

## Wellcome - HRB CRF based Research Clinic Programme

### Background and Introduction

Since opening in 2013 the CRF has supported a wide-range of hospital-based health professionals undertaking clinical research and has been involved in over 120 studies across 20 disease areas. We have had many successful studies with over 150 associated publications. However, we have identified successful patient recruitment as a key challenge. Benchmarking against similar CRF's and research active hospitals in the UK has shown that that well characterised clinical cohorts are critical for reaching recruitment targets, increasing efficiency of trial feasibility assessments and study start-up and, ultimately, attracting more research funding. Well characterised cohorts are valuable to translational scientists wishing to undertake large scale funded research projects. Equally industry (pharmaceutical, medical device and diagnostic) are attracted to hospitals with well characterised cohorts where the feasibility of reaching trial recruitment targets can be more confidently predicted and achieved.

How will the CRF support Research Clinics?

At St. James's Hospital there are very good examples of well characterised cohorts of patients that that attract research funding. These include, but are not limited to:

- 2,200 + patients with HIV attending ID/GUM clinics and other services of the hospital
- Hepatology - Hepatitis C patients
- Haemophilia A and B patients attending the national centre for Haemophilia
- 2000 + patients in the Barrett's Oesophagus surveillance programme.

However, there is an unrealised potential at St. James's Hospital for other clinical cohorts to emerge. Through its research support activities, the CRF is uniquely placed in St James's Hospital to provide resources and facilities to clinicians and cross disciplinary groups (for example, clinical nutrition, pharmacy, physiotherapy, social work, psychological medicine) to help them characterise cohorts of their patients.

### CRF Resources/ Services and Facilities for Research Clinics

In 2019, the CRF can support four Research Clinics, offering the following resources:

- Three clinical consultation rooms
- Six bed-day ward for testing and assessment of patients
- CRF Research Nurse support
- Access to SJH PAS and EPR system
- Waiting area for 20 patients
- Pneumatic tube link to CPL
- Local sample processing for cohort specific bio-collections
- Electrophysiology (EEG)
- Liver elastography/ultrasound
- ECG

- Research data entry
- Access to TTMI Bio banking infrastructure
- Assistance with grant applications from TTMI Research Programme Manager (RPO)

In addition, consultants are free to bring their own team to support the research clinic.

#### Conditions/ Terms

- The Consultant is expected to provide their own staffing for the clinic – CRF research nurse support can be provided where justified by the applicant
- Research Clinics are limited to one 4-hour session per week
- Capacity for 30 participants per 4-hour session
- Applications must clearly identify a hospital-based PI (consultant) to take responsibility for the clinic
- Consultant would be permitted to run a research clinic for up to 12 months and this would be extended subject to review
- Research clinic must have the prospect of generating research outputs such as grant applications, academic training, funded studies and publications and clinical trials within 12 to 24 months.

The CRF is open to proposals from a wide range of specialties and cross disciplinary groups, including, for example, research clinics led by nurses, physiotherapists, clinical nutritionists, social workers and other health professionals. Some examples of research clinics that have been successful in in other large teaching hospitals include:

- Ankylosing Spondylitis
- Lupus
- Sjogren's Syndrome
- Interstitial Lung Disease/Fibrotic Lung Disease
- Diabetic Foot Disease
- Raynaud's Disease
- Scleroderma/SLE
- Vasculitis
- Rare Kidney Disease
- Uro-oncology
- Immunotherapy
- Hypertension
- Early Arthritis
- Headache/Migraine
- Sepsis

## Application Process

Clinicians interested in developing a research clinic are encouraged to submit an application form by e-mail to Anna Baczek ([BURDZANA@tcd.ie](mailto:BURDZANA@tcd.ie)) by COB on **30 November 2018**.

Research Clinic proposals will be assessed using the following assessment criteria:

- 1. Unmet clinical needs of patient cohort (20/100):**
  - Size of the cohort
  - Unmet clinical needs of the cohort
  - Is the cohort at St. James's unique in Ireland? And globally?
- 2. Relevance and importance of potential research questions (20/100):**
  - What are the research questions?
  - Has an Irish cohort been studied before?
  - Are their potential interventions that could improve the health of cohort members?
- 3. Potential value of funding opportunities (20/100):**
  - Are there research grants that you are planning to apply for?
  - Is there a patient group or research charity relevant to the proposed cohort?
  - Are you connected with other researchers who have potential to secure research funding if data and samples were available to them from this cohort?
- 4. Track record of applicant and their proposed team/collaborators (20/100)**
- 5. Operational feasibility of proposed research clinic? Will it work for patients and clinicians? (20/100)**

Informal enquiries can be made to Professor Martina Hennessy, Director, [mhenness@tcd.ie](mailto:mhenness@tcd.ie) or Dr David Kevans, Associate Director [KEVANS@tcd.ie](mailto:KEVANS@tcd.ie)