



RDS London NEWSLETTER

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Research Design Service London - The Key to Success!

Research Design Service (RDS) London has been providing support to researchers in the capital for almost three years now. The impact of their support is apparent in the number of applications which have succeeded in obtaining funding with guidance from RDS London and its team of expert advisers. With experience and knowledge available from teams at four of the top universities in London; King's College London, Imperial College London, Queen Mary University of London and University College of London, it really does pay to get them involved!

RDS London has helped many teams in developing grant applications. Over 350 have submitted their proposals and 94 of those have had news that they have been successful. Teams have secured funds from many of the NIHR programmes, research councils and charities.

We spoke to some of the researchers that have used RDS London to find out what it was that makes their support so invaluable.

Professor Louise Howard, Head of Section of Women's Mental Health at the Institute of Psychiatry approached RDS London in July 2011 for help with her application to the NIHR Policy Research Programme titled 'Optimising outcomes for victims of violence, trauma and abuse: the NHS response to human trafficking'.

Prof. Howard received help from advisers based at KCL, who gave some general advice on her application; more specialist advice was also given from Carol Porteous, the patient and public involvement lead for RDS London.

We asked Prof. Howard how RDS London helped with her application:

"I found the input to be helpful in providing an early form of peer review. It was extremely useful to get feedback from reviewers who are not specialists on the topics as this reflects how the panel is likely to perceive the proposal. I would highly recommend to others!"

Professor Khalid Khan, Professor of Women's Health and Clinical Epidemiology at Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry received funding from NIHR HTA in September 2011 on his project titled 'Cell Salvage in Caesarean Section in Women at risk of Haemorrhage – an RCT', he said:

'I approached the RDS for support with an application for NIHR HTA funding and was able to meet with members of their team to discuss the proposal in detail. The RDS advised on the required sample size, statistical methods and health economic evaluation, and also contributed to crafting the relevant sections of the grant application. I was very pleased with the standard of advice received. I think this is an excellent service for researchers who are preparing grant applications.'

RDS London are delighted to see they are making a difference to the quality of research which is being funded in London. They have the ability to support a wide range of schemes and can support you right up to submission, so please don't hesitate to contact them!

Welcome from the Programme Manager

Happy New Year to all our readers!

The Chancellors autumn statement delivered in November again emphasised the key role that health research plays in the national economy as well as improving health and care. The statement highlights the set up of a new Health Research Authority to streamline regulation and improve the cost effectiveness of clinical trials. This is being supported by the NIHR Research Support Services that have been established to reduce duplication of R&D checks (and not to be confused with NIHR Research Design Services!). Updates were also provided on many of the goals set out in the Plan for Growth. Some of these will affect research teams putting together grant applications. For example, there is a plan to include a clause in all NIHR contracts with NHS providers that will require them to measure for any clinical trial they host, the time taken from receipt of a research protocol to the recruitment of the first patient. The target for this is less than 70 days.



RDS London has continued to engage with researchers in the capital; an NIHR Open Day held at the London School of Economics on the 22nd November proved to be very popular. The event was completely full and saw an impressive 140 researchers attend throughout the day. Presentations in the morning from the NIHR Co-ordinating Centres and RDS London gave the audience a broad overview of the funding available for health and social care research and the support that can be provided. One of the afternoon sessions was dedicated to giving research teams an opportunity to discuss a proposed research study in more detail with an RDS adviser or with representatives from the funding programmes. A parallel session then gave an overview on how to put together a convincing grant application. If you were unable to attend the event and would like to see a selection of the presentations given on the day, then please visit our website.

An RDS drop-in clinic was held at Whipps Cross University Hospital NHS Trust on the 28th November. These clinics provide an excellent opportunity for NHS staff to find out more about the service we offer and meet the team for initial discussions on proposed studies. We are keen to make access to our service as easy as possible, so if you'd like to discuss a possible event at your institutions then please do get in touch.

Dr Peter Lovell
Programme Manager

Events Diary

- On 22nd February from 11am - 3pm RDS London will be holding their popular RfPB Research Design Clinic which is specifically aimed for researchers applying for RfPB funding. The clinic will be held at the Wellcome Collection on Euston Road. Bookings are now open so please visit our website for more details!
- Every Thursday from 10am-1pm on the 16th floor of the Tower Wing, Guy's Hospital RDS London have a drop-in clinic for researchers based in South London. No need to book just turn up.
- Keep an eye out on our website for news of any upcoming local events we may be holding. We will be announcing details of a Patient and Public Involvement workshop, to be held in the Spring, very soon!

Obtaining statistical input for a research grant application: when do you need it?

by Victoria Cornelius, Statistician at KCL



My role at RDS London is to provide statistical advice and guidance to researchers on their grant applications. The most frequent request I receive is for help to calculate a sample size for their study. This calculation will be based on the primary research question; however this is sometimes not fully specified by researchers in applications. The research question should be defined such that a primary outcome, comparison and overall aim of the study are inferred. A sample size calculation cannot be calculated in isolation. Unless the researcher has a very keen interest in statistics, a study usually requires a study statistician.

Statisticians often work with researchers to define the research question and this subsequently informs the aims, design, sample size calculation and statistical analysis. The aim of a study maybe to find a significant difference of an outcome between treatment groups, or it may be to estimate an outcome with a specified level of confidence. The research question, aims, design, sample size calculation and statistical analysis are all intrinsically linked, so it's important to make sure this is reflected in your application and this is what a study statistician will help you with.

Grant awarding bodies are aware of the importance of statistics in the success of a study, so they will be looking for evidence that the statistical aspects of your application have had and will have an appropriate level of input from a statistician. At RDS we can provide you with statistical advice and guidance at the design stage of your study, and we can also provide additional help in finding a statistician to join your team.



Workshops and Conferences

6th - 7th March 2012

i4i Life Sciences Accelerator programme

For further information and to book a place visit:

<http://www.ccf.nihr.ac.uk/i4i/Pages/i4iAcceleratorProg.aspx>

18th April 2012

University of Greenwich and Kent and Medway Comprehensive Local Research Network Research Day

To book a place:

www.crncc.nihr.ac.uk/about_us/ccrn/kent_medway/news/UGKMCLRN

20th April 2012

Enteric Event - Mind the Gap

<http://www.bowelfunctionhtc.org.uk/>

For further details and more workshops and conferences in London please visit our website www.rdslondon.co.uk/workshops

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Funding Deadlines

NIHR Central Commissioning Facility (CCF) Funding Deadlines

Programme Grants for Applied Research
 Submission Comp 12 (stage1) 19 March 2012

Programme Development Grants
 Submission Comp 7 5th March 2012

Research for Patient Benefit Comp 18
 Submission 18th May 2012

NIHR National Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC) Funding Deadlines

Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation (EME) programme
 Submission (Researcher led) 9th March 2012
 Submission (Commissioned) 13th Feb 2012

HTA Clinical Evaluation and Trials
 Submission 2nd May 2012

Health Services and Delivery Research (HS&DR)
 Submission (Researcher led) 15th March 2012
 Submission (Commissioned) 17th May 2012

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Update



Carol Porteous PPI Lead

This being our first newsletter of 2012, I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year. This year the world's attention will be on London, for the London 2012 Olympics, the Cultural Olympiad and the Queen's Jubilee. So I hope that you all enjoy the spotlight on London in 2012 and that you have a healthy, happy and successful year.

In RDS London our attention, once again is focused on helping researchers across London make this year a successful one. As you will probably have already seen in our events section, we will be holding the first RfPB Research Design Clinic of the year on the 22nd of February at the Wellcome Collection on Euston Road, from 11am till 3pm. This event is your chance to come and speak with a research advisor about your project and also to find out more about what RDS London can do for you.

As Patient Public Involvement (PPI) Lead for the Research Design Service London my role within the RDS is to help advise, develop and encourage patient and public involvement within proposals and unfortunately I see a great many applicants and applications that leave PPI till the last minute and by then it is probably too late to incorporate well developed, sound PPI into your proposal.

I will be at the RfPB Research Design Clinic and available to talk to any of you attending on the day about the PPI within your projects. You may be at the very early stages and are unsure of when and how to begin incorporating PPI into your proposal if so then come along to our clinic and have a chat with me. I will be able to give you information on how to apply for an Enabling Involvement Fund (EIF), how to advertise for patients and the public on the Involving London website, to answer any general queries and get you started with PPI in plenty of time for the RfPB deadline in May.

If you have any questions or just want to know more about what is expected in terms of patient and public involvement in your RfPB proposal please do book a slot with an advisor and ask to speak to me on the day. I look forward to seeing you there!

New agony aunt style column in our next issue!

An all new agony aunt style column will be appearing here from our next issue in June! RDS London invites you to ask our team of expert advisers anything you may want to know on:

- specific aspects of study design
- research terminology
- patient and public involvement
- dealing with failure from previous funding competitions

If there is a question you would like answered then please don't hesitate to contact us. No question is too big or small!

Contact us now by emailing info@rdslondon.co.uk with agony aunt in the subject. We will try to answer as many of your questions as possible.



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