

# Small research grants for patient safety

## BETTER KNOWLEDGE FOR SAFER CARE

The aim of the small research grants for patient safety initiative is to stimulate research on patient safety, by providing seed funding for small research projects. In addition, it is envisaged that the initiative will contribute to building local research capacity and will help raise awareness about patient safety.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE INITIATIVE

- To increase research on patient safety by providing seed funding for 20–30 small research projects, to be initiated in 2009;
- To contribute to building local capacity for research on patient safety by providing grants to research institutions and research teams in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, especially to projects in which young researchers and those in early or mid-career are the lead investigators; and
- To promote the culture of patient safety by improving dissemination of research findings.

In the first year, US\$ 500 000 will be allocated to fund 20–30 grants for studies to begin in 2009. Funding of between US\$ 10 000 and US\$ 25 000 per grant will be available. The amount is flexible, but the grant must be appropriately justified. The grant may be renewable if the first project is completed satisfactorily and if funding is available.



## ELIGIBILITY

- The grants are intended for well-designed, well-defined research projects, which can be completed within 12–18 months.
- Research in all methodological and clinical disciplines that address patient safety is encouraged.
- The proposed studies may be conducted in any health-care setting, including hospitals, primary care, ambulatory care, community care and home care. Research to be conducted in developing countries and countries with economies in transition is particularly encouraged.
- Researchers at all stages of their careers are eligible to apply, although submissions from young researchers are especially encouraged.
- Researchers must be affiliated with a recognized institution located in the country in which the project will be conducted.
- Collaboration, both between institutions and between countries, is strongly encouraged.
- Multi-disciplinary research teams with an appropriate mix of expertise, including clinicians, practitioners or policy-makers, are strongly encouraged.



## RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The grants will target research proposals that correspond to the global research priorities of the World Alliance for Patient Safety (Box 1). Studies that focus on the first two priorities, identifying, developing or testing local interventions for improving patient safety and the cost-effectiveness of risk-reducing strategies, will be the main target of the current call for proposals. Other priorities at global, regional or local level that show potential for translation into policy and action will also be considered, if funding is available.

### BOX 1. GLOBAL RESEARCH PRIORITIES OF THE WORLD ALLIANCE FOR PATIENT SAFETY

- Identification, design and testing of locally effective, affordable solutions
- Assessment of cost-effectiveness of risk-reducing strategies
- Counterfeit and substandard drugs
- Inadequate competencies, training and skills
- Maternal and newborn care
- Health care-associated infections
- Extent and nature of the problem of patient safety
- Lack of appropriate knowledge and its transfer
- Safe injection practices
- Unsafe blood practices
- Lack of communication and coordination
- Poor safety culture and blame-oriented processes
- Latent organizational failures
- Better safety indicators
- Design and operation of devices and procedures that include considerations of human factors
- Health information technology and information systems
- Patients' role in shaping the research agenda
- Adverse drug events and medication errors



## ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION

Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis, following peer review by a panel of experts. The key selection criteria will include:

- Relevance, significance and originality of the research question(s);
- Scientific merit, i.e. adequacy of the study design, appropriateness of the method and the measurements to be made and validity of the instruments to be used for data collection;
- Adequacy of management of the project team and the project plan;
- Budget and value for money.

The assessment will consist of three steps:

**Step 1: Screening.** The Research Secretariat will examine the applications to ensure their eligibility and the completeness and accuracy of the information supplied. Those considered to be appropriate will be forwarded to the review panel for peer review. The identity of the researchers and their institution(s) will be removed from the applications to ensure confidentiality and impartiality.

**Step 2: Peer review.** Members of the review panel will use pre-determined criteria to review the applications. Each proposal will be assessed by at least two reviewers. The assessment will be carried out in two phases. Phase 1 will be an assessment of scientific merit, the relevance of the proposal for policy and the strength of the plan for managing the project. This assessment will be 'blinded' (the reviewers will be unaware of the identity of the applicant) to ensure objectivity and impartiality. Phase 2 will be an assessment of the capacity and ability of the investigators, the project team and their affiliated



institution(s), to ensure that they have the necessary skills, experience and institutional support to carry out and complete the project.

All applications meeting the selection criteria will be ranked, and the applications with the highest scores will be recommended for funding. At this stage, the Research Secretariat may consult relevant regional focal points for patient safety or WHO country representatives for an additional assessment of the proposed project's estimated budget.

**Step 3: Ethical clearance by the WHO Ethics Review Committee.** All applications funded through this initiative will have to obtain ethical approval from the WHO Ethics Review Committee. The Secretariat will work with the successful applicants and with the Ethics Review Committee to facilitate this process.



## ABOUT THE WHO WORLD ALLIANCE FOR PATIENT SAFETY

The World Alliance for Patient Safety was launched in October 2004 by the Director-General of WHO. It aims to increase awareness and political commitment to improve patient safety policy and practice in all WHO Member States. The Research Programme aims to foster research on patient safety worldwide and to spread and use research findings and evidence to improve patient care.

### For further information and enquiries, please contact:

Ms Nittita Prasopa-Plaizier  
 World Alliance for Patient Safety  
 World Health Organization  
 20 Avenue Appia  
 CH-1211 Geneva 27  
 Switzerland  
 Fax: +41 22 791 1388  
 Email: [pssmallgrants@who.int](mailto:pssmallgrants@who.int)  
 Website:  
<http://www.who.int/patientsafety/research/grants/>

### CONTRACT AND FUNDING

Grants will be awarded through a Technical Services Agreement between WHO and the institution that is nominated by the principal investigator of the research project. The letter of agreement, which will outline the terms and conditions of the contract, will serve as the official contract.

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The Small Research Grants for Patient Safety are managed by the Research Programme of the World Alliance for Patient Safety.

### CALL FOR PROPOSALS AND TIMETABLE

The small grants initiative will be launched formally in June 2008. Applications for grants will be welcomed until 30 September 2008. Further information on the selection process, the conditions of granting and the application form is available on the website of the World Alliance for Patient Safety. Future news, announcements and reports will also be posted on the website:

<http://www.who.int/patientsafety/research/grants/>.

Timetable for selection:

Activity	Date
Programme launch	24 June 2008
Call for proposals	1 July 2008
Closing date for applications	30 September 2008
Peer review	October–November 2008
Communication of review outcomes	December 2008
Review by the WHO Ethics Review Committee	January–March 2009
Projects start	April–May 2009

WHO/IER/PSP/2008.06 (A4)

#### © World Health Organization 2008

All rights reserved. Publications of the World Health Organization can be obtained from WHO Press, World Health Organization, 20 Avenue Appia, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland (tel.: +41 22 791 3264; fax: +41 22 791 4857; e-mail: [bookorders@who.int](mailto:bookorders@who.int)). Requests for permission to reproduce or translate WHO publications – whether for sale or for noncommercial distribution – should be addressed to WHO Press, at the above address (fax: +41 22 791 4806; e-mail: [permissions@who.int](mailto:permissions@who.int)).

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Health Organization concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.

The mention of specific companies or of certain manufacturers' products does not imply that they are endorsed or recommended by the World Health Organization in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned. Errors and omissions excepted, the names of proprietary products are distinguished by initial capital letters.

All reasonable precautions have been taken by the World Health Organization to verify the information contained in this publication. However, the published material is being distributed without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied. The responsibility for the interpretation and use of the material lies with the reader. In no event shall the World Health Organization be liable for damages arising from its use.

Designed by Paprika, France  
 Printed by the WHO Document Production Services, Geneva, Switzerland