Background

The National Dental Practice-Based Research Network (PBRN; www.NationalDentalPBRN.org) is an NIH-supported organization of practitioners who work together with researchers to answer meaningful questions that will improve clinical decision-making.

The Network is designed to:
- Actively engage practitioners in research and quality improvement
- Contribute to the development of knowledge that improves oral health
- Provide practitioners with opportunities for collegiality with other dentists and researchers
- Answer real-world questions relevant to community clinicians
- Reduce the translation gap from 17 years to less than 1 year by producing quick feedback

Purpose

- To examine comparative effectiveness of strategies used to recruit dentists for the first three clinical studies done in the National PBRN:
  - Cracked Tooth Registry (CTR),
  - Management of Dentin Hypersensitivity (MDH)
  - Decision Aids for Suspicious Occlusal Lesions (SOCL)
- Efficient recruitment of practitioners is critical to implementing National Dental PBRN studies.

Methods

- The Southwest Region of the National Dental PBRN, as one of six regional centers within the network, conducted a retrospective analysis of the recruitment methods used for three studies.
  - CTR utilized an approach involving multiple correspondence attempts. MDH and SOCL recruitment was initiated through an interest survey (Figure 1) that had details on 8 upcoming studies.
  - Steps and duration to complete recruitment were measured to estimate the value of each strategy as reflected by time spent and overall effort.
  - Overall duration of recruitment was 2 months for MDH and SOCL and 6 months for CTR (Figure 2).
  - This analysis supports the use of interest surveys to expedite PBRN study recruitment, particularly across multiple studies, due to having fewer administrative steps and a shorter duration of time needed to achieve recruitment goals.

Results

- All study recruitment goals were met. The interest survey had an overall response rate of 41% (n=679) and identified 88% (n=43) of practitioners needed for both MDH and SOCL (Figure 2).
- In comparison, 72% (n=26) of practitioners for CTR were recruited through multiple methods of correspondence. Remaining practitioners were identified through personal contacts with champion members (Figure 2).
- Recruitment for MDH and SOCL involved two procedural steps (interest survey and follow-up email post-indication of interest), while CTR involved up to four procedural steps (email, fax, postal mail and phone call) (Figure 2).

Conclusions

- This analysis supports the use of interest surveys to expedite PBRN study recruitment, particularly across multiple studies, due to having fewer administrative steps and a shorter duration of time needed to achieve recruitment goals.