Comparing Payments Between Sociobehavioral and Biomedical Studies in a Large Research University in Southern California

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Table 1: Factors associated with payments to research participants

Table 2: Logistic regression for dichotomous payment status

Table 3: Log-linear regression for the continuous payment amount

Figure 1. Payment category by study type

Key Findings and Considerations

- Our findings suggest payment decisions are made by considering several variables including study visits, study type, participation type, risk level, and research method.
- Budgetary constraints and investigators’ perceptions of relatively low risk may have contributed to low payment amounts in sociobehavioral studies.
- Low levels of payment/risk suggest payments were neither undue nor coercive.
- Quantitative studies tended to provide higher payment compared to qualitative or mixed-methods studies.
- Higher risk studies paid more money than lower risk studies, which raises concerns about the potential for undue influence and payment to overcome risk.
- Some limitations were our relatively small sample size and low risk clinical trials.
- We recommend study investigators specify information on types of payments or non-monetary types of compensation to be given and reasoning behind those payment forms.
- Future research should carefully consider payment and the impact that study risk has on payment decisions.
- Guidance for payment in research should be provided as part of IRB applications.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Institutional Review Board analysts, MW and LC, who assisted with and facilitated access to data.

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