

Claire Bennett

Bionical Emas

Vice President of Data Management



Why the interest in Clinical Data Management (CDM)?

It was the summer of 96 and I had just graduated in Biomedical Science and applied for my first job – described as “something to do with Clinical Research”. I was offered the job within hours of my interview. I was now a Clinical Data Assistant – whatever one of those was! I went on to learn that the role of CDM is to implement the right tools and processes to collect and manage data from clinical trials; checking that data is valid, consistent and complete to support statistical analysis. If the data isn't ‘right’ the correct conclusions cannot be drawn, the trial is at risk of failure and the patients that have participated may have done so in vain. I will never meet these patients, but have a responsibility in their care and potentially their survival. I feel connected to them through the data. Unknowingly I had embarked on a challenging and ultimately fulfilling career that allowed me to put my science degree to good use, indulge my curiosity, push boundaries, develop and implement new technology-led processes and build teams of excellent data managers that share my passion to bring new, innovative treatments to more patients and improve or extend lives.

Where do you feel you have made the most impact in your role?

Historically CDM was considered very much a ‘back room’ activity. We were running paper-based trials and checking that the data was ‘right’ was manual and time-consuming with the risk of critical data being overlooked. There had to be a better way, and there was. Technology was advancing rapidly and with it, CDM. We were pioneers. First using fairly rudimentary tech to reduce manual data review and apply standardisation. Then leading the implementation of electronic Data Capture systems to streamline data collection and the adoption of advanced data analytics tools for focused, faster, more efficient data review. The clinical trial landscape is constantly evolving. I ensure that Bionical Emas data managers stay abreast of advances in technology and changes to the regulatory guidance, allowing them to be front and centre in the clinical team and recommend creative data solutions to our clients, using data and technology to drive key decision-making.

What traits do you value most in your team members?

To be curious, ask questions and challenge how/why things are done. Not everything comes with a manual – use your initiative and common sense to present solutions.

How do you manage a satisfactory work-life balance?

It has taken a long time for me to achieve this and there are no cut-and-paste solutions. I work from home so it can be hard to detach from work but I have trained myself how and when to switch off and, if I forget, my family are quick to remind me.

What advice would you give to those thinking of a similar career?

Be a lifelong learner. CDM is constantly evolving, studies are more complex, data sources have multiplied, technology has advanced exponentially and pressure to do everything faster has increased. Continuous learning will allow you to stay current, be flexible and adaptable to these changes and lead this evolution.



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Ellie Matthews

Bionical Emas

Head of Project Management, EAP



What drives your passion for your role?

Bionical Emas is a CRO providing Clinical Development, Clinical Trial Supply and Early Access Program (EAP) services to pharmaceutical companies. I am head of Project Management within the EAP division, responsible for all operational aspects of the programmes we run. Delivering unlicensed medicines to patients in desperate need is incredibly important but I am equally driven by delivering a great service to all stakeholders involved in these programmes. A huge amount of work goes in to planning, setting up and delivering EAPs from an expert team, I love being part of this and seeing the medication shipping around the world.

How do you inspire excellence in your team?

I truly believe in ‘leading by example’, working hard and being visible. I feel that I have built up a lot of sector experience and expertise over the years but I am always open to learning something new. I strive to deliver to very high standards and expect this of my team as well, feedback from them suggests this is a good thing! This work ethic runs genuinely throughout the business.

What is your greatest professional achievement to date?

I am so proud of the EAP service, team and culture we have built at Bionical Emas. We had a foundation in the existing company infrastructure (CRO and distribution) to build out an awesome EAP service, but it took a huge amount of teamwork and dedication. We have a significant amount of repeat business with many clients, both within EAP as well as between the different divisions of Bionical Emas - proof that our values and our model work. Having been part of the EAP team from early on and seeing what we have achieved to date, this is always going to be something I am proud to have been a part of, as well as the huge developmental journey for me professionally.

What has been your greatest challenge, and how did you overcome it?

I am responsible for the EAP operational teams. Bringing together a group of individuals with different professional backgrounds, experiences and roles within the division, to ultimately work towards a single goal was certainly a challenge. Clear, open communication and an inclusive way of working brought the team together. Ultimately, everyone wanted to work hard and deliver for the patients, so once the common ground was established and clear roles and responsibilities defined, the team evolved in a truly collaborative way.

What advice would you give your younger self?

Believe in yourself, your opinions matter.



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