What Am I Missing Here?
Thought-Provoking Questions for the Clinical Research Industry
By Norman M. Goldfarb

261. Remember that document we gave you at the beginning of the study?

Study participants are supposed to “stay consented” for the duration of a study, thus the concept of informed consent being a continuing process. In other words, participants are allowed to change their mind and withdraw consent at any time. It is unrealistic to expect them to remember the contents of a consent form for months or even years, especially since they probably did not understand even much of it in the first place.

We give them a copy of the consent form at the beginning of the study but they are likely are they to review it periodically on their own volition or even with prompting. However, they are much more likely to look at it if a problem arises during the study. Nevertheless, if we are serious about keeping study participants “consented” during the duration of a study, we need to refresh their memory from time to time. We could take time during each visit to discuss the consent information, or build a system to send them periodic “consent refreshers” by email, but eConsent technology can easily be adapted for this purpose, and conveniently provide the refresher material in context. This is another reason to adopt eConsent. 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 editor@magiworld.org.

Author
Norman M. Goldfarb is Editor of the Journal of Clinical Research Best Practices. Contact him at 1.650.465.0119 or ngoldfarb@magiworld.org.