



A Why have a research funding strategy?

In developing a *Research Funding Strategy*, DMT's main objectives are to:

- Continue to enhance the special contribution that DMT can make to the field of medical research, particularly research related to ageing and older people.
- Maintain a balance between research and other grants in allocating resources at DMT's disposal.
- Encourage high quality research applications within the stated DMT's vision and purpose.
- Ensure that DMT supported projects will qualify for the Government's Charity Research Support Fund.

B The historical context

Over the last 55 years, DMT has supported a wide range of medical research in various universities and hospitals throughout the UK.

In 1999, the Trustees agreed that, in the light of the demographic changes towards an increasingly ageing population, the main priority for support should be research and other activities and developments related to older people and ageing. This focus has increasingly informed decision-making on grants over recent years.

C DMT's specific areas of interest

DMT's specific areas of interest are:

- Research that is concerned with:
 - diseases and issues of ageing;
 - the care and environment of older people;
 - disabilities that predominantly affect older people;
 - rehabilitation.
- Initiatives aimed at evaluating and improving patient care or public health;
- Areas where it is difficult to attract funding (e.g. incontinence, end of life research);
- Pilot studies which could establish whether major studies are justified.

D What types of research will DMT support?

DMT is keen to support applied research projects that are smaller in scale than those undertaken by major funders such as Research Councils, and Wellcome. DMT will also consider applications for staff posts or apparatus for specific purposes. Priority will be given to:

- clinical research rather than basic science (with the exception of pilot/'proof of concept' studies);
- research which has the potential to be translatable into effective practice within a reasonable time frame;
- research carried out on a multidisciplinary basis;

PLEASE NOTE

The publication of this *Research Funding Strategy* is intended to help applicants assess whether their research proposal is likely to be of interest to DMT.

It should be read in conjunction with the Dunhill Medical Trust's Guidelines for Research Grants

[RESEARCH GRANTS – guidelines for applicants.pdf](#)

- health services research and public health research;
- activities which will expand the research capacity in the above areas.

DMT will also consider applications related to the more qualitative end of the research spectrum (e.g. research related to modifiable risk factors for well-being and health: environmental factors, diet, stress, exercise, social participation, recreation etc.)

E Balance between research and non-research grants

DMT supports both research and a wide range of other non-research related projects. In 2004/05, research grants amounted to £1.2m (i.e. 38 per cent of available resources). If other research-related grants are included (e.g. building grants for research institutes), this amount rises to £1.5m (i.e. almost half of DMT's total spending). In future, DMT will aim to spend roughly half of its resources on research, with the balance dedicated to non-research activity.

F Where will DMT allocate grants?

DMT has no specific geographical link and will consider supporting applications anywhere within the UK. Although the Trust aims to ensure equitable access to grants across the UK applications are considered on merit alone. Research grants may be allocated to any organisation with the appropriate capacity, research record and governance arrangements. Non-research grants may be awarded to appropriate organisations/charities which can demonstrate significant effort to achieve funds through a variety of routes, strong financial management and a well worked out business plan.

G How will DMT support research?

DMT will seek to achieve its aims through providing:

- Research grants for amounts up to £500k to cover salaries, consumables, small dedicated pieces of equipment and (exceptionally) travel costs, but not the full economic costs of research.
- Research grants are normally for a maximum of three years. If exceptional circumstances can be clearly demonstrated, grants may be extended to five years not less than six months before the end of the grant.
- Building and/or equipment grants for innovative developments in the designated research areas.
- Research fellowships, studentships etc. aimed at expanding research capacity in the designated priority areas.
- *Serendipity Awards* to enable the testing of an idea which comes from an unexpected clinical or laboratory observation or well grounded practice to obtain proof of concept
- Exceptionally, endowments for innovative academic posts within a priority area.

Note:

- Support will be normally given directly to researchers within academic or NHS institutions, rather than through a third party (e.g. a charity dedicated to a specific condition).
- DMT will not support research in respect of medical areas such as heart disease and cancer which are already supported by large dedicated charities.
- Where appropriate, DMT will be happy to work in partnership with other not-for-profit organisations to maximise the effectiveness of its funding (e.g. joint research fellowships).

H Who will DMT support?

DMT will support research carried out by:

- clinicians from all health professions (including allied health professionals) with the relevant qualifications and experience to undertake the research;
- scientists working in health-related fields (including epidemiologists, social scientists, health economists etc.) with the relevant qualifications and experience to undertake the research;
- clinicians and scientists in training and/or registered to study for a higher qualification and who are supervised by an appropriately qualified clinician/scientist.

I Processes/systems underpinning DMT's research programme

A rigorous procedure has been established for assessing research applications. This includes the implementation of a peer review system with:

- A Grants & Research Committee, including external advisers with specific expertise in DMT's areas of interest.
- Reference to appropriate external referees to provide expert opinion on individual applications.

The Trust has also established a system to identify a formally approved and explicitly stated research sponsor for all DMT funded projects.

DMT aims to make information for potential applicants as widely available as possible and all grant-making documents and guidelines can be easily downloaded from DMT's website.

J Implementation plan

In order to achieve the aims of its *Research Funding Strategy*, DMT will:

- Agree and implement initiatives aimed at improving the number of high quality research applications within three years.
- Ensure that more than 75 per cent of DMT research funding supports the Trust's *Research Funding Strategy* within the next five years.
- Maintain an appropriate peer review process and ensure that all research supported by DMT is subject to it.
- By the end of 2006/07, have an appropriately restructured *Fellowship Programme* (working with partner organisations) which supports postdoctoral studies, specialist registrars registered for an MD or other health professionals who are suitably qualified and have a clear and feasible programme to offer.
- By the end of 2009/10, have a fully functioning *Research Studentship Programme* (with partner organisations or alone) which supports PhD students, clinicians and others in the early years of their training to undertake research;
- Have an agreed set of guidance documents which support the delivery of objectives, which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are consistent with the *Research Funding Strategy* and the overall strategic objectives of the Trust.