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NIHR funding opportunities

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is the major provider of funding for applied health and social care research. From a total budget of about £1bn, the NIHR provided £210m in research grants in 2010 – 2011, and an additional £80m in research support to members of the NIHR faculty.

The majority of this funding was allocated via a portfolio of competitive research funding programmes which anyone working in, or alongside, the NHS might apply to.

The RDS exists to provide help for people preparing these applications and as the RDS is funded by the NIHR for this purpose, such help is provided **free of charge**.

This edition of RDS News focuses on new NIHR funding streams.

To find out more about funding opportunities visit our website at:
www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk



i4i Challenge Awards

The i4i Challenge Awards is a new NIHR funding stream that aims to bridge the gap between the innovation and development of new medical technology and its adoption into clinical pathways.

Background

Despite clinical evidence for its use, the cost and risk of implementing a new device into clinical pathways can make it difficult to get the product adopted into clinical practice.

The NIHR has allocated £15 million over the next three years to the i4i Challenge Awards to help overcome these issues by identifying and supporting the application of emerging platform technologies which hold the potential to have a disruptive impact on clinical pathways.

The i4i Challenge Awards call for proposals is now open.

Programme outline

The i4i Challenge Awards will hold one competition per year that will address a particular 'challenge' that is a priority for the NHS.

The programme will seek to identify those medical technologies with the greatest potential clinical benefit, along with how they might be integrated into clinical decision and treatment pathways and how they might be implemented on a large scale.

A typical Challenge Award project will look at technologies that have, in the first instance, been developed to aid the identification, diagnosis, and monitoring of a single disease.

Challenge 1

The first challenge that the i4i Challenge Awards will address is cardiovascular disease – the leading cause of death in England and worldwide.

Cardiovascular disease encompasses a number of conditions including coronary heart disease, stroke and peripheral arterial disease. The high morbidity and mortality rate for patients with cardiovascular disease continues to be a significant burden on resources for the NHS, with the management of such long-term conditions remaining a high priority within both primary and secondary care.

The i4i Challenge Awards are inviting applications looking to implement point-of-care cardiac diagnostic and monitoring devices based on platform technologies for routine use. The programme is looking for disruptive technologies which have the potential to offer both time and cost savings alongside improved diagnosis and monitoring of cardiovascular disease.

Proposals must be based around a working prototype which has the potential for use in wider clinical settings, such as in other clinical specialities or within the community.

Diseases such as diabetes and chronic kidney disease are associated with cardiovascular disease. Applications to study the implementation of any medical device

prototypes that examine the condition of the heart or blood vessels in patients with associated diseases will be considered for this competition.

Funding

Funding awarded will be used to demonstrate the usefulness of the technology in the clinic and its broader applicability.

There is no funding limit for projects – funding amounts are determined by the nature and scale of the research activity. i4i Challenge Award funding will cover up to 100% of eligible project costs. Projects will be funded for up to three years.

Eligibility

Project teams will be led by an (academic) clinician based in an NHS Trust, in cooperation with commercial and Higher Education Institution (HEI) partners as appropriate. Lead applicants must be based in England only.

For further information visit:
www.ccf.nihr.ac.uk/i4i/Pages/i4iChallengeawards.aspx



New Health Services & Delivery Research (HS&DR) programme

A new NIHR Health Services and Delivery Research (HS&DR) programme has been established, to fund a broad range of research. It will build on the strengths and contributions of two former NIHR research programmes: the Health Services Research (HSR) programme and the Service Delivery and Organisation (SDO) programme, which were merged in January 2012.

Aims

The HS&DR programme aims to produce rigorous and relevant evidence on the quality, access and organisation of health services, including costs and outcomes. The programme will enhance the strategic focus on research that matters to the NHS including research on implementation and a range of knowledge mobilisation initiatives. It will be keen to support ambitious evaluative research to improve health services.

Programme remit

The HS&DR programme funds research to improve the quality, effectiveness and accessibility of the NHS, including evaluations of how the NHS might improve delivery of services. The audience for this research is the public, service users, clinicians and managers.

The programme has two workstreams:

- the health services research workstream which will be mainly **researcher-led**; and
- the healthcare delivery research workstream which will be mainly **commissioned**.

The HS&DR programme aims to support a range of types of research including evidence synthesis and primary research. This includes large scale studies of national importance.

This means primary research projects which:

- Address an issue of major strategic importance to the NHS, with the cost in line with the significance of the problem to be investigated
- Are likely to lead to changes in practice that will have a significant impact on a large number of patients across the UK
- Aim to fill a clear 'evidence gap', and are likely to generate new knowledge of direct relevance to the NHS
- Have the potential for findings to be applied to other conditions or situations outside the immediate area of research
- Bring together a team with strong expertise and track record across the full range of relevant disciplines
- Will be carried out across more than one research site.

The HS&DR programme will not support research covered by the remits of the existing NIHR programmes.

The programme will not fund laboratory-based or basic science research, the setting-up or maintenance of research units, or proposals which are solely service developments, audits or needs assessments.

Existing HSR and SDO projects

All projects funded under the HSR and SDO programmes will continue to be monitored and supported as currently.

Further information

For further information about the HS&DR programme visit:
www.netscc.ac.uk/hsdr/



NIHR Surgery Themed Call: Now open

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is issuing a call for research on the evaluation of technology-driven implanted or implantable medical devices, surgical procedures or surgical devices.

This call is a key component of the NIHR response to recognition of the need for an increase in research-based evidence related to surgical productivity and to patient outcomes, through:

- Supporting capacity building across a wide range of surgical disciplines and;
- Increasing the volume of high-quality research on the effectiveness, delivery and organisation of surgery and surgical services.

Research proposals must be within the remit of one of the following six NIHR managed research programmes:

- Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation (EME)
- Health Services and Delivery Research (HS&DR)
- Health Technology Assessment (HTA)
- Invention for Innovation (i4i)
- Programme Grants for Applied Research (PGfAR)
- Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB)

- Applications based on innovative study designs are particularly welcome.
- Applications to evaluate the comparative effectiveness of new procedures that would obviate the need for surgery will be considered.
- Clinical trials involving 'non-surgical' interventions, e.g. interventional radiology, gastroenterology, cardiology, etc. must include a surgical intervention as a comparator.
- The inclusion of patient views and experiences are considered important by each participating programme.
- Proposals solely to explore epidemiological or pathophysiological issues around conditions conventionally treated with surgery are not in the remit of this call.

The deadline for proposals is **Friday 25 May 2012**.

For further information about the Surgery Themed call visit:
www.nihr.ac.uk/research/Pages/Surgery.aspx



PPI in Theory and in Practice - a study from the participants' perspective

There are frequently calls for broader representation in Public and Patient Involvement (PPI), but little research has been done to look at why some people become involved while others are put off or drop out. A new study is currently underway that intends to address this by looking at why people became involved in health service research, what keeps them interested and what drives them away.

The study is being run from the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry (PCMD) in Exeter and they are looking for Public and Patient representatives working in

different roles who are willing to complete a short survey about themselves and the work they do.

So if you are: based in England; active in some Public and Patient Involvement role, or have been in the past; and you are interested finding out more or in taking part in this study contact Kath Maguire on:

Email: kath.maguire@pcmd.ac.uk
or visit the study website:

<http://home2.btconnect.com/rebalance/>



Research Capability Funding

A new funding stream will replace Flexibility and Sustainability (FsF) funding from April 2012. The new 'NIHR Research Capability Funding' stream will have a wider range of uses than FsF funds.

A summary of the key changes is available on the NIHR website at: www.nihr.ac.uk/infrastructure/Pages/research_capability_funding.aspx



Contact Us

Each RDS office is run by an experienced researcher, well equipped to provide practical and user-friendly advice on the research process and applying for funding. If you are unsure of where your nearest office is, or who best to contact, simply get in touch with the **Co-ordinating Centre, Taunton** on **01823 342792** or rds-sw@tst.nhs.uk or visit our website at: www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk

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