Poster Number: 3

Using Lean Management Principles to Decrease IACUC Protocol Review Time
Lindsay Pascal, MS, MPA; Katie Pasichnyk, BS
Seattle Children’s Research Institute

Problem statement:
In 2013, it took an average of 31 calendar days for IACUC transactions to be reviewed and approved at our institution. Transactions included minor changes, significant changes, new applications, annual renewals, triennial renewals, and congruence reviews. Our aim was to use the principles of lean management to systematically identify and remove waste from our administrative processes in order to decrease IACUC protocol review time without compromising review quality or animal welfare.

Description of research:
Since 2013, we have tracked all IACUC transactions (approximately 300 per year) to measure our baseline application turnaround time (TAT), from receipt to approval. In FY2014, we began tracking TAT by category (e.g., significant changes, new applications) and documenting the best-practice administrative processes used for each. This standard work allowed us to measure how work flows through the IACUC office, where problems occur, and to identify opportunities for improvement. We focused our efforts on identifying and eliminating waste such as waiting and re-work from lengthy transactions, and reduced the average application TAT to 23 calendar days. In 2015, we created an electronic visibility board that displays all transactions in process, and uses a traffic light system to highlight transactions that meet specified aging criteria. Our standard work does not allow for applications to age beyond yellow; therefore, red transactions are not progressing normally according to standard work and require corrective action. Our department huddles daily to determine the cause of yellow and red transactions, create corrective action plans, and update standard work, as required, to ensure that problems do not reoccur. Implementing standard work and increasing visibility has resulted in a 68% reduction in protocol review and approval time over two years, and application TAT currently averages 10.5 days. The principles of lean management are simple and can be applied without technical solutions or financial cost to decrease IACUC protocol review time. At the beginning of our lean transformation we used Microsoft Excel for tracking, Microsoft Word for documenting standard work, and a whiteboard for visibility. Establishing baseline data, creating standard work, eliminating waste, and increasing visibility are the starting point for any lean transformation.