

## How to Maximise Your Chance of Funding Research Grants

This quick guide has been prepared to assist those wishing to successfully apply for a St Vincent's Clinic Research Foundation (SVCRF) grant, particularly those with less experience in writing grant applications.

We rigorously review all Applications to ensure we fund high-calibre research.

Below are some basic tips that might help you fine-tune your grant application. They are **based on common omissions from grants** reviewed by our Scientific Committee.

- Be clear about your study design. Is this a pre/post-observational study or a randomised controlled trial? Your method section should clearly state this.
- What is/are your primary outcome measure(s)? These need to be clearly articulated.
- What is/are your secondary outcome measure(s)? (Where applicable).
- Include clear descriptions of how samples/mice/patients will be selected/recruited to minimise confounding/bias (who will do this? How will you access and obtain data?). What steps will you take to minimise selection bias (e.g. if you are using mutant mice for your intervention, you should use litter mate controls to minimise the confounding effect of genetic and environmental factors)? Additionally, in the case of experiments, it is important to state how investigators will be blinded when undertaking outcome assessment. Your strategies to comply with this guideline need to be clearly stated, and where compliance is not possible, please provide reasons and strategies that will mitigate potential confounding/biasing factors.
- Sample sizes are essential. Grants submitted for our consideration frequently do not give the sample size. Occasionally, the number of subjects required is only listed in the budget, which is unacceptable.
- Power calculations, where relevant, are essential. We do not wish to fund underpowered studies.
- Please provide comprehensive budget justifications. If you are applying for more than one grant and they all have different budgets, you need to give a rationale for **each** required amount, or we will assume it's not fundable if you don't get the requested amount.
- Please do not provide the names of referees with an apparent conflict of interest. We will now ask referees this question directly, and their response may not support your application. Please use the NHMRC definitions of conflict of interest to decide if your referee has a conflict, but in general, your immediate supervisor or your PhD supervisor is conflicted.
- Stick to the page limit. Additional pages will not be considered as part of the application. Please do not use tiny font to make the page limit (eg 9 font). The required font is Arial 11.
- If you have had previous funding from SVCRF, we will seek evidence of publications and grants arising.

There are published guidelines about how to write up particular study designs. For instance, the CONSORT group have guidelines for writing up randomised controlled trials.<sup>1</sup> For those undertaking animal studies, the CAMARADES checklist also provides useful guidelines on important points to consider when preparing your grant.<sup>2</sup> While developed primarily for writing up a finished study, these guidelines are also useful when preparing grant applications as a checklist to ensure you have covered the important points.

### References:

- <sup>1.</sup> Kenneth F Schulz, KF, Altman DG, Moher D for the CONSORT Group. CONSORT 2010 Statement: updated guidelines for reporting parallel group randomised trials. *BMJ* 2010; 340: c332.
- <sup>2.</sup> Sena E, Bart van der Worp H, Howells D, Macleod M. How can we improve the pre-clinical development of drugs for stroke? *TRENDS in Neurosciences* 2007; 30 (9): 433-439.