

Short title 80 char ***IRB Meetings during the Covid Pandemic and Post-Covid: 2022 Survey Results***

IRB Meetings during the Covid Pandemic and Post-Covid Options: Results from the 2022 Survey of BMC/BUMC IRB Panel Members

Background: Due to the Covid pandemic, since March 2020 all IRB meetings have been conducted via Zoom instead of in-person. Although this format has been successful, a study was needed to assess options to conduct safe, inclusive, engaging future IRB meetings.

Objective: To assess optimal policies and procedures for conducting IRB panel meetings post-Covid.

Methods: In January 2022, a 21-item REDCap survey was emailed to all IRB Chairs and members to obtain their anonymous input on the format/procedures of future IRB meetings. Descriptive statistical analyses were conducted on the returned surveys (32/42, 76% response rate). Stratified analyses by the four IRB panels, IRB member affiliation, and voting status were done using NCSS-9. Results were presented and discussed with each IRB panel to further inform the format/procedures for future meetings.

Results: 84% reported remote IRB meetings had been conducted 'Very effectively', 13% 'Somewhat effectively', and 3% 'Somewhat ineffectively'. Comparing remote meetings to in-person meetings, 62.5% said they were conducted 'Very effectively', 25% 'Somewhat effectively', 6% 'Neutral', and 3% 'Somewhat ineffectively'. 34% felt 'Very/Somewhat' comfortable about returning to in-person meetings, 16% were 'Neutral' and 50% were 'Very/Somewhat' uncomfortable. Asked if they would attend in-person meetings in 2022, 13% said 'Always', 28% 'Most of the time', 25% 'Sometimes', 19% 'Never' and 16% were 'Unsure'. Preferences for future format options were: 69% fully remote, 59% hybrid, 25% alternating, 16% fully in-person. Asked if their responses could change in the future- 79% responded 'Yes', 19% 'Maybe', and 6% 'No'. What made IRB meetings more or less effective, factors informing whether to attend in-person meetings, and the positives and negatives about remote/in-person meetings will also be presented.

Conclusions: Remote IRB meetings are effective and should continue as a future option. Regular IRB surveys are important to cultivate inclusive procedures that reflect the perspectives of IRB members.