MRC Funding opportunities

NCRI Living with and Beyond Cancer Conference, Manchester

29 April 2019

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2017/18 MRC Research Expenditure

- **Researcher led grants**, £218m • 31%
- **Directed/Managed funding**, £109m • 16%
- **Shared facilities and platforms**, £109m • 16%
- **Units**, £139m • 20%
- **Institutes**, £128m • 18%
- **Fellowships**, £42m • 6%
- **Studentships and Training Grants**, £24m • 4%

The MRC is part of UK Research and Innovation
Discovery science and applied research portfolio

MRC
5 year Average
13/14 – 17/18

- Underpinning
- Prevention of Disease and Conditions, and Promotion of Well-Being
- Development of Treatments and Therapeutic Interventions
- Management of Diseases and Conditions

- Mechanisms of Disease (aetiology)
- Detection, Screening and Diagnosis
- Evaluations of Treatments and Therapeutic Interventions
- Health and Social Care Services Research

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Current MRC Strategy and Prioritisation

- Overall strategy to guide investment
- Supported by Board/theme strategies and opportunities

**Priority Challenges**
- Infections and AMR
- Lifelong mental health and dementia
- Prevention and population health
- Regenerative medicine and advanced therapies

**Discovery for Medicine**
- Cell and tissue systems
- Experimental Medicine
- Mechanism to population
- Therapeutic Target Validation

**Transforming Health Research and Innovation**
- Data Science and computation
- Stratified Medicine
- Novel technologies for health
- Academic/industry relationships

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Emerging themes for Strategy Refresh
Infections & immunity
- Global health
- Immunity and infection through the life course
- Data integration and systems approaches

Neurosciences & mental health
- Mental health studies
- Neurodegeneration
- Insight into the living human brain

Molecular & cellular medicine
- Understanding dynamic biological systems
- Exposures, biological mechanisms and disease
- Radiation oncology & biology

Population & system medicine
- Multimorbidities
- Mechanisms and models of human diseases
- Integrated population health
- Nutrition

Relevance to LWBC

MH studies:
- focusing on children and adolescents;
- exploring co-morbidities of physical and MH

Population-level research (epidemiological, etc)

Understanding the biological effects of radiation exposure on normal and malignant tissue; application of this knowledge to improve radiation treatment.

Medical Sociology
- Lifestyle, socio-economic and behavioural impacts on health
- Health inequalities
- Population and disease-related cohorts
UK Prevention Research Partnership

Vision: sustainable, cost-effective ways of improving UK population health through the primary prevention of NCDs

Key Objectives:
- interdisciplinary and whole systems approaches to prevention
- focus on better translation and industry engagement
- capitalise on emerging technologies, big data and discovery research
- support methodological innovation

Scope: physical health as well as mental health and wellbeing

Funding available: £50-55m over 6-7 years

First call for proposals: launched in October 2017 for large interdisciplinary consortia (£4-7m, 5 years) and smaller scale networks >> awards anticipated in March 2019
MRC-NIHR Methodology Research Programme

£4m per annum; Call open October and May

Remit covers the breadth of MRC and NIHR remit:

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Applications must:
- Respond to an evidenced **need** for improvement to underpinning methods
- Include **engagement** with end-users for the methodology
- Provide a pathway to **generalise** beyond given case-studies
- Improve current practice (dissemination, **implementation** and impact)

Includes investigator-led and strategic opportunities - check the website: [https://mrc.ukri.org/funding/science-areas/methodology-research/](https://mrc.ukri.org/funding/science-areas/methodology-research/)

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Diseases often cluster together triggered by shared underlying mechanisms resulting in **multimorbidity**, the presence of two or more concurrent long-term health conditions.

MRC recognizes the multimorbidity challenge and is seeking to stimulate research in this emerging area:

- Multimorbidity is an opportunity area for researcher-led applications to PSMB
- Engaging with the DHSC/NIHR, Wellcome and other funders to:
  - align multimorbidity research efforts both nationally and globally
  - plan cross-funder activities
- MRC research agenda concentrated on the discovery and targeting common biological pathways of multiple diseases to prevent and treat multimorbidity
Development Pathway Funding Scheme (DPFS)

**In remit:**

- Development and pre-clinical testing of novel therapeutic entities, devices and diagnostics through to early-phase clinical studies (Ph I to Ph IIa)

- “Repurposing” clinical studies – existing therapies in new indications

**Out of remit:**

- Discovery science including mechanistic studies and biomarker identification (MRC research boards)
- **Technology development** where not aligned to a medical/clinical developmental plan (likely BBSRC or EPSRC remit)
- Phase 2b and 3 clinical trials & trials of non-novel agent-disease combinations (NIHR)
Clinical Academic Research Partnerships

Aims

- Support collaborative high-quality research partnerships between outstanding research groups and clinical colleagues
- Connect basic biomedical science better to clinical research and rapidly enhance medical research capacity

Scheme

- PhD-qualified consultant-level NHS clinicians, with a PhD or MD who do not have any current substantive research activity
- 30–50% of the applicant’s salary, for 1–3 years, and consumables costs
- 2 rounds in 2019
- £12m available, supported by the MRC and the NIHR
- Next deadline: 18 June 2019

https://mrc.ukri.org/funding/browse/carp/clinical-academic-research-partnerships/