

## What Am I Missing Here?

### Thought-Provoking Questions for the Clinical Research Industry

By Norman M. Goldfarb

#### 143. Catch as catch can

It is obviously unethical to enroll a subject in a study in which all arms are inferior to the standard of care otherwise available to the subject. Similarly, if an investigator is conducting two competitive studies, it is probably unethical to enroll a subject in the one that offers the subject the inferior outcome. But, is it ethical for an investigator to enroll a subject in a study that is inferior to a study running down the street? What if the investigator could be conducting the superior study if he or she had a stronger business development function? What if the investigator's feasibility evaluation process can't discriminate between superior and inferior studies? What if the investigator's past poor performance means he or she doesn't see the superior study? All of these questions have the same answer: Each investigator, each site, each sponsor, and the clinical research enterprise as a whole has a responsibility to ensure that study subjects enroll only in good studies conducted by good investigators. What am I missing here?

**Do you know a better way? Is something getting under your skin? Please send your ideas for future columns to [ngoldfarb@firstclinical.com](mailto:ngoldfarb@firstclinical.com).**

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