



**World Health  
Organization**

**Patient Safety**

A World Alliance for Safer Health Care

WHO Patient Safety Small Research Grants

## A Summary



*Better Knowledge for Safer Care*



The aim of this WHO Patient Safety initiative is to stimulate research on patient safety priorities worldwide, by providing seed funding for small research projects. In addition, it is envisaged that the initiative will contribute to building local research capacity and will help raise awareness about patient safety.

*“to promote the culture of patient safety”*

## Objectives of the initiative

- to increase research on patient safety by providing seed funding for 20–30 small research projects per year;
- to contribute to building local capacity for research on patient safety by providing grants to research institutions and research teams in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, especially for projects in which young researchers and those in early or mid career are the lead investigators; and
- to promote the culture of patient safety by improving dissemination of research findings to the global community.

**Between US\$ 10 000 and US\$ 25 000 per grant will be available.**

The amount is flexible, but the grant must be appropriately justified. The grant may be renewable if the first project is completed satisfactorily and funding is available.

This initiative first called for proposals in 2008. As a result, 21 projects from around the world were selected for funding and will be initiated before the end of 2009. This year up to US\$ 500 000 has been allocated to support the small grants research project.



## Eligibility



- Grants are intended for well-designed, well-defined research projects, which can be completed within 12–18 months.
- Research in all methodological and clinical disciplines that address patient safety is encouraged.
- The proposed studies may be conducted in any health-care setting, including hospitals, primary care, ambulatory care, community care and home care. Research to be conducted in developing countries, and countries with economies in transition is particularly encouraged.
- Researchers at all stages of their careers are eligible to apply, although submissions from junior or mid-career researchers or those aged 45 or younger are especially welcomed.
- Principal investigators must be affiliated with a recognized institution located in the country in which the project will be conducted.
- Collaboration, both between institutions and between countries, is encouraged.
- Multi-disciplinary research teams with an appropriate mix of expertise, including clinicians, practitioners or policy-makers, are strongly encouraged.

## Research Priorities



The programme focuses on applied research. Applications that attempt to identify local solutions, or evaluate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of existing solutions are especially welcomed.

The grants will target research proposals that correspond to the global research priorities of WHO Patient Safety, of which the details are available at:

<http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/bmj.b1775>.

The current call for proposals will focus on the topics listed below, although studies on other topics among the global research priorities may be considered:

- Counterfeit and substandard drugs;
- Maternal and newborn care;
- Safe injection practices;
- Improving competencies, training and skills;
- Communication and coordination across care pathways;
- Latent organizational failures.

## Assessment and selection

*“relevance, significance and originality”*

Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis, following peer review by a panel of external experts. Selection criteria will include:

- relevance, significance and originality of the research question(s);
- scientific merit, i.e. adequacy of the study design, appropriateness of the method and the measurements to be made and validity of the instruments to be used for data collection;
- adequacy of management of the project team and the project plan;
- adequacy of the budget and value for money.



The assessment will consist of three steps:

### Step 1: Screening

The Research Secretariat will examine the applications to ensure their eligibility and the completeness and accuracy of the information supplied. The screening panel will carry out a first screening of the project. Those reaching a minimum threshold will be forwarded to the review panel for peer review. The identity of the researchers and their institution(s) will be removed from the applications to ensure confidentiality and impartiality.

### Step 2: Peer review

Members of the review panel will use pre-determined criteria to review the applications. Each proposal will be assessed by at least two reviewers. The assessment will be carried out in two phases. Phase 1 will be an assessment of scientific merit, the relevance of the proposal for policy and the strength of the plan for managing the project. This assessment will be 'blind' (the reviewers will be unaware of the identity of the applicant) to ensure objectivity and impartiality. Phase 2 will be an assessment of the capacity and ability of the investigators, the project team and their affiliated institution(s), to ensure that they have the necessary skills, experience and institutional support to carry out and complete the project.

All applications that meet the selection criteria will be ranked, and the applications with the highest scores will be recommended for funding. At this stage, the Research Secretariat may consult relevant regional focal points for patient safety or WHO country representatives for an additional assessment of the proposed project's estimated budget.

### Step 3: Ethical clearance by WHO Ethics Review Committee

All applications recommended for funding are subject to ethical approval by the WHO Ethics Review Committee. The Secretariat will work with the successful applicants and with the WHO Ethics Review Committee to facilitate this process.

## Contract and funding

In addition to approval from WHO ERC, all applications selected for consideration are also subject to adherence to WHO Patient Safety funding conditions and requirements. Grants will be awarded through a Technical Services Agreement between WHO and the host institution. The TSA terms and conditions are available in Conditions of Grants.

## Project management

The WHO Patient Safety Small Research Grants are managed by the Research Programme of WHO Patient Safety. The designated technical officer (TO) will coordinate with all relevant departments in WHO on behalf of the principal investigator.



## Call for proposals and timetable

The second call for the small grants initiative will be published on 1 July 2009. Applications for grants will be welcomed until 30 September 2009. Applications can only be submitted online.

Further information on the selection process, the conditions for awarding the grants and the application form are available on the WHO Patient Safety website. Future news, announcements and reports will also be posted on the website:

<http://www.who.int/patientsafety/research/grants/>.

Activity	Date
Call for proposals	1 July 2009
Closing date for applications	30 September 2009
Peer review of proposals	October - November 2009
Communication of the review outcomes	December 2009
Protocol preparation	January - February 2010
Applications reviewed by the WHO Ethics Review Committee	March - April 2010
Research projects commence	April - May 2010
Mid-term report due (six months after project commencement)	November 2010
Final report due (two months after project completion)	July - December 2011



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