

...with Lorena Caruana

Clinical Trials Associate/Practitioner at **University Hospital Southampton NHS FT**. EDGE user since 2017.

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How and why did you move into clinical research?

I gained some invaluable experience in the research sector in my previous role as a Healthcare Assistant within Children's Outpatients. This provided me with an insight into what goes on. From this point, I took an interest in research as it is a way of helping current and future patients on a wider scale. I also took part in a research study as a participant, and I found that this was very interesting and rewarding.

What does your role as CTA/Practitioner entail on a daily basis?

My role is to support the safe delivery of research studies across the paediatric team, which cover a wide range of specialities. This involves working with multi-disciplinary teams across the hospital setting, as well as out in the community. As you can imagine, this is a varied role, and can change from day to day. My role often involves tasks such as study administration and clinical work such as venesection, to also helping with patient screening and recruitment.

What do you love most about working with patients?

Meeting the patients and their families, and building a professional and friendly relationship where we can give them the best experience and support through their research journey. And also being able to support them through difficult situations, for example, a venesection procedure which they may find distressing. I enjoy



working with my colleagues and the patients to overcome these kind of situations to provide better outcomes and experiences for our patients. For me, it is what working in healthcare is all about.

How do you utilise EDGE in your daily role?

I use EDGE daily to manage my studies, record screened patients, and patients who have enrolled onto a research study. It is an easy and user friendly system which reflects the studies' overall recruitment, and displays important figures such as target numbers and other useful information which is important when delivering a research study.

How can EDGE be used to help Clinical Trials Practitioners like yourself?

EDGE offers a wide range of features and has a lot of potential in helping clinical staff. It has a lot of functionality to record important patient information

which is useful for my role. It is also a great way of ensuring safe delivery of clinical trials. I look forward to using more of EDGE's clinical features in the future!

Which personal skills do you feel has been enhanced by the deployment and familiarity of EDGE?

Since using EDGE and embedding it as part of my daily routine, I have become much more organised. The system enables me to keep my recruitment and study data up-to-date.

What are your plans in terms of using and developing EDGE within your department for the next 12 months?

Our R&D dept. are currently offering more EDGE training so that we can use more of the system. This will undoubtedly benefit our roles and improve communication across the trust. This will also help increase our EDGE usage within our department, and help improve our research processes.

How would you increase and enhance opportunities for patients to participate in clinical trials in the future?

The relevant teams often utilise social media, which is a current and contemporary way to spread the word of research. Those who meet the criteria of a particular research study would be approached if appropriate, therefore giving everybody the chance to be involved. Research opportunities are open to everyone!

One great thing that you think clinical research has achieved, and why:

Finding better ways to manage medical conditions to provide current patients better outcomes and quality of life, as well as hope for future patients.

One clinical research superpower that you wish you possessed:

The power to freeze time – so that we can run more research studies and get even more work done!

One useful nugget of life advice that you've received:

Be kind – it costs nothing.

Your favourite holiday destination, and why:

This is tricky! Probably Bali – it offers relaxation and adventure.

And finally, and perhaps most importantly, in which way does EDGE resemble your personality:

I would say it is friendly, and I have been told I am too. This works well in my work environment and with patients.