



TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH IN CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE, DIABETES AND OBESITY (ROUND 2)

A joint initiative in translational research, funded by the 21 DHBs and the HRC

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS 2009 (DHBRF 008)

The 21 District Health Boards have established a health research fund for the purpose of commissioning research that addresses key knowledge gaps for DHBs. The fund intends to support and promote the translation of research findings into practice. Guiding principles are to fund projects that can maximise benefit to the health sector and communities, to provide opportunities for knowledge transfer, to ensure investments meet national and international best practice, to focus on health services and population health and to contribute to improved health service delivery and outcomes over the short to medium term.

This fund is sponsored by the National DHB CEO forum, and governed by the District Health Board Research Fund (DHBRF) Governance Group with members representative of the DHB CEO's, DHB funder and provider services, primary care, mental health, Maori health, community health and health researchers.

This joint venture is being administered by the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC). This project along with all research contracts awarded through the DHBRF will be subject to the same quality assurance processes, contestability regime and monitoring protocols as is standard with research awarded through the annual HRC funding round and Partnership Programme.

RESEARCH TOPIC

This initiative seeks to fund projects that improve the health of New Zealanders through reducing the impact or incidence of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and/or obesity. To this end it aims to fund short term, translational research projects in one or all of these areas, which maximise benefits to the health sector, both in terms of improved service delivery and health outcomes, at a local, regional and/or national level.

Whilst a primary objective of the DHBRF is addressing health priority areas, the fund also aims to engender a culture of research and innovation within the health sector. Part of this is through providing space for the development of new ideas while also ensuring that current knowledge is effectively translated through the sector. The development of collaborations are fundamental in ensuring that research results have maximum utility across the health sector.

BACKGROUND

Reducing the incidence and impact of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity are three of the 13 population health objectives for immediate action set out in the New Zealand Health Strategy.¹ The importance of addressing cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity is undisputed with cardiovascular disease being the leading cause of death and diabetes affecting around 200,000 people, only half of which are diagnosed.² Moreover, the incidence of diabetes, a significant cause of ill health and premature death, is projected to increase at an accelerating rate. Obesity has been identified as one of the most important avoidable risk factors for a number of life threatening diseases and serious morbidity, including both cardiovascular disease and diabetes.³ Significant inequalities in risk, health outcomes and access to appropriate care exist in all three health problems, particularly for Māori and Pacific peoples.⁴

¹ Ministry of Health, *New Zealand Health Strategy*, Ministry of Health, 2000.

² Ministry of Health, *Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease, Quality Improvement Plan*, Ministry of Health, 2008. <http://www.moh.govt.nz/diabetes>

³ Ministry of Health, *Health Eating-Healthy Action, Oranga Kai-Oranga Pumau: A Strategic Framework*, 2003.

⁴ Ministry of Health, *Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease, Quality Improvement Plan*, Ministry of Health, 2008.

PROFILE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this research funding is to provide opportunities for DHBs and primary care providers⁵ to undertake small-scale translational research project(s)⁶, which are of regional or national utility, with the objective of reducing the incidence or impact of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and/or obesity. The project would need to provide findings which could be quickly disseminated through the health sector. The project must comprise a partnership of at least two DHBs and/or primary care providers. A total funding pool of \$800,000 is available with the expectation up to ten projects will be funded.

It is essential that research projects align with the principles of translational research which underpin the DHBRF. Projects must therefore:

- Focus on health services and population health;
- Involve a trial or intervention or be observational research (this includes health services research);
- Demonstrate sustained engagement of stakeholders/end-users from the outset (e.g. patient or community);
- Demonstrate translatability, that is, have the intention of application or uptake in the sector;
- Aim to provide translatable results in the short to medium term.

Further to this the research project needs to demonstrate:

- Alignment to a strategic goal of the host organisation or local, regional or national policy;
- Potential health impact value;
- That it does not duplicate any existing activity of the host organisation;
- It includes senior member of the organisation as a champion of the project;
- An implementation plan for the research findings.

For more information on translational research please see Appendix A.

⁵ Primary health care relates to the professional health care received in the community, usually from GPs or practice nurses. Primary health care covers a broad range of health and preventative services, including health education, counselling, disease prevention and screening. Primary care providers can include GPs, nurses, pharmacists, allied health professionals and disability professionals, or anyone providing a primary health care service. Ministry of Health, *The Primary Health Care Strategy*, 2001.

⁶ For the HRC definition of translational research go to:

http://www.hrc.govt.nz/root/pages_policy/Translational_Research_Criterion.html

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

It is anticipated that the deliverables for this initiative will be specific to the proposed project but will include:

Draft and Final Reports	Detailing research findings and assisting in the dissemination of research results.
Progress Reports	Regular reports detailing research progress.
Publication	Through DHBRF newsletters, reports, peer-reviewed publications (if possible), and other appropriate mediums.
Forum Participation	Participation in future forums to support update and dissemination of research findings.

PARTNERSHIPS

All applications should be hosted and led by DHBs and/or primary care organisations or providers (the host institution on the application form). All applications must demonstrate a meaningful partnership for the research project with **at least one other** DHB and/or primary care organisation. The DHBRF Governance Group both acknowledges and encourages the benefits of forming strategic alliances to maximise the national utility of the research outcomes at a planning, policy and/or service delivery level. This includes partnerships with university based and other research organisations. Other partnerships with Māori health providers, community organisations and consumer groups will serve to further strengthen the application. Applicants must outline the key partnerships formed in response to this Request for Proposals along with clear processes to ensure the contribution and engagement of these stakeholders.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The potential to translate research findings into practice or policy is an essential requirement of this fund. The identification and engagement of key stakeholders will be essential throughout this research project. The overall research process is intended to inform key stakeholders, to increase sector buy-in to the research and, as quickly as possible, to improve health services. Applicants must outline the potential for the transfer of knowledge that their project is likely to create and the processes necessary to ensure the uptake of research findings.

Dissemination of the research findings is essential. The most appropriate methods for communication of research results to a range of stakeholders, including DHBs, PHOs, community groups, Maori and government agencies will need to be identified. The research providers will be expected to focus on communication from the outset of the research project, beginning with the identification of the key stakeholder groups and how dissemination strategies will be tailored to meet the needs of these groups. It is important that audiences are informed of the existence and aims of the project from the outset.

The research providers will be expected to ensure that all information is tailored to the needs of the intended audience, so that research findings can be of maximum utility. It is also expected that the research findings will be published, if possible, in

peer-reviewed journals. At the end of the project a summary report of all the information collected should be prepared. Other dissemination opportunities may include hui, workshops, interviews, conference presentations and media releases. It is expected that a detailed dissemination plan discussing the strategy used for dissemination be included in the response to this Request for Proposals.

BUDGET

The DHBRF Governance Group seeks to fund a number of research projects from a funding pool of \$800,000 (GST exclusive). As it is the preference to fund up to ten projects, it is anticipated that applicants will take this into consideration when developing their research projects and corresponding budgets. The duration of the projects may be no longer than **one year**. Funding will be available for an immediate start for the research projects, although the start date for the research is negotiable. Funding will not be made available beyond the duration of the project.

DISCLAIMER

The Health Research Council reserves the right to withdraw or amend this document, and/or amend the timeline or, funding set within it. Notification of any changes will be posted on the HRC website as and when appropriate.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applicants are invited to register their interest by completing a simple Registration of Intent form (ROI-DHBRF008) and returning it to the HRC Health Sector Relationships team **by 5pm, 29 April 2009**. The completion of this form allows us to gauge the number of applications expected and accurately distribute them among the reviewers. If you have any problems submitting a Registration of Intent please contact Ms Katie Jones at the HRC on (09) 303-5081.

A **full application** on the correct form (DHBRF008) should then be submitted to the Health Sector Relationships team **by 5pm, 27 May 2009**. Forms are available from the HRC website (www.hrc.govt.nz). The scientific integrity of the full applications will then be assessed by the Translational Research Steering Committee. Applicants will have an opportunity to respond to the Committee Reviews during the rebuttal period. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of this Request for Proposals by **July 2009**.

Please note that the Investigator Briefing for this initiative will be held through an online forum. In order to facilitate greater participation, and reduce the burden on applicants, the traditional Investigator Briefing Meeting has been converted into an online forum. This forum will open shortly after the RFP release (please keep an eye on the website for dates). The forum will close on **Tuesday 19th May 2009**. You will not be able to submit questions once the forum closes, however all previous questions and answers will be available for viewing. Please refer to the DHBRF web site (<http://dhbrf.hrc.govt.nz/index.php/home>) for more information and the forum site. Questions or enquiries relating to any aspect of the RFP or application process are welcome. The forum will also be available for networking opportunities if appropriate.

CLOSING DATES AND TIMES

Full proposals must be submitted **before 5.00pm** on the closing date unless written authorisation has been received from the HRC at least **one week prior** to the closing date.

Date	Action/Event
Early April 2009	Online Investigator Forum Opens
29 April 2009	Registration of Intent closing date
19 May 2009	Online Investigator Forum Closes
27 May 2009	Closing date for Full Applications Applicants submitting full proposals will be advised of the outcome of the Request for Proposals by July 2009

APPLICATION FORM

A Registration of Intent form (ROI-DHBRF008) should be used to advise the HRC of an intention to submit a full application. Please download this form from the HRC website (www.hrc.govt.nz) or call Ms Katie Jones at the HRC on (09) 303-5081 to receive a hardcopy.

The HRC form (DHBRF008) should be used when submitting a full application for the Request for Proposals. Applications must be presented in English. Applications should be typed in single space, using a font equivalent to (and not smaller than) Times New Roman 12 point type. The text must also be printed single-sided on white A4 paper.

NOTE: This is an example of Times New Roman 12 point font.

Page limits must be strictly adhered to. The HRC reserves the right **not to process** any application that does not comply with stated page limits or font size restrictions, as it is an unfair burden on those reviewing your application.

Applications must be correctly collated. No collation of inserts or of extra copies can take place after receipt of the application. All copies should be single sided and stapled. Please do not staple the original application.

COPIES OF APPLICATIONS REQUIRED

Applications submitted to the HRC should include one signed original and twelve additional copies. No part or parts of an application can be returned to the applicant.

PRIVACY PROVISIONS

In the event that an application is successful, the HRC reserves the right to release applicants' names, details of the host institution/company, contact details (work phone, fax or email), contract title and funding awarded for public interest purposes and to meet the statutory requirements of the Health Research Council of New Zealand Act 1990.

MAILING ADDRESS

The application should be sent to the Health Research Council's office, and marked for the attention of Ms Katie Jones. The address is given below:

Mailing Address:

Health Research Council of New Zealand
PO Box 5541, Wellesley Street
AUCKLAND

Physical/Courier Address:

Health Research Council of New Zealand
110 Stanley Street
AUCKLAND

The first named investigator will be sent confirmation of receipt of his/her application within five working days of the closing date.

Enquiries

All enquiries related to this Request for Proposals should be directed to:

Katie Jones
Project Coordinator, Health Sector Relationships
Health Research Council of New Zealand
Phone: (09) 303 5081
Fax: (09) 377 9988
Email: kjones@hrc.govt.nz

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

It is important that all applicants familiarise themselves with the criteria against which their proposal will be scored. The three equally weighted assessment criteria of the Translational Research in Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes and Obesity project include:

Potential to Improve Health Outcomes

- reducing incidence and impact of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and/or obesity;
- methods, appropriate study design and analyses.

Translatability of Research

- translatability of findings, both short and long term;
- quality of dissemination process and knowledge transfer.

Research Team

- strength of the collaboration;
- track record;
- sector wide engagement.

All reviewers will use these same three criteria, and will score each of the criteria on a 7-point scale. The score for each of the criteria will be based on the anchor point descriptors (1, 4 and 7) as outlined below; the best possible score for any specific proposals is 21.

A: Potential to Improve Health Outcomes
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7 = The project has the potential to make a significant contribution to reducing the incidence and impact of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and/or obesity. The methods for the project are sound. The proposed study design is excellent and proposed analyses are clearly appropriate.

4 = The project has some potential to reduce the incidence and impact of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and/or obesity. The methods for the project are satisfactory. The study design or proposed analyses are adequate but would benefit by improvements in one or both of these areas.

1 = The project does not have any potential to reduce the incidence and impact of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and/or obesity. There are serious flaws in the methods, study design and analyses proposed for the project.

B: Translatability of Research

7 = The project is likely to produce results which will have a high level of translatability across the health sector, both short and long term. The process for dissemination and uptake of results is excellent.

4 = The project may produce some results which can be translated across the sector, either in the short or long term. The process for dissemination and uptake of results is satisfactory.

1 = The project will not produce results which can be translated across the sector. The process for dissemination and uptake of results is inadequate.

C: Research Team

7= The collaborations and partnerships formed relating to the application are strong. The team has the potential and experience to meaningfully engage relevant key stakeholders in the sector. The team has the ability to effectively disseminate the research results across the sector.

4= The collaborations and partnerships formed relating to the application are adequate. The team has the potential to engage some stakeholders. The team has the ability to disseminate the research results across the sector.

1 = The collaborations and partnerships formed relating to the application are weak. The team does not have the ability to meaningfully engage relevant stakeholders in the sector. The team will not be able to effectively disseminate the research results across the sector.

Appendix A - Translational Research

The HRC defines translational research as:

Translational research is the scientific investigation of interventions aimed to accelerate the update and use of evidence-based observations and practices to improve health services, operational, public health and policy-level decision making. Translational research begins with the identification of a clinical, health service or policy-related problem and ends with the successful application of a research generated solution. Translational research occurs in two continuous phases and moves in both directions along the bench-to-bedside and bench-to-policy continuum.

However, this is quite a broad definition and there has been much published on how to define and identify translational research.

The National Cancer Institute, U.S. National Institutes of Health, defines translational research as: “Translational research transforms scientific discoveries arising from laboratory, clinical, or population studies into clinical applications to reduce cancer incidence, morbidity, and mortality.” While this definition specifically discusses cancer, it can be applied to many other health problems.

There have been many articles written in recent years exploring how to define translational research and how to undertake translational research. Below is a very small selection of these.

Lean, M E J; Mann, J I; Hoek, J A; Elliot, R M; Schofield, G. (2008). Translational research: From evidence based medicine to sustainable solutions for public health problems (editorial). *BMJ*, 337: 705-706.

Pronovost, P; Berenholtz, S; Needham, D. (2008). Translating evidence into practice: a model for large scale knowledge translation. *BMJ*, 337: 963-965.

Woolf, S H. (2008). The Meaning of Translational Research and Why It Matters. *JAMA*, 299(2): 211-213.

Westfall, J M; Mold, J; Fagnan, L. (2007). Practice-Based Research - “Blue Highways” on the NIH Roadmap. *JAMA*, 297(4): 403-406.

Lenfant, C. (2003). Clinical Research to Clinical Practice - Lost in Translation? *New England Journal of Medicine*, 349:868-874.

<http://nihroadmap.nih.gov/clinicalresearch/overview-translational.asp>