

SPECIAL ARTICLE

Guidelines for Medical Research Projects in Papua New Guinea

MEDICAL RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE¹

- 1 All research projects related to human health and disease in Papua New Guinea must be brought to the attention of the Medical Research Advisory Committee. This will ensure that the Minister for Health, the Department of Health and all health workers can be made aware of work being undertaken and enable open lines of communication to be set up between different groups of research workers and with those responsible for delivering health care. The Medical Research Advisory Committee acts as the national scientific and ethical review board and as the institutional ethical committee for the Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research.
 - consent and the intended period of conduct of the study; and
 - a short list of relevant publications by the principal investigator(s) and by others in the field of the research project.
- 2 All research proposals related to human health and disease in Papua New Guinea should be submitted to the Medical Research Advisory Committee for scientific approval and ethical clearance. Proposals should include:
 - the name, full address and qualifications of the principal investigator(s) and the names and addresses of collaborating investigators;
 - a short title for the project;
 - a brief summary of the project in nontechnical language;
 - a statement of the aims and significance of the project, including its potential for improving human health;
 - a description of the background and research plan of the project in sufficient detail for proper assessment of the proposal to be made, including details of location, the study populations involved, the means of achieving informed
- 3 Submitted proposals fall into four categories:
 - i Projects to be carried out by or in collaboration with the Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research. Proposals will be submitted to the Medical Research Advisory Committee by the Director of the Institute of Medical Research.
 - ii Projects to be carried out by or in collaboration with members of the University of Papua New Guinea, the Department of Health or other Papua New Guinean institutions. Proposals will be submitted to the Medical Research Advisory Committee by the principal investigators or by the member of the Papua New Guinean institution who is responsible for the project. Proposals subjected to scientific and ethical review by the Medical Faculty Research Committee or the Health Systems Research Committee of the Department of Health (according to current delegation arrangements) will be submitted by their respective Chairpersons to the Medical Research Advisory Committee.
 - iii Projects to be carried out by other residents of Papua New Guinea. Proposals will be submitted by the principal investigators to the Medical Research Advisory Committee.
 - iv Projects to be carried out by nonresidents

¹ Department of Health, PO Box 807, Waigani, NCD 131, Papua New Guinea

of Papua New Guinea, apart from collaborative projects under (i) and (ii) above. Proposals will be submitted by the principal investigators to the Medical Research Advisory Committee. In order to expedite consideration of the proposal, it is recommended that a sponsor, who need not necessarily have any other involvement in the project but who is prepared to vouch for it, be found in Papua New Guinea. However, no proposal will be precluded from consideration by lack of a sponsor.

- 4 Projects which require funding or grants-in-aid may be submitted to the Medical Research Advisory Committee for funding. Since the Committee does not always have discretionary funding in its annual budget, intending applicants should consult with the Chairperson of the Committee before submission. Grants may in principle be approved for up to three years in the first instance. Grants may cover salaries of research staff, maintenance of the project (consumables, transport, field expenses etc), items of equipment and travel. Funds will be allocated according to the scientific and social merits of the project, and the funds available. Preference will be given to applications from Papua New Guinean citizens and investigators resident in Papua New Guinea. Applications should provide, in addition to the list given above:

the name and address of the institution, if any, which employs the principal investigator(s);

a clear statement of the budget for each year for which funding is sought, divided into personnel (salaries of full-time and part-time research staff), maintenance (laboratory consumables, field expenses, transport, office supplies, printing, computation expenses, utilities and other costs), equipment (non-consumable items worth more than K200) and travel (fares, accommodation and per diem allowances);

justification of the budget (a brief statement justifying each budgetary item in terms of its necessity for carrying out

the project and its cost); and

the names and addresses of two referees who are prepared to comment on the project.

Applications should be signed by the principal investigator(s) and by the financial officer of the institution, if any, which employs the principal investigator(s) and should indicate the intended starting date of the project.

The principal investigator(s) and financial officer should furnish a progress report and a financial report on the project after each year of funding, indicating any variation in the funds required for the following year, if any were already approved, and fully justifying any additional items (which will be approved only under exceptional circumstances).

- 5 Proposals, preferably with five copies, should be submitted to the Chairperson of the Medical Research Advisory Committee, Director of Research and Monitoring, Department of Health, PO Box 807, Waigani, NCD 131 (Aopi Centre, Waigani Drive). Proposals may be submitted at any time. The Committee meets every three months.
- 6 The titles and other relevant information for all proposals approved by the Medical Research Advisory Committee will be listed and published in the Papua New Guinea Medical Journal and similar periodicals and circulated to interested institutes and departments within Papua New Guinea.
- 7 Principal investigators are expected to provide progress and outcome reports on their projects to the Medical Research Advisory Committee. Copies of all final reports and publications arising out of the results of approved projects should be submitted to the Medical Research Advisory Committee, the Medical Library of the University of Papua New Guinea and the Library of the Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research.
- 8 Storage of primary data, serum etc in the Archives of the Papua New Guinea Institute

- of Medical Research may be arranged if required by the investigators of any approved project.
- 9 Biological samples and data collected remain the property of Papua New Guinea and should not without the permission of the Medical Research Advisory Committee be shared with a third party or used for purposes other than those for which they were approved.
 - 10 The Medical Research Advisory Committee should be consulted on all issues pertaining to intellectual property and commercial benefits that may arise from research conducted under its auspices.
 - 11 Any projects involving human subjects should conform to the necessary ethical standards. Guidance may be obtained from the principles set out, for example, in "Statement on Human Experimentation" published by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (GPO Box 9848, Canberra, ACT 2601, Australia).
 - 12 Any projects involving animal experimentation should conform to accepted principles. These are outlined, for example, in "Code of Practice for Experiments on Animals" published by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (GPO Box 9848, Canberra, ACT 2601, Australia).