ELECTIVE (SSC5a) REPORT (1200 words)

A report that addresses the above four objectives should be written below. Your Elective supervisor will assess this.

My two-week internship at Galser, a contract research organization managing clinical trials across all phases, was a transformative experience that significantly enhanced my understanding of clinical research and its critical components. This reflection details my journey, the knowledge gained, the challenges faced, and the invaluable insights I acquired into the world of clinical trials.

One of my primary goals was to develop research and analytical skills through the interpretation of data and understanding statistical methodologies. At Galser, I accessed various statistical tools used in the analysis of clinical trial data through virtual workshops and online training sessions focused on research ethics evaluation. Working with these tools under the guidance of experienced statisticians, even from a distance, helped me grasp complex data interpretations and the importance of maintaining integrity and accuracy in research.

Understanding the intricacies of regulatory compliance in clinical trials and quality assurance practices was another critical objective. Through my internship, I engaged with modules on Good Clinical Practice, delivered by the Swiss Association of Pharmaceutical Professionals. Observing how Galser ensures compliance with local and international regulations through comprehensive training sessions and detailed process walkthroughs was enlightening. This experience highlighted the crucial role of regulatory frameworks in safeguarding participant welfare and data validity.

A significant component of my internship involved comprehensive training in research ethics evaluation and the informed consent process. This training equipped me with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and implement the ethical standards crucial in protecting study participants throughout clinical trials. By learning how to ensure that all participants are fully informed and agree to the procedures in a way that respects their autonomy and understanding, I gained a deep appreciation for the moral responsibilities involved in clinical research.

This training not only enriched my practical skill set but also provided me with valuable credentials that enhance my CV and expand my career opportunities. Proficiency in research ethics and informed consent is highly sought after in the field of clinical trials, as it underpins the integrity and credibility of any research project. The knowledge and experience I gained in these areas during my internship at Galser position me well for future roles that require ethical oversight and patient interaction, making me a more attractive candidate for potential employers looking for individuals who can uphold and promote the highest standards of clinical research practice.

Throughout my internship, I had the opportunity to delve into several key operational areas critical to clinical trial management at Galser. Project Management was a focal point, where I observed how projects were outlined, scheduled, and executed, ensuring that each phase met its milestones within designated timelines and budgets. In Risk-Based Monitoring, I learned about the strategies implemented to identify, evaluate, and mitigate risks, which is essential for maintaining the integrity of clinical trial data and participant safety.

Patient Recruitment Management was another area where I gained insight. I saw how Galser developed patient recruitment strategies that are both effective and ethical, ensuring a diverse participant pool critical for robust research outcomes. Regulatory Affairs involved understanding the complex landscape of compliance with global regulatory requirements, an area that underscored the importance of thorough knowledge and meticulous attention to detail.

Data Management practices at Galser were particularly enlightening. I was introduced to systems used for accurate data collection, storage, and analysis, which are pivotal for drawing valid conclusions from the research. Quality Management was continuously emphasized; I participated in sessions that reviewed quality assurance processes and standards that ensure trials are conducted without compromise to accuracy, reliability, and ethical standards.

Lastly, training in Quality Management was robust, involving regular updates to practices and protocols to keep pace with global standards and regulatory changes. These trainings were crucial for fostering a culture of continuous improvement and adherence to quality in every aspect of clinical trial management.

I also gained insights into the development of interventions to address global health challenges, such as COVID-19 and Monkeypox, through strategy meeting webinars and document reviews. Learning about the stages of clinical trials, from conceptualization through to execution, offered a holistic view of the efforts required to combat global health issues. This provided a profound respect for the collaborative efforts needed to develop effective health interventions on a global scale.

Engaging with the clinical trial team at Galser through virtual meetings and collaborative online platforms was an integral part of my internship. The shared experiences and knowledge from the team members enhanced my understanding of the research and monitoring phases, teaching me about the complexities and challenges of clinical trial management.

An additional aspect of my internship that stood out was the reflection of Swiss cultural values within the organizational framework of Galser. Switzerland is renowned for its organization and punctuality, traits that were evident in every aspect of the company's operations. Meetings started precisely on time, project deadlines were strictly adhered to, and every phase of a clinical trial was meticulously planned and executed. This Swiss penchant for timeliness ensured a smooth workflow and efficient management of trials, which was impressive to witness, even from a virtual standpoint.

Moreover, the politeness and professionalism of the Galser employees added significantly to my positive internship experience. This environment not only facilitated my learning but also made me feel valued and respected as part of the team. The respectful communication and collaborative spirit prevalent at Galser exemplified the best of Swiss professional culture, making my internship both educational and genuinely enjoyable.

Beyond the technical and educational aspects, my internship was a period of significant personal growth. The virtual interactions with professionals who are passionate about their work inspired me to pursue a career in clinical research with renewed vigor. I feel extremely grateful to have been given this opportunity to learn from and be around professionals in the field who are doing great things for the future of medicine and providing patients with future treatments. I believe that having done this internship was a crucial aspect to my medical education.

Reflecting on my two-week internship at Galser, I feel a profound sense of accomplishment and enlightenment. The experience has refined my skills and expanded my knowledge while solidifying my passion for clinical research. The exposure to the mechanics of clinical trials and the complexities of global health interventions has been invaluable. I leave this experience more inspired, informed, and determined to contribute to the field of clinical research, equipped with a deeper understanding of its impact on global health and well-being.