Transcript of: Longitudinal Project

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REDCap version featured: 5.6.0 (standard branch)

Author: Veida Elliott, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Institute for Clinical and Translational Research

Audio is in normal text below. Timestamps are in bold to assist in finding specific topics.

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The longitudinal module is designed to capture the same variables multiple times over a specific period of time. In structure, it is often similar to the traditional project type. Multiple data entry forms are usually defined, and all data is entered while logged into REDCap. However, with the longitudinal module enabled, forms are displayed in a grid. This illustrates how forms can be completed repeatedly for a single record.

The longitudinal module is best suited to very structured studies which do not last indefinitely. Clinical trials make frequent use of this module. All patients follow the same series of events over a clearly defined period of time.

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Before data collection begins, the time-points, events, or visits are defined. An exact number of days between events can be used. Alternatively, sequential numbers are assigned to order events. This is useful when the exact number of days is not as critical as the order in which events occur.

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Next, the grid is completed by defining which data entry forms are completed at each event. These two steps define the underlying longitudinal event grid.

A single project can have multiple event grids. This approach is optional and is called using multiple arms.

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The arms of a longitudinal project usually correspond to different groups of records. Many times, only one arm is needed. Here, the project captures data for a clinical trial containing two arms. Each arm uses the same data collection instruments. However, a separate series of events is defined for each arm, so different instruments can be designated for completion at the unique events of each arm.

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New records are created through the Add/Edit Records link. This page and the Dashboard are used to open existing records.

Clicking any of the colored buttons will open the data entry form for this record and event.

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The calendar cannot be used to enter data in a basic longitudinal project. Record-specific events are not linked to the event grid. The only way the calendar becomes available for data entry, is by enabling the Scheduling module. That project type is explored in a separate video.

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Like the calendar, other features change significantly when using the longitudinal module. The syntax used in calculations, branching logic, and piping is more complex. Reports, exports, and imports are also slightly different and in some ways more limiting. Once in production mode, the longitudinal grid can still be expanded to include new instruments and events. But modifying or deleting existing events and instruments will almost always result in data loss. It is critical to fully test the longitudinal module while in development mode.