A. Taylor, PhD, MPH, is Assistant Professor, Department of Health Policy and Management, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and Core Faculty, Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics, Baltimore, MD; Sumaija Jain, MEd, is Research Assistant and Counselor, Expect Respect Program, SafePlace, Austin, TX; Anjali Pandit, MPH MS, is a clinical psychology doctoral student, Health Literacy and Learning Program, Division of General Internal Medicine, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University, Chicago, IL; and Michael S. Wolf, PhD, MPH, is Associate Professor of Medicine and Learning Sciences, Health Literacy and Learning Program, Division of General Internal Medicine, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University, Chicago, IL.

References


Letters

Clarification, Continued

We appreciate the letter submitted by Zarin and Tse (“Clarification about ClinicalTrials.gov,” May-June 2013) in response to our article, “The Presidential Bioethics Commission’s Database of Human Subjects Research” (March-April 2013), and agree that reporting project-level data to ClinicalTrials.gov is one way in which federal departments and agencies could implement the commission’s recommendation for improved accountability through public access to data about federally supported human subjects research. Indeed, as the commission noted in its report, *Moral Science: Protecting Participants in Human Subjects Research*, “[f]or agencies without existing systems today, data could be submitted to ClinicalTrials.gov or another existing online registry, provided the core data elements are available (p. 52).” ClinicalTrials.gov collects more data than legally required. It is an expansive database that could serve a central role in implementing the commission’s recommendation. What remains necessary is the will to mandate reporting of a core set of data elements—title, investigator, location, and funding source and amount—for all federally supported human subjects research, as the commission recommended. Only then, as Zarin and Tse observe, can we continue to build on the “enormous opportunities for assessing and improving ethical and scientific oversight of human research (p. 19).”

Michelle Groman, PhD
Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues

Jeremy Sugarman, PhD
Johns Hopkins University