**Clinical Development Scientist**

What does your job entail on a day-to-day basis?

**The group in which I work is involved in all the late phase and registration/pivotal trials that will enable marketing authorization of a particular drug. My role varies on a day to day basis, since the stage at which the clinical study is at will determine the tasks you are involved in.**

**The clinical trials within my department are all late phase and could have been running for a good few years; therefore you are not always involved in all aspects of the role at any given time. During the setup of a clinical trial, I would be involved in writing and reviewing the clinical protocol, writing the informed consent form (the form that patients sign to give their consent to participating in a clinical trial), reviewing data management and safety documents as well as addressing questions from health authorities and ethics committees.**

**When a clinical trial is ongoing the data generated is reviewed in an ongoing manner so that any potential safety signals are detected early. At the end of a trial there is a lot of work involved in relation to all the data that has been generated before the statistical analyses is carried out. The final stage of a study would be to write the clinical study report (this is the document that details methods and safety and efficacy results and is submitted to the regulatory authorities).**

What qualifications are required?

**A medical degree, a degree or a higher degree in science (includes pharmacy, dentistry etc). For some types of roles it can be an advantage to have a specific background e.g. pharmacology for Clinical Pharmacology and early development.**

What other transferable skills do you need?

**Good organizational skills and the ability to work with other people! Clinical development is very much teamwork-orientated so being able to work with other people and good communication skills is a must. I find cultural awareness is also very useful, as most pharmaceutical companies work in a global environment.**

Are there opportunities to widen your knowledge of other areas in your field?

**At my company we are encouraged to look at secondments into other departments and at other locations. So long as there is a way of covering my current work and a business case, I have the option to work abroad for up to 12 weeks or in another department at this site for 6 months to a year. We can also be considered for external MSc degrees that are related to Clinical Development (provided there is a good rationale). On a more immediate note, we are encouraged to attend at least one relevant conference a year.**

**I personally think that the best way to widen your knowledge of other areas is by speaking to people ☺**

Is training continual? Career Progression?

**There is ongoing training as part of the so-called ‘containing professional development’, but most is on the job and it is not structured. If there is a specific training requirement it can be stipulated on our personal development plans.**

What do you enjoy the most in your job?

**I enjoy the teamwork that is involved in drug development; it is great to work with a variety of different people from different backgrounds and with different experiences. From a scientific perspective, I enjoy learning about new disease areas and how a drug works (mechanisms, pathways). Writing clinical study protocols allows me to use this knowledge and I do enjoy writing informed consent forms because it makes me think of the scientific information in lay terms.**

What challenges do you have to overcome?

**As I do not have a medical degree or a PhD, it can be difficult to progress within this department, and I have had to work hard to show that I have the experience and skills required. However this is not the same in other departments.**

Any advice for those interested in a position such as yours?

To be open-minded about different roles and opportunities, as you never know where they will lead. In addition, it is always a good idea to gain as much experience as possible in the pharmaceutical industry and it will then make it easier to network.

What sources did you use to find out about the job vacancy?

**Internal networking and recruitment agencies are a good starting point.**

Is there anything that you miss about being in the lab (if you were previously a lab-based scientist)?

**Working in a lab (especially an academic lab) can be less structured and more exploratory which I miss, as my current role is restricted within the bounds of good clinical practice. I also think the lab environment is very much more social just by the nature of the job e.g. since you cannot eat and drink at the lab bench and there can be experiments with long waiting periods in between, it is perfect for taking lots of breaks with your colleagues!**