

Medical Research Scotland – Research Strategy

Introduction

Medical Research Scotland is the largest and most comprehensive medical research charity in Scotland. Originally established as the Scottish Hospital Endowments Research Trust (SHERT) by Act of Parliament in 1953, it was a non-departmental public body with charitable status. It became a fully independent charity in November 2005 and since April 2006 has operated under the name of Medical Research Scotland. (For full information on the historical background, enabling legislation, operational structures and procedures, see: <http://www.medicalresearchscotland.org.uk/about.htm>)

The endowment funds of Medical Research Scotland are administered by a body of Members who receive no fee or remuneration for their services, supported by a number of professional advisers, investment managers and auditors. The day-to-day administration of the charity is the responsibility of the Trust Secretaries.

The Members of Medical Research Scotland are only empowered to provide support for research from the income received from the endowment funds.

Medical Research Scotland supporting research (*WHY we support research*)

Medical Research Scotland aims to improve health standards by funding research of the highest quality into the cause, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of all forms of illness and genetic disorders, and into the advancement of medical technology.

Its objects are to:

- receive and hold endowments, donations and bequests
- make grants from these to promote medical research in Scotland
- engage in fundraising activities for the purposes of the Trust
- develop and exploit ideas and exploit intellectual property.

Medical Research Scotland fulfils its objects by supporting research-minded members of the scientific, medical, dental, nursing, midwifery & allied health professions by giving them the opportunity to pursue high-calibre research either independently or in collaboration with colleagues in their own or other universities, major hospitals or research units in Scotland. It seeks to provide support for people in the early stages of their research careers.

Research eligible for support from Medical Research Scotland (*WHAT type of research we will support*)

Medical Research Scotland is committed to supporting only the highest-quality research, as judged by international peer review. It is comprehensive in its support of medical research and is not focused on research into any one disease or disorder. It supports the broad spectrum of clinical and laboratory-based medical research, all of which is aimed at: improving understanding of the basic mechanisms of disease processes; or improving the diagnosis, treatment or prevention of disease; or the advancement of medical technology.

Scotland's population suffers from undesirably high levels of many diseases, including **cancer, heart disease, stroke, rheumatic diseases**, HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases and neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Medical Research Scotland supports research into all these conditions, and many more.

The funds available to Medical Research Scotland are divided between a general endowment fund for medical research and a small number of endowment funds earmarked (by donors' express wishes) for research into specific disorders. The earmarked funds are as follows: Arthritis; Cancer; Cardiac & Vascular diseases; Diabetes; Kidney diseases; Neurological diseases.

Researchers eligible for support from Medical Research Scotland (*WHO we will support and WHERE*)

Medical Research Scotland is committed to making a difference to people in the early stages of their careers in medical research. Funding, therefore, is *normally* directed to those members of the scientific, medical, dental, nursing, midwifery & allied health professions who are under 35 years of age and whose research proposals are judged by international peer review to be of the highest quality.

The level of qualification required of those eligible for consideration depends on the type of award for which an application is being made. For example, those applying for the Tyson Research Fellowship must be registered practitioners from one of the Nursing, Midwifery or Allied Health Professions and carry out the project work in an established research team. Those applying for a Research Project Grant, or 'pump-priming' support will *normally* be expected to hold a clinical or other professional qualification and be registered with the appropriate professional body, or hold a PhD (or equivalent) and have some years of research experience.

Medical Research Scotland will only support research carried out in universities, recognised research institutions or NHS teaching hospitals in Scotland. Applicants may, at the time of their application, be based anywhere in the world, but they will only be supported if their research will be carried out in Scotland and hosted by a recognised research organisation.

Research support available from Medical Research Scotland (*HOW we plan to fund research, WHEN we make funding available and for HOW LONG*)

Medical Research Scotland principally offers Research Project Grants and the number of awards made in any one year is at the discretion of the Members, who meet as a full body twice a year (normally February and August) to consider funding proposals.

Research Project Grants of up to three years' duration and to a maximum value of £150,000 are for defined research projects proposed by eligible individuals. Medical Research Scotland will also provide 'pump-priming' support or support for feasibility studies of appropriate duration which would allow the recipients to go on to receive mainstream funding from the Research Councils or major research charities. Research Project Grants are awarded twice-yearly and involve a two-stage application process. The number of grants awarded is variable.

A two-year Research Fellowship (the Tyson Fellowship) enables a registered practitioner from the Nursing, Midwifery & Allied Health Professions to undertake a research project as part of an established research team in Scotland on any relevant aspect of clinical nursing, midwifery or AHP research, which may be on evidence-based practice, quality of life issues and/or education programmes for disease prevention, early detection and implementation. Suitable subjects might include, for example: cancer, palliative care, cardiovascular disease & stroke, lung diseases, rheumatic diseases, genetic disorders, gerontology, pain management, critical care, transplantation issues, safe drug handling, maternity & child health, mental health, public health. The Tyson Fellowship may be awarded annually to a maximum value of £80,000.

Information about the closing dates for all Medical Research Scotland awards, together with the detailed information about eligibility and other conditions for each type of award is available from the "Applying for Funding" page of the website: (<http://www.medicalresearchscotland.org.uk/apply.htm>).

The future of research support from Medical Research Scotland

The Members of Medical Research Scotland intend to:

- continue to provide support for research into the cause, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of all forms of illness and genetic disorders, and into the advancement of medical technology
- maintain their commitment to supporting only the highest-quality research as judged by rigorous international peer review
- maintain their commitment to making a difference to younger researchers by providing support at a level which enables them to take early steps towards independent research careers
- keep under review the appropriateness and adequacy of the awards offered by Medical Research Scotland to ensure the most effective use of the funds available to them and in light of the continually changing medical, educational and research scene in Scotland, seeking advice from expert individuals and bodies outwith the Membership where appropriate
- augment the funds available to enable the continued support and maintenance of the outstanding contribution of Scottish medical research to healthcare throughout the world
- promote the contribution that Medical Research Scotland makes to better health care, both as a means to increase donations and also to further encourage research-minded young doctors, scientists, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals working in Scotland.

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