

Ten Ways to Recognize a Clinical Research Professional

By Norman M. Goldfarb

Although most clinical research professionals have strikingly good looks, appearance is not a reliable method of recognition. Neither is asking someone if he or she is a member of the profession — we all know the stories about people masquerading as study coordinators, clinical research associates, and even auditors. Giving someone a GCP quiz is sure to be awkward if the person is just a poseur. The best way to recognize a true clinical research professional is thus behavioral — watch closely and it won't take long before the genuine article reveals him or herself.

You know you are in the presence of experienced clinical research professionals if:

- They date their signature on credit card charge slips.
- They ask the waiter to double-box their leftovers.
- They tell you a driving test is a process, not an exam.
- The return address on their holiday card envelopes includes their credentials.
- They look furtive when coloring in a blue sky.
- They keep a summary of the IRS regulations for out-of-pocket expenses in their wallet or purse.
- They duck if someone says "plaudits" loudly.
- They ask you to enroll in their party.
- They don't watch the Belmont Stakes because reducing ethical principles to a horse race is appalling.
- They use a black marker to correct the time on the wall clock and initial the change.

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