

Dear all

In this week's message:

Latest RDS blog - Sample size: what difference matters?

Latest NIHR funding opportunities:

- NIHR Health Technology Assessment Awards - New commissioned calls
- NIHR Short Placement Award for Research Collaboration
- NIHR Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases: Primary and/or Secondary Prevention of Cancer
- NIHR School for Primary Care Research (SPCR)

Latest funding calls from other bodies:

- MRC: Clinical Research Training Fellowship Post Doctoral opportunity
- MRC: Clinician Scientist Fellowship opportunity
- MRC Confidence in Concept 2019
- Stroke Association Project Grants

Blogs and articles:

- Case study: My path to research - a cancer nurse's story
- Update to NIHR guidance notes-Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Resources:

- NIHR's Interactive Costing Tool

Training and events:

- Clean Air for All - Working together to improve the air we breathe for better health
- Support available from Clinical Research Network West Midlands

RDS blog - Sample size: what difference matters?

Are you planning a study to evaluate a healthcare intervention? In this month's RDS Blog, Nick Taub (Senior Adviser in Medical Statistics, RDS East Midlands) looks at the Minimum Clinically Important Difference – a key aspect in any evaluation study.



Read the blog [here](#)



Latest funding calls and other opportunities

NIHR Health Technology Assessment Awards - New commissioned calls

Details: The Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Programme funds research about the clinical and cost-effectiveness and broader impact of healthcare treatments and tests for those who plan, provide or receive care from NHS and social care services.

The HTA Programme is accepting stage 1 applications to their commissioned workstream for the following primary research topics:

- [19/131 Short-term use of benzodiazepines for the acute management of acute low back pain](#)
- [19/132 A clinical prediction rule for post-operative atrial fibrillation in patients undergoing cardiac surgery](#)

Deadline for proposals: 1pm on 29th January 2020

The HTA Programme is accepting stage 1 applications to their commissioned workstream for the following primary research topics:

- [19/120 Relapsing polymyalgia rheumatica](#)
- [19/121 The clinical and cost effectiveness of pulse oximetry screening for hypoxaemia in newborn babies](#)
- [19/122 A cross-sectional study and modelled evaluation of the performance of bowel cancer screening in England](#)
- [19/123 Oxybutynin for the treatment of vasomotor symptoms associated with menopause](#)
- [19/124 Effectiveness of meniscal allograft transplantation](#)
- [19/125 Cardiac rehabilitation for stable angina](#)
- [19/126 Suspending proton pump inhibitors to reduce Clostridium difficile infection](#)
- [19/127 Surgery for endometrioma in women undergoing IVF](#)
- [19/128 Administration routes of steroids in the first-line treatment of idiopathic sensorineural hearing loss](#)
- [19/129 Lumbar fusion for low back pain](#)

Deadline for proposals: 1pm on 1st April 2020

The HTA Programme is accepting stage 1 applications to their commissioned workstream for the following primary research topic:

- [19/130 Bipolar disorder](#)

Deadline for proposals: 1pm on 6th May 2020

NIHR Short Placement Award for Research Collaboration

Details: The Short Placement Award for Research Collaboration (SPARC) scheme allows early stage researchers supported by an NIHR Infrastructure or NIHR School to spend time in other parts of the NIHR. The scheme is specifically designed to foster collaboration and enhance the researcher's early career and CV. The placement is funded by awards of up to £5,000 per individual.

One of the aims of the NIHR is to increase the number of researchers equipped with the skills to work at the interfaces between academia, the NHS and wider health, public health and social care, and industry. In line with this aim we propose to pilot for this round

encouraging applicants to use their placement to visit parts of the NIHR that have existing links with industry partners.

Deadline for applications: 16th December 2019

Find out more [here](#)

NIHR Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases: Primary and/or Secondary Prevention of Cancer

Details: The NIHR and the MRC, in partnership with the Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD), is seeking to generate new knowledge on interventions and their implementation for the primary and/or secondary prevention of cancer in Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), as defined in the DAC list of ODA recipients.

Collectively the NIHR and MRC will invest up to £6 million for this initiative. This amount is expected to fund several awards.

Deadline for proposals: 4pm on 30th April 2020

Find out more [here](#)

NIHR School for Primary Care Research (SPCR)

Details: The NIHR is inviting academic institutions in England to apply to a new open competition to renew and refresh membership of the NIHR School for Primary Care Research (SPCR).

The renewed SPCR will conduct world-leading research in primary care which responds to and meets the needs of local populations and local health and care systems, and which addresses the nation's changing demographics and corresponding impact on disease burdens and service demands.

Deadline for proposals: 1pm on 15th January 2020

Find out more [here](#)

Funding calls from other bodies

MRC: Clinical Research Training Fellowship Post Doctoral opportunity

Details: The CRTF supports clinicians, including (but not limited to) medics, surgeons, dentists, clinical psychologists, public health specialty trainees, allied health professionals, nurses, midwives and veterinarians, to undertake a PhD or other higher research degree. The scheme also provides a route for post-doctoral applicants who achieved their PhD some time ago but who have not been research active since due to clinical training commitments to reacquire research skills. Applications are welcome across all areas of the MRC's remit to improve human health.

Deadline for proposals: 4pm on 9th January 2020

Find out more [here](#)

MRC: Clinician Scientist Fellowship opportunity

Details: The CSF develops talented medically and other clinically qualified professionals who have gained a higher research degree to lead their own research plans and establish their own research team to make the transition to independent investigator. A CSF provides funding for a challenging research programme, and an ambitious programme of research training which offers accelerated personal and career development. Applications are welcome across all areas of the MRC remit.

Deadline for proposals: 4pm on 9th January 2020

Find out more [here](#)

MRC Confidence in Concept 2019

Details: The Confidence in Concept (CiC) scheme is a key part of MRC's translational research strategy and provides annual awards of up to £1 million to institutions to flexibly support a portfolio of early stage translational research projects. It is intended to accelerate the transition from discovery research to translational development projects by supporting preliminary work or feasibility studies to establish the viability of an approach.

The CiC scheme aims to accelerate the transition from discovery science to the early stages of therapeutic/biomarker development and de-risk rapidly projects across the translational lifecycle such that they become eligible for substantial funding bids.

The award provides institutions with locally administered, responsive and flexible funding to support a diverse portfolio of preliminary translational projects. The projects supported should aim to generate sufficient preliminary data to establish the viability of an approach before seeking more substantial funding, e.g. from the Developmental Pathway Funding Scheme (DPFS).

Deadline for proposals: 4pm on 5th February 2020

Find out more [here](#)

Stroke Association Project Grants

Details: Stroke Association Project Grants cover the whole spectrum of stroke research - from secondary prevention, through to treatment and rehabilitation in a clinical setting, and longer-term in the community.

- **Clinical Trial Project Grants:** These are project grant proposals which incorporate a randomised controlled trial or other clinical trial of a device or an intervention. These grants are intended to support the early phases of trials with the intention that, if successful, they proceed to the full trial stage supported by a large funder such as the MRC or NIHR.
- **Developmental Research Project Grants:** These are project grant proposals that are focused on areas which do not incorporate randomised controlled or other types of clinical trials. This includes study proposals in observational or epidemiological studies, basic laboratory science or early developmental/ proof of concept studies.

Deadline for proposals: 5pm on 4th February 2020

Find out more [here](#)

RDS West Midlands can offer free expert support and advice on all aspects of designing and developing applications for NIHR funding and other peer reviewed funding bodies– please complete our online [Request for Support](#) form to gain access to our advice.

NIHR Funding deadlines calendar

For an overview of the year's NIHR calls and ongoing opportunities, please view the online calendar: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding-and-support/current-funding-opportunities/>

Blogs and articles

Case study: My path to research - a cancer nurse's story

Alison Finch is Assistant Chief Nurse at University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and has been awarded a Health Education England/NIHR Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship. She is a cancer nurse who has spent 15 years working with young people in haematology and broader cancer specialty.

Our friends in RDS London have made a video in which Alison shares insight into her career, how her local Research Design Service supported her in submitting applications, as well as some of her top tips for other health and care professionals looking at applying for a fellowship award.

Watch Alison's story [here](#)

Update to NIHR guidance notes

Highlights NIHR's expectations with regard to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for people taking part in NIHR research. This change, summarised below, has recently been agreed by the NIHR Centre Executives Board and is currently being implemented by the different NIHR research programmes.

Guidance for applicants on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for study participants:

Every person eligible to take part in research should be offered the same opportunity of taking part in that research regardless of:

- Age
- Gender including gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Marital status
- Being pregnant or on maternity leave
- Disability including diminished mental capacity
- Ethnicity, religion or belief
- Geographical location
- Socioeconomic status
- Access to healthcare

Applicants should demonstrate how these factors have been considered and addressed in their proposal, including steps taken to ensure the research sample is representative of the population the study is targeted at.

Resources

NIHR's Interactive Costing Tool

What: The new web-based interactive Costing Tool (iCT) provides a framework for transparent cost display and calculation to support swift local site budget negotiations when planning commercial trials in the NHS.

This new digital version of the Excel-based predecessor will enable even faster costing and contracting between the life sciences industry and the NHS as part of the study set-up phase. The tool is available as a module within the NIHR Central Portfolio Management System (CPMS) and includes a number of major improvements.

From April 2020, the NIHR will stop producing Excel templates; the online interactive Costing Tool will therefore be the only system available for industry costing submissions for new studies. An introduction to the new iCT system can be found on the [NIHR website](#).

Find out more [here](#)

Training and Events

Clean Air for All - Working together to improve the air we breathe for better health

Poor air quality is one of the major public health challenges in Birmingham. We know that the negative impacts of poor air quality are worse for the poorest, most vulnerable residents and those with long-term health conditions. Birmingham is part of the wider West Midlands region and should be well placed to make improvements to air quality as we have leading hospitals, universities, a major transport network and committed, active citizens.

This evening event will bring together doctors, scientists, social enterprises, charities, community groups and policy experts to address your questions and discuss solutions. We will explore the different types of pollution that we breathe during our daily lives, the health risks and how this puts pressure on our healthcare services. We will also look at how research can shape air quality and health policies to improve the lives of those in our city. There will be a mixture of presentations, interactive sessions and time for discussion and networking. Come along to meet experts in the field, and other like-minded people with whom you can join forces to make positive change.

Event Speakers:

- Dr Margaret O'Hara, Public Involvement in Research Lead, University Hospitals Birmingham
- Lawrence Tallon, Director of Corporate Strategy, Planning & Performance, University Hospitals Birmingham
- Phillippa Hentsch, Head of Strategy & Analysis, University Hospitals Birmingham
- Dr Suzanne Bartington, Clinical Research Fellow, University of Birmingham
- Professor William Bloss, Professor of Atmospheric Science, University of Birmingham
- Sandra Green, Campaign Network Coordinator, British Lung Foundation

Date: Wednesday 20th November 2019 18:00 (doors open) 18:30 – 21:00

Venue: Lecture Theatre 1, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Mindelsohn Way, Birmingham, B15 2TH

Registration is essential- for your free place please visit:

<https://www.birminghamhealthpartners.co.uk/event/clean-air-for-all/>

Support available from Clinical Research Network West Midlands

Please note that support and advice is available from the CRN WM Study Support Service Early Contact Team for any study that is potentially eligible or applying for CRN Support. This includes providing cost attribution advice to support researchers in completing their grant applications and authorising the Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Tool (SoECAT*), navigating the approvals process, accessing training provided by the Network, identifying and supporting the management of excess treatment costs, and can highlight further support within the Network to support study set up and delivery to time and target.

*Please find attached information on our SoECAT Clinics which provides dates to access support open to anyone working on a specific study.

For more information or support. Please contact Kirsty Hunter or Ellen Edwards.

email: studysupport.crnwestmidlands@nihr.ac.uk

Applying for NIHR funding? Access free advice and support from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Research Design Service West Midlands

Our multi-disciplinary team can offer advice on the key ingredients in a successful health or social care research proposal, including:

- Statistics and health economics
- Qualitative methodology
- Support on involving patients and public in research, identified by the NIHR as a critical component in funding applications
- Peer review of draft grant applications before submission.

Find out more about how RDS West Midlands could help you and your team at <http://www.rds-wm.nihr.ac.uk/>

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