Templates for participant selection flow diagrams

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Introduction to flow diagram templates

This document provides a set of flow diagram templates designed to support transparent reporting in target trial emulations. These diagrams help readers clearly understand how the final study sample was selected from an initial cohort.

The templates are structured to accommodate different scenarios encountered in target trial emulation:

1. Flow diagram
* This diagram is helpful when there is a unique time of eligibility and treatment strategies which are distinguishable at baseline.
1. Flow diagram when cloning is used
* This diagram is helpful when there is a unique time of eligibility and treatment strategies are not distinguishable at baseline, handled through cloning, censoring and weighting. Numbers of clones censored due to deviations from the treatment strategies should be listed in the relevant boxes.
1. Flow diagram for sequential trials
* This diagram is helpful when there are multiple times individuals could meet eligibility and treatment strategies which are distinguishable when baseline is defined by the investigator (e.g., by calendar time). The unit of analysis in sequentially emulated trials is each individual in each trial (i.e., a person-trial).

Researchers can adapt these templates to their specific study context. For further guidance and resources, visit <https://target-guideline.org>.

## **Template 1: Example flow diagram**

## Participant flow diagram for the observational emulation.

For more information, visit: <https://target-guideline.org/>

**(n = )** classified into [*treatment strategy B]*

**(n = )** individuals with [*condition of interest*] assessed for eligibility

**(n = )** individuals excluded

**(n = )** reason 1

**(n = )** reason 2

**(n = )** reason 3

**(n = )** reason 4

**(n = )** reason 5

**(n = )** classified into [*treatment strategy A]*

Treatment strategies

**(n = )** censoring due to nonadherence\*

**(n = )** losses to follow-up

**(n = )** competing events

**(n = )** outcomes

**(n = )** censoring due to nonadherence\*

**(n = )** losses to follow-up

**(n = )** competing events

**(n = )** outcomes

Follow-up

**(n = )** eligibleindividuals

Eligibility

\* if estimating a per-protocol effect

## **Template 2: Example flow diagram when cloning is used**

Participant flow diagram for the observational emulation.

**(n = )** clonesclassified to *[treatment strategy B]*

**(n = )** individuals with [condition of interest] assessed for eligibility

**(n = )** individuals excluded

**(n = )** reason 1

**(n = )** reason 2

**(n = )** reason 3

**(n = )** reason 4

**(n = )** reason 5

**(n = )** clonesclassified to *[treatment strategy A]*

**(n = )** remained adherent to *[treatment strategy A]* at *[timepoint of interest]*

**(n = )** remained adherent to *[treatment strategy B]* at *[timepoint of interest]*

Follow-up

**(n = )** eligibleindividuals

***(n = )*** *individuals cloned*

Treatment strategies

**(n = )** clones censored to [*timepoint of interest*]

**(n = )** reason 1

**(n = )** reason 2

**(n = )** reason 3

**(n = )** reason 4

**(n = )** reason 5

**(n = )** clones censored to [*timepoint of interest*]

**(n = )** reason 1

**(n = )** reason 2

**(n = )** reason 3

**(n = )** reason 4

**(n = )** reason 5

Eligibility

**(n = )** losses to follow-up

**(n = )** competing events

**(n = )** outcomes

**(n = )** losses to follow-up

**(n = )** competing events

**(n = )** outcomes

For more information, visit: <https://target-guideline.org/>

##

## **Template 3: Example flow diagram for sequential trial emulation**

Participant flow diagram for the observational emulation.

**(n = )** person-trialsacross all emulated target trials

**(n = )** person-trials classified into [*treatment strategy B]*

**(n = )** unique individuals

**(n = )** individuals with [*condition of interest*] assessed for eligibility

**(n = )** individuals excluded

**(n = )** reason 1

**(n = )** reason 2

**(n = )** reason 3

**(n = )** reason 4

**(n = )** reason 5

**(n = )** person-trials classified into [*treatment strategy A]*

**(n = )** unique individuals

Treatment strategies

**(n = )** censoring due to nonadherence\*

**(n = )** losses to follow-up

**(n = )** competing events

**(n = )** outcomes

**(n = )** censoring due to nonadherence\*

**(n = )** losses to follow-up

**(n = )** competing events

**(n = )** outcomes

Follow-up

**(n = )** uniqueindividuals included in at least one emulated target trial

Eligibility

\* if estimating a per-protocol effect