WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE A CLINICAL TRIAL STATISTICIAN?

Kamran Khan - Pragmatic CTU



My name is Kamran Khan and currently, I am working as a clinical trials statistician splitting my time between the Queen Mary University of London pragmatic clinical trials unit (PCTU) and the critical care and peri-operative research group (CCPMG) at the Royal London Hospital.

What's your background? I have a master's degree in health informatics, and I am a recent PhD graduate in health informatics & biostatistics from University College London. I started working as a clinical trials statistician during the last two years of my PhD at the cardiovascular clinical trial unit (CVCTU) at the William Harvey Heart Centre, Queen Mary University of London.

What do you do in a typical week? My responsibilities include:

- Reading trial protocols and writing statistical analysis plans (SAPs) for various trials
- Data cleaning and wrangling
- Analysing study data according to SAPs using appropriate statistical methods
- Generating clinical reports for meetings such as data monitoring and safety committees using statistical programming languages like R
- Contributing to manuscripts for scientific publications
- Other aspects of clinical trials such as sample size calculation.

What do you like best about your job? I love working as a statistician because I play a crucial role in contributing to medical advances by working on different trials which evaluate new treatments/devices to detect or treat different diseases and the analysis results can impact clinical practices.

I am still gaining experience as a clinical trials statistician and learning about different trials designs and novel statistical modelling techniques.

Any advice to share? I would advise anyone who wants to become a clinical trials statistician to first gain the relevant degree such as a master's degree in biostatics and learn about how clinical trials are conducted and study designs, sample size calculation and data analysis and visualisation techniques using Stata, R or Python and then look for internships or entry level positions to gain some practical experience.