

Q&A Coffee Sessions

with EDGE super users

EDGE?



Super User!

ISSUE: December 2021



Name: Deepika Sonia

Organisation: Starship Child Health (SCH)

Job title: CTA and Data Manager

Email: DSonia@adhb.govt.nz

How and why did you move into your current role within clinical research?

I worked in NZ Primary Care for almost 8 years with some experience of clinical research. I wanted a new challenge and to explore research in a hospital setting. I was excited to be offered the role of Clinical Trials Administrator and Data Manager working as part of the Starship Research & Innovation Office. Starship is a directorate of Auckland District Health Board (ADHB),

comprising both Auckland City Hospital and Starship Child Health representing the largest public hospital and clinical research facility in the country. I have been in the role for 18 months and am truly enjoying it.

What does your role as CTA and Data Manager at Starship Child Health (SCH) entail on a daily basis?

Apart from research administration support to include both operational and finance responsibilities, I am directly responsible for both our EDGE and our EDC databases. In fact, this week we launched the EDC software across ADHB after running a successful 12 month pilot ahead of local hosting. We are currently in the roll-out phase of EDGE as our chosen CTMS, so I am working with research teams across our multiple specialties to further support their management of research projects.

How does the patient and research landscape look in NZ currently – particularly in Auckland, NZ?

The health system in NZ is undergoing a significant change from July 2022. The new health

system (Health NZ, and the Māori Health Authority) will be a single health service and a shift from our current structure of 20 District Health Boards. As part of this transition, there will be recommended changes to NZ's clinical research infrastructure and as this is currently in a consultation phase. It is an exciting 'watch this space scenario' for now.

How has your role changed over the past 12 months?

Auckland has been in a state of lockdown for nearly 4 months now, while the rest of NZ has experienced more freedom. From a work perspective, this has meant that we moved to a work from home model away from clinical areas directly dealing with Covid-19 patients. I have a young son and he has been unable to attend pre-school, so like many parents I have had to juggle this work/home balance as best I can. We work reasonably flexibly and have regular team meetings every Monday with our manager, Debra Matich, and in between we are often on Zoom or phone calls, which certainly does not replace face-to-face meetings but means that we are still able to meet our commitments.

/Continued...

You've been using EDGE for over 2 years now. How do you utilise EDGE in your daily role?

As a research office, we provide study team access to EDGE, so centralised information is immediately available to all team members reducing duplication of documents and email requests. As many teams do not have trial administrators, it is part of my job to support the investigator and research nurse with education and training, and uploading various documents and case report forms. As we are still on-boarding new specialties, I am currently working with a new team to load a large multi-site study when they will not only use the document repository, but also track patient recruitment and visits. We are still developing our workflows within EDGE to provide a comprehensive reference library.

When we spoke with Ruth Lucas at Auckland District Health Board 2 years ago, we learnt that Cancer and Blood as a directorate were still in the early stages of trialling EDGE on a few small projects. How has the use of EDGE grown since this time?

We now have a comprehensive view of Starship research projects, investigators and significant milestones. This has provided us with a current view of our research activity across Starship and identified those specialties that would benefit from direct infrastructure support.

What small wins and successes have you discovered during the past year during EDGE rollout?

As above, from a research management perspective we have a current view of Starship research activity. Often teams are time-poor, so once we work with them to demonstrate the benefits of a purpose-built research database, and coupled with super user support from our office, there is greater enthusiasm for EDGE.

As a CTA and Data Manager at your site, what is your favourite

functionality to use in EDGE, and why?

Workflows are my personal favourite. This functionality helps to track project and site level progress, and we can produce reports easily by clicking a button. I recommend these documents as a helpful resource for on-boarding new team members as the processes are clearly described in a well-structured manner.

What are your/site's plans for using and developing EDGE over the next 12 months?

We're now looking at the Finance module of EDGE. Our aim is to use this functionality to track project expenses. We are constantly working towards moving more specialty research teams to EDGE.

One hope for the future of EDGE within Clinical Trials and Data Management

We are very interested to see what other long-term users have recommended as beneficial within EDGE 3. And we would also like to see a strategic decision taken to use EDGE across multiple other directorates at ADHB as part of an enterprise-wide solution.

Describe one challenge that you think clinical research faces in Auckland, NZ

It is likely that there will be significant improvements to the way in which healthcare data is managed both nationally and regionally, and access arrangements to that data.

One clinical research superpower that you wish you possessed:

Knowing all of the regulatory guidelines by heart so that I can easily respond to queries or tricky situations without having to visit the website.

The best thing about living in Auckland, NZ, and why?

East or West, New Zealand is the best,
It's full of beauty, adventure and even allows you to rest,
East or West, New Zealand is the best,
We're proud of multi-culture, inclusion, and COVID management at its best,
East or West, New Zealand is the best,
We love our beaches, forests, wildlife and every mountain's crest,
East or West, New Zealand is the best.

PS: I'm not a poet ☺

One new personal skill that you've learned over the past year/during the pandemic:

I'm much more patient, organised, and better at multi-tasking. Thanks to full-time working from home, task deadlines and the cherry on my cake - a very active toddler!
Somehow, I managed to pull-it off and maintain my sanity at the same time. I now believe that (sometimes) pressure brings out the best in you. ;)

By Ken Brackstone, Clinical Informatics Research Unit