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## Reporting back from the Residential Research School 2011

For the past seven years experts from the RDS - South West have come together for a week at the RDS Residential Research School to work intensively with research teams to develop NIHR grant applications.

The aim of the Research School is to assist the researchers to develop a research proposal which they will be able to take forward as a high quality funding application.

Selection for the school is through an open competition in which the teams bid for a place in the form of a research proposal. The primary criterion for selection is the potential of the research idea to attract peer reviewed funding from a major national research funding organisation.

This year a team from North Bristol NHS Trust won one of the places at the school, so we took the opportunity to ask a couple of members who attended to share their experience.

### Dimitrios Siassakos

NIHR Academic Clinical Lecturer in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.



### Why did you approach the School?

*"We were keen on receiving input from experts to an ambitious multi-site project. Our unit has rapidly evolved from niche researchers to a recognised centre for clinical improvement and quality in maternity care, but we still benefit from guidance on how to use our enthusiasm and skills appropriately. We had heard from other researchers that the RDS 1-day workshop was very good and fit-for-purpose, and wanted to try the full 6-day version."*

### How has it benefitted you?

*"We have worked on, and significantly improved, an NIHR SDO (Service Delivery and Organisation) grant application that is now through to the last stage of the NIHR selection process. We enjoyed collaboration with experts in different aspects of the design process: methodologists, statisticians, qualitative researchers, health economists. We also had the opportunity to discuss future ideas and collaborations, not just with the RDS experts but also with the other attending research teams."*

### Was the process easy to apply (what did you have to do)?

*"We completed a formal application, which is similar to other common grant application forms. This meant that the project had to be developed to some extent before attending the school."*

### What was the highlight for you?

*"The highlight was being awarded the 'project closest to funding'; though it has increased the pressure on us to be successful in the final stage of the application to SDO..."*

## Would you recommend it to other researchers?

*"Without any reservations - an extremely rewarding week".*

## What was the one key message you came away with?

*"Recipe to success: describe and explain (a project) - in detail!"*

### Jo Crofts

NIHR Academic Clinical Lecturer, Department of Obs & Gynae, Southmead Hospital, Bristol.

*"The school was an excellent experience that I would recommend to any NBT teams preparing a research project. The week was extremely well organised and really useful in helping us prepare our research*

*proposal. All the RDS experts were very supportive and really helped with the development of the proposal.*

*In fact, following our application to the research school the local RDS staff recommended that we applied for NIHR Service Delivery & Organisation funding for our project. We submitted an outline SDO proposal in March and heard on the second day of the research school that we had been shortlisted for funding!*

*We are now awaiting the feedback from the SDO so that we can prepare the full application (we will have 8 weeks to complete the full application from receiving the feedback - so expect to be*

*submitting the full proposal in mid-July).*

*I would certainly recommend the research school to other departments at NBT".*

This year the Residential Research School was held in the depths of Somerset. It runs each year, is open to researchers from across the south west region and is supported by NHS Trusts.

Please contact the RDS – South West on [rds-sw@tst.nhs.uk](mailto:rds-sw@tst.nhs.uk) or 01823 342792 if you are planning to develop an NIHR grant application or are interested in finding out more about the Residential Research School.

## Patients put in charge of their own pain control in new study

Emergency care doctors and nurses in Plymouth have been awarded £250,000 funding from the NIHR Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) Programme, obtained with RDS support.

Consultant in Emergency Medicine Jason Smith, and Mark Rockett, a Consultant in Pain Medicine, alongside Research Nurse Rosalyn Squire, will use the money to run a trial over two and a half years in the Emergency Department at Plymouth's Derriford Hospital to find out whether patients get more relief if they administer their own pain control.

The College of Emergency Medicine recommends that patients in severe pain should receive analgesia within 20 minutes of arrival in the



Emergency Department (ED), with regular reassessment and further action as required. However, effective pain control is often not achieved and almost half of ED patients in a recent survey felt more could have been done to treat their pain.

Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) is routinely used in other hospital settings (most often post-operatively) where the patient is fitted with a syringe driver which allows them to control their own pain relief, depending on need.

PCAs are safe and effective but their value in ED is unknown. The team from the ED at Derriford Hospital in Plymouth, working with the RDS, have designed the trial to assess whether the use of PCAs in ED is an effective and cost-effective alternative to nurse-titrated analgesia: **(PAin SoluTions In the Emergency Setting – PASTIES)**.

Jason, Mark and Rosalyn approached the RDS with the idea to evaluate the use of PCA in patients in pain in ED. Although simple in concept, there were both practical and methodological issues to be addressed (for example, what happens when the patient is transferred to the ward? How can pain be reliably recorded in this setting?). These and many other issues were discussed in depth at the RDS-SW Residential

Research School in November 2009. The team returned to Plymouth with the essentials for a competitive grant application and a realistic plan to take the study forward.

An application was submitted to the South West RfPB Committee in January 2010, with the successful outcome conveyed about six

months later. Jason and the team have recently heard that their application for ethical approval has been successful and they will thus shortly be recruiting patients.

Dr Mark Rockett said *“The Research School and the RDS – South West were critical in shaping a good idea into a successful RfPB grant*

*application - we couldn't have done it without you”.*

Dr Jason Smith, who is leading the project, added: *“Without the RDS we would still be groping around in the dark rather than where we are, about to start recruiting 400 patients to a well-funded study, so thanks again for all the input.”*

## **Grant Applications Workshop, Gloucester**

**The RDS–SW is running a one-day workshop on 29th September 2011 in Gloucester for researchers who are developing proposals with the intention of applying for a grant.**

The workshop does not provide detailed training in research methodology, rather it more generally covers the full range of issues inherent in developing a successful grant application.

The RDS has a particular interest in supporting applications to the Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) Programme, and this workshop will be particularly useful for people wishing to apply to that scheme. However, it is also relevant for those applying to other NIHR funding schemes and indeed other applied health research funders such as national charities.

Competition for these grants is fierce and the workshop aims to help participants understand how to improve their chances of success.

The Grant Applications Workshop is directed at researchers who are considering applying to peer-reviewed funding competitions for applied health or social care



research, and is intended to allow them to turn good applications into excellent ones.

Researchers will need to send in advance the latest draft of their research proposal. As a minimum they should have a plan for a project but, ideally, a worked up proposal, perhaps even one that has been previously rejected. Some of these will be selected and used as illustrative material during the workshop. However, all proposals will receive detailed written feedback.

This **free** full day workshop will be held at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, Redwood House, Education Centre, Great Western Road, Gloucester, GL1 3NN on **Thursday 29th September 2011.**

It will comprise short talks and group work on different elements of the application. The team

leading the workshop has a wealth of experience in working collaboratively to develop grant applications for peer review funding.

Applications to attend the workshop should be submitted on the standard form available on the RDS – SW website at: [www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk/events.htm](http://www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk/events.htm)

You will also need to attach a copy of your written research proposal at whatever stage it is at now - this can be an early draft or a well worked up application, but as a minimum you need to outline the research question that you want to address, why you think it is an important research question and how you are going to address it.

Applications will be reviewed and places awarded to applicants with suitable proposals.

The **deadline** for receipt of completed application forms and research proposals is **Friday 29th July 2011.**

For further information, visit the RDS - South West website at: [www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk) or contact our Co-ordinating Centre on 01823 342792 or [rds-sw@tst.nhs.uk](mailto:rds-sw@tst.nhs.uk)

## New NIHR Health Services & Delivery Research Programme

Professor Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer, recently announced that, *"Building on the successes and strengths of the NIHR Health Services Research and Service Delivery and Organisation programmes, I have great pleasure in announcing that a new NIHR Health Services and Delivery Research programme is to be established by merging the two existing programmes. This will allow the development of common aims and methods, focused on the public and decision makers needs, whilst simplifying the research funding landscape, reducing bureaucracy and reducing management costs."*



improve service effectiveness, efficiency and productivity. In keeping with the existing programmes, the audiences for this research will be the public, service users, clinicians and managers. The budget of the new programme will be the total of the two existing programmes at £16m per year.

The first call for proposals will open in early 2012. In order to ensure that the commissioning of high quality research is sustained, the existing Health Services

Research and Service Delivery and Organisation calls, programme boards and panels will continue to operate until December 2011.

The current arrangements for monitoring of existing funded projects remain in place. Deadlines and milestones are unchanged, and the current secretariat will continue to support projects.

For more information see: [www.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.nihr.ac.uk)

The new programme will still have the two main work streams of health services research and healthcare delivery research. The former will focus on research into the quality, appropriateness, effectiveness, equity and patient experience of health services. The latter will focus on evaluating models of service organisation, delivery and interventions, which have the potential to

## Contact Us

Each RDS office is run by an experienced researcher, well equipped to provide practical and user-friendly advice on the research process and applying for funding. If you are unsure of where your nearest office is, or who best to contact, simply get in touch with the **Co-ordinating Centre, Taunton** on **01823 342792** or [rds-sw@tst.nhs.uk](mailto:rds-sw@tst.nhs.uk) or visit our website at: [www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk)

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