems means that data are not mislaid or lost. This also allows an automatic audit trail within the electronic system.

...and there are some factors to be aware of when using eCOA that are important to take into account for its successful implementation.

Overall, the advantages of eCOA over paper COA are numerous. The increasingly widespread use of eCOA solutions is testament to their success and they will continue to become more and more commonplace, replacing a wide range of paper clinical trials documentation in the coming years.



Learn more in our white paper



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