



Ensuring Value in Research (EVIR) Funders' Forum

Autumn 2024 Round Table Meeting Minutes

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|---|----------|
| Wednesday, 2 October 2024 | 2 |
| 1.1 Welcome to the 15th EViR Meeting | 2 |
| 1.2 Welcome and introduction to Forte. | 2 |
| 1.3 Reflections from Forte on the theme for the day (evidence, implementation, and impact) 2 | |
| 1.4 What's going on? Discussion on funders dissemination and implementation activities: update 2024-2025..... | 3 |
| 1.5 Participatory research: Involving public, policy, and practice in research. | 4 |
| 1.6 Introducing our Associate Members | 4 |
| 1.7 Perspectives on research impact..... | 5 |
| 1.8 Pre-clinical update. Better Science through More Transparency: Pilot study on stimulating transparent laboratory animal research. | 6 |
| 1.9 EViR Updates | 7 |
| Thursday, 28 September 2023 | 8 |
| 1.1 Welcome to Day 2 | 8 |
| 1.2 Welcome to new members. | 8 |
| 1.3 Introduction of the new Guiding Principles..... | 8 |
| 1.4 Review of the strategic plan – update of groups and reflection of goals and timelines | 9 |
| Appendix A - Speakers | I |

Wednesday, 2 October 2024

Hybrid meeting. Forte hosted the meeting in Stockholm, Sweden.

1.1 Welcome to the 15th EViR Meeting

Michael Bowdery (HCRW) welcomed all members from 41 different organisations to the EViR Funders' Forum Roundtable. An overview of the meeting agenda was presented, and attendees were invited to come together at the networking session at the end of the day.

Day 1 was open to everyone from the broad EViR global community with an interest in the EViR agenda, regardless of the membership status of their organisation.

1.2 Welcome and introduction to Forte.

Introducer: Staffan Arvidsson (Forte, Sweden)

Speaker: Jonas Björk and Cecilia Beskow (Forte, Sweden)

Purpose of the session:

The opening session commenced with a warm welcome from Staffan Arvidsson Senior Research Officer at Forte, setting the tone for the conference and theme of the day.

Discussion:

During the meeting, the speakers focussed on Forte vision and mission highlighting Forte 3 main areas in health: Health, Working life and Welfare. Forte invested 77 million euro in research funding in 2023 with a success rate of 8.4% in annual call for grants. Their average project grant is 141000 euro a year. They offer 5 types of grants: Project, Career, collaboration, organisational and infrastructure and research environment support. They also issue joint calls for proposals and launch international research initiatives. Collaborating with organisations in many other countries.

Relevant links:

- **Recording:**¹ Welcome to the 17th EViR meeting - Michael Bowdery
Forte – Welcome and introduction to Forte - Staffan Arvidsson
- **Presentation:**¹ Welcome to the 17th EViR meeting - Michael Bowdery
Forte – Welcome and introduction to Forte - Staffan Arvidsson

1.3 Reflections from Forte on the theme for the day (evidence, implementation, and impact)

Introducer: Staffan Arvidsson (Forte, Sweden)

Speakers:

- Stella Jacobson (Forte, Sweden)
- Anna-Karin Florén (Forte, Sweden)

Purpose of the session:

This session explored reflections and insights regarding evidence, implementation, and impact, including strategies and challenges.

Discussions:

Forte outlined the background of the company and their strategy to identify categories of research based on the purpose and function to reach their mission. Based on 3 categories. Researchers aim to achieve descriptive research, explanatory research, problem solving research. Arranged sequentially. Devised from randomly distributing examples of applications to reading pairs to categorize and compare classifications. Descriptive research dominated the applications by 67% - explanatory – 18% and problem solving 15%.

Discussion followed with suggestions from attendees regarding how to stimulate more analytical and problem-solving approaches. Suggestion to change assessment criteria as this determines which applications receive funding. Forte are constantly trying to evolve work in impact and impact is included in the assessment criteria. Pilot for impact calls in 2022 resulted in 41 applications of which 10 received funding. Key application strengths; background description established collaboration/projects based on co- creation methods, based on experience in original projects, descriptions of users need for knowledge, methods, and development. Weaknesses in applications included overconfidence in products had applied for. need to communicate clearly what impact means, weak theory, and methodology descriptions in applications, inadequately described learning processes, skills shortage, program logic or similar missing, lack of long-term perspective, optimistic schedules, and budgets. To summarise study showed that applicants take an interest in working actively with impact. However, Forte need to encourage a dialog on better explanation on impact.

Relevant links:

- **Recording**¹: Reflections from Forte on the theme for the day (evidence, implementation, and impact) - Staffan Arvidsson, Jonas Björk and Cecilia Beskow
- **Presentation**¹: Reflections from Forte on the theme for the day (evidence, implementation, and impact) - Staffan Arvidsson, Jonas Björk and Cecilia Beskow

1.4 What's going on? Discussion on funders dissemination and implementation activities: update 2024-2025

Introducer: Barbara van der Linden, EViR Working group and Dissemination and Implementation Interest group lead (ZonMw, the Netherlands)

Purpose of the session:

The session explored what the working group had done to date with regards to dissemination and implementation activities. Discuss what colleagues present are doing in relation to dissemination and implementation activities within their organisations.

Discussion:

EVIR D&I working group is a small group which started in 2017 and comprises of 30 organisations. Sent a survey to identify the 6 areas of D&I which organisations are doing. In 2023 started new D&I working group.2024-2025 learning and exchange survey where the focus is to map out activities in 6 categories with concrete examples. To gain overview of the range of activities funders are doing. More evidence for effectiveness and more insight into impact of activities. Possibly new approaches, strategies, and activities. More activity based on implementation framework and science. EVIR are calling for members to join interest groups and encouraged attendees to join the European implementation event taking place in June 2025.

During the session an activity took place where colleagues present were asked to name 1 or 2 dissemination and implementation activities their organisation had undertaken in the last 2 years.

Relevant links:

- **Recording**¹:What's going on? Discussion on funders D & I activities: update 2024-2025
Barbara van der Linden
- **Presentation**¹: What's going on? Discussion on funders D & I activities: update 2024-2025
Barbara van der Linden

1.5 Participatory research: Involving public, policy, and practice in research.

Introducer: Staffan Arvidsson (Forte, Sweden)

Speaker: Ulrica von Thiele Schwarz, Professor of Psychology, (Mälardalen University, Sweden)

Purpose of the session:

The session explored the connection between implementation and participation. Focusing on what is participatory research and why engage with it?

Discussion:

During the meeting, discussions centred around how participatory research differs from traditional research, highlighting the tensions in practice-based research and examples of excellence in practice-based research. The conversation also touched upon the importance of building inclusive relationships with communities.

Relevant links:

- **Recording**¹: Participatory research - Ulrica von Thiele Schwarz
- **Presentation**¹: Participatory research - Ulrica von Thiele Schwarz

1.6 Introducing our Associate Members

Introducer: Michael Bowdery (HCRW, Wales)

Speakers:

- **Cochrane Collaboration** – Ruth Foxlee
- **Evidence-Based Research Network** – Karen Robinson
- **Evidence Aid** – Claire Allen, Xavier Bosch-Capblanch and Jawaria Karim

Purpose of the session:

This session explored each participating Associate Member's interest in research evidence and the value they in connection and collaborating with EViR.

Relevant links:

- **Recording¹:** Cochrane (EViR: Dissemination, implementation & impact) - Ruth Foxlee
Evidence-Based Research Network – Karen Robinson
Evidence Aid: Advancing humanitarian research and impact - Claire Allen, Xavier Bosch-Capblanch and Jawaria Karim
- **Presentation¹:** Cochrane (EViR: Dissemination, implementation & impact) - Ruth Foxlee
Evidence-Based Research Network – Karen Robinson
Evidence Aid: Advancing humanitarian research and impact - Claire Allen, Xavier Bosch-Capblanch and Jawaria Karim

1.7 Perspectives on research impact**Assessing and Monitoring Research Impact: The Challenge for Funders**

Speaker: Professor Hugh McKenna, (Ulster University)

Purpose of the session:

This session explored the challenges faced by research funders in tracking and assessing the impact of the research they fund. It drew on the experience and approaches of guest speakers and EViR members in tackling impact and demonstrating the importance and value of research.

Discussion:

The meeting commenced with an explanation on research funding sources and the requirement for research to have a scientific social and environmental impact. Funding bodies want clear evidence how impact is going to be achieved. The challenge researchers face knowing the impact of their studies were identified and concluded that research impact training is required.

Relevant links:

- **Recording¹:** Assessing and Monitoring Research Impact: The Challenge for Funders - Professor Hugh McKenna
- **Presentation¹:** Assessing and Monitoring Research Impact: The Challenge for Funders - Professor Hugh McKenna

An introduction to the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)

Speaker: Erzsébet Toth Czifra (CoARA)

Purpose of the session:

The session explored the increasing divergence between research and practice. Assessment processes relying on journal and publication metrics is a hurdle to recognition of diverse contributions and can negatively affect the quality and impact of research. The organisations research has identified the need for systematic research assessment.

Discussion:

An open discussion amongst attendees agreed the need for recognisable assessment recognition. However, it is difficult to change culture. Ensure actively ushing those cultures is becoming more valuable.

Relevant links:

- **Recording¹:** Overview of CoARA: vision, progress, state of the art - Erzsébet Toth Czifra
- **Presentation¹:** Overview of CoARA: vision, progress, state of the art - Erzsébet Toth Czifra

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| 1.8 Pre-clinical update. Better Science through More Transparency: Pilot study on stimulating transparent laboratory animal research. |
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Speaker: Martijn Nolte, ((ZonMw, the Netherlands))

Discussion:

The session explored the impact transparency has on improving the quality of research with reference to a pilot study conducted.

Results concluded that many saw value of most methods, however, lack of alignment among stakeholders, the administrative burden and lack of training and reward as barriers.

Relevant links:

- **Recording 1:** ZonMw Pilot-project: Better Science through More Transparency - Martijn Nolte
- **Presentation1:** ZonMw Pilot-project: Better Science through More Transparency - Martijn Nolte

1.9 EViR Updates

Speaker: Michael Bowdery (HCRW, Wales)

Attendees had the opportunity to hear any updates on ongoing EViR initiatives, discussed key findings, and outlined future plans.

Discussion:

Guiding principles had been shared on the screen several times. Those in working groups will be aware. Tomorrow the proposed new principles will be presented to members.

Next roundtable will take place online in spring 2025.

Next face to face roundtable will be in autumn 2025 and will require a host as UoS will not be hosting as secretariat from January. Zonw will be hosting for 5 years from 1st January 2025.

Thursday, 28 September 2023

Hybrid meeting.

1.1 Welcome to Day 2

Purpose of the Day: For members' leads and relevant colleagues. During this day, attendees focussed on activities and actions under the priority areas in our strategic plan.

1.2 Welcome to new members.

During this session, attendees had the opportunity to hear about adding two new members to EViR: KWF Dutch Cancer Society and The Dam Foundation.

- **KWF Dutch Cancer Society** (Eveline Notebook, Netherlands)
 - **Recording¹:** Introduction Dutch Cancer Society (KWF) - Eveline Noteboom
 - **Presentation¹:** Introduction Dutch Cancer Society (KWF) - Eveline Noteboom
- **The Dam Foundation** (Sigrid Hegna Ingvald and Jan-Ole Hesselberg Norway)
 - **Recording¹:** The Foundation Dam - Jan-Ole Hesselberg Norway and Sigrid Hegna Ingvald
 - **Presentation¹:** The Foundation Dam - Jan-Ole Hesselberg Norway and Sigrid Hegna Ingvald

1.3 Introduction of the new Guiding Principles

Speaker/facilitator: Anne Cody (HRB, Ireland)

This session presented the revised EViR Mission Statement and Guiding Principles to the membership, for discussion and response.

Revision of current guiding principles commenced in roundtable meeting in 2023. Feedback to draft 1 was received from small and honorary members. To date feedback has been positive. The members revised current version (1.2) and made suggestions.

Relevant links:

- **Recording¹:** WG update: Guiding Principle review - Anne Cody
- **Presentation¹:** WG update: Guiding Principle review - Anne Cody

Roundtable discussion on the new GPs

An in-depth discussion followed regarding the GP headings and descriptive text.

1.4 Review of the strategic plan – update of groups and reflection of goals and timelines

Research on Research (RoR)

Speaker: Amanda Blatch-Jones (NIHR, England)

It has been recognised the need to identify and prioritise what questions are important to us against EViR guiding principles within the RoR workplan. Challenges for working group members were identified and discussed. Suggestion was made regarding holding half day work shops for EViR working groups to connect and collaborate. Best use of resource, especially when work requires different working groups input.

- **Recording¹** : Updates from the Research on Research working group.
- **Presentation¹**: Updates from the Research on Research working group.

Sustainability

Speakers:

- Ellie Monks (NIHR, England)
- Josie Jackson (HCRW, Wales)

Group membership changes were announced as new opportunity for Leadership of sustainability working group due to current leadership ending due to other commitments. Pleased to be joined by colleagues from HRB Ireland and DLR Germany. The strategic workplan was discussed and actions identified regarding how to meet goals set for the next 3-5 years. Announcement to be made regarding the opportunity for Leadership of sustainability working group. Suggestion to approach UKRI centrally with regards to membership and joining the working group.

- **Recording¹** : EViR Sustainability Working Group Update
- **Presentation¹**: EViR Sustainability Working Group Update

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Speaker: Violina Sarma (HCRW, Wales)

There have been no meetings since spring due to leadership and resources challenges. However, the group have created a glossary of terms: resource knowledge page, mapping exercise to identify ambitions, outputs, and actions. EDI data collection discussion addressed how to achieve good EDI data, what are the challenges and why it's important to collect data. Need to identify leadership for the working group. Violina happy to be co-lead and will propose to the working group for approval.

- **Recording¹** : Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Working Group Updates - Violina Sarma
- **Presentation¹**: Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Working Group Updates - Violina Sarma

Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC)

Speakers:

- Garry Aslanyan (ESSENCE, WHO)
- Dottie Goble (NIHR, England)

The speakers reported that it has been a challenge drawing in individuals engaged in funding into the space. A complex network community. Goals are still relevant and achievable. Aim is to focus on dialogue with research funders and identify key players. Challenge to identify key players across membership to get a clear understanding and establish mechanisms to reach out and engage. Several activities to achieve goals including shifting the LMIC focus to a common theme of interest and engagement to longer drive LMIC enjoyment and reach out.

- **Recording¹** : EVIR LMIC WORKING GROUP: Strategic plan review - Dottie Goble
- **Presentation¹**: EVIR LMIC WORKING GROUP: Strategic plan review - Dottie Goble

Reflections and discussion

Overall good progress has been made to date reviewing the guiding principles. Members agreed to have 1 further round for feedback after today's updates and then send to wider organisations for feedback.

Discussed the website communication strategy, recruitment of new members and plans for the next roundtable including topics. Members reflected on the structure of this roundtable and agreed the format requires reviewing.

- **Recording¹** :

1.4 Summary, next steps, next host, and meeting closure

Michael thanked attendees and Forte for participation. It was announced that ZonMw will be hosting EViR from 1st January 2025.

Appendix A - Speakers

Anna-Karin Florén (Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare)

Program Manager for Working Life Research, The Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare

Amanda Jane Blatch-Jones (NIHR, UK)



Senior Research Fellow for the NIHR Insight and Evaluation team (based at the University of Southampton), within the research and evaluation service delivery group. Working closely with a range of stakeholders and leading on several areas of strategic importance, the NIHR's investment in RoR provides robust evidence and offers new insights to continually improve research practices using a range of methodological approaches.

Amanda has worked for the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR UK) since 2008 and has held a research position at the University of Southampton for more than 20 years. She has worked in the field of Research on Research (also known as meta-research, meta-science) since its inception and has led several studies into the research management processes and practices to provide funding organisations with sufficient evidence-informed recommendations to enhance and improve how research is funded, monitored, assessed and disseminated (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1486-5561>). Before working with the NIHR, she held several research roles within the fields of drug education for young people, chronic liver disease, palliative and end of life care, stroke care, and nurse prescribing practices.

Anne Cody (Health Research Board (HRB), Ireland)



PhD, MSc Bus Practice. Head of Investigator-led Grants, Research Careers and Enablers, Health Research Board

Anne has a background in cell biology and spent ten years as a researcher in Germany and Ireland. She has been working with the Health Research Board in a variety of roles for 20 years. During this time, she has gained experience across a wide spectrum of health research and funding instruments from infrastructures over health research careers to knowledge translation awards and worked with many co-funders.

Anne is currently responsible for the HRB's Investigator-led Grants, Research Careers and Enablers. She has been the driver behind the HRB's systems approach to Public, Patient and Carer Involvement (PPI). She has been actively involved in tackling unconscious bias, has initiated transparency initiatives and has led a [self-audit assessing the HRB's performance against recommendations to maximising research value](#). This has led her together with Kelly

Dunham from PCORI to develop a self-assessment tool specifically directed at funders, which is available to EViR member organisations.

Barbara van der Linden (The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMw), Netherlands)



MD, PhD (1962). Barbara has worked at the Netherlands Health Research Funder ZonMw since 2004, first as an implementation officer for long term care and since 2008 as staff member in Implementation and Innovation.

She is responsible for ZonMw's implementation policies and leads the ZonMw implementation team. She has written reports on cost saving interventions, Choosing Wisely, and Strengthening Impact and publications on implementation and innovation in research. In 2017 she became co-convenor of the international Ensuring Value in Research (EViR) Health Funders Forum on behalf of ZonMw. She leads the EViR working group on Dissemination and Implementation. Barbara is one of the initiators of the Netherlands Implementation Collective (NIC).

Cecilia Beskow (Forte, Sweden)

Head of Research, The Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare

Claire Allen (Evidence Aid, UK)

Claire Allen: Claire has been with Evidence Aid since the very beginning. She worked for Cochrane for 15 years, during which time Evidence Aid was born as a project within the Cochrane family. When Evidence Aid became an independent entity, Claire moved over to become its first (and, for some time, only) member of staff. Claire is responsible for Evidence Aid's programme of research resources and works with our very committed advisors and volunteers to ensure that those resources are usable, useful and used. Claire works 3 days a week.

Dottie Goble (NIHR, UK)



Assistant Director for the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR UK) Journals Library, with oversight on publications across the Health Technology Assessment and Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation programmes.

She has a key role in ensuring transparency and open research across the NIHR, leading the development of the Clinical Trial registration and dissemination of results and is currently implementing data sharing mechanisms across the NIHR. Before working with the NIHR, she had 15 years' experience in local government policy development and community engagement.

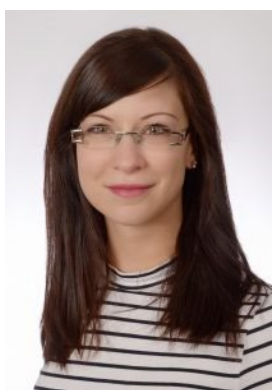
Eleanor Monks (NIHR, UK)



Ellie Monks joined the University of Southampton in 2011 and is Senior Commercial and Contracts Manager within the School of Healthcare Enterprise and Innovation, Faculty of Medicine. In her current role, Ellie is responsible for growing and managing the School's portfolio of healthcare enterprise activities, managing high-profile government contracts with the National Institute for Health and Social Care (NIHR) in excess of £150million. Prior to this Ellie was a Programme Manager for the NIHR's Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation (EME) Programme. As a University of Cambridge graduate, Ellie brings over 10 years' experience in environmental and health-related project and programme management, with former roles including the Director of the Steppe Forward Programme at the Zoological Society of London (ZSL). Here, Ellie worked closely with the World Bank and the Mongolian Government to develop and manage a programme to empower Mongolians to create sustainable in-country conservation programmes.

Ellie is a strong advocate for sustainability, having completed the Future of Sustainable Business at the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment, University of Oxford. She is a Trustee of the Borneo Nature Foundation as a result of her previous work in supporting and delivering research into orangutan behaviour and habitat protection/regeneration in Indonesian Borneo.

Erzsébet Toth Czifra (CoARA)



Since May 2023, Erzsébet has been the Program Manager of [CoARA](#) where she is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the [Coalition](#). As such, she also coordinates the [CoARA Boost](#) Horizon Europe project. Erzsébet has a solid background in open science and research assessment in the Arts and Humanities disciplines. Before joining CoARA, she was the first Open Science Officer for [DARIAH-EU](#). She received her PhD in Cognitive Linguistics at the Eotvos Lorand University, Budapest. In recent years, her professional interests and publication activities have been shifting towards the study of data sharing, publication and evaluation practices, such as [FAIR data in the Humanities](#), [quality assessment of innovative scholarship in the Social Sciences and Humanities](#) or [evaluation and peer review challenges around Virtual Research Environments](#).

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Eveline Noteboom



Project leader implementation – Dutch Cancer Society (KWF)
Eveline has a background in health sciences and did a PhD on the role of the general practitioner in shared decision making for cancer treatment. She now works for four years at KWF. In her role as project leader implementation, she monitors the implementation portfolio and works on several projects to facilitate the implementation of research findings, such as eHealth tools in mental health care.

Garry Aslanyan, (ESSENCE/WHO, Switzerland)



Dr. Garry Aslanyan is currently the Manager of Partnerships and Governance at the World Health Organization (WHO) Special Programme on Research and Training on Tropical Diseases in Geneva, Switzerland. He is responsible for managing TDR's donor relations, governance and partnerships, including ESSENCE on Health Research initiative. Dr Aslanyan joined TDR in June 2009 and has had several roles. He currently oversees governance and partnership activities, and has developed and manages the ESSENCE on Health Research initiative, a framework for harmonization and alignment for capacity strengthening activities of research funding agencies.

Trained in dentistry, public health, and health policy and systems, Dr Aslanyan previously worked at the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD). He is an Adjunct Professor in international health and public health at the University of Ottawa and the University of Toronto.

Hugh McKenna (University of Ulster, Northern Ireland)



Professor Hugh McKenna was, until recently, Dean of Medical School Development and Pro Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation at Ulster University, UK. He has over 250 publications, including 17 books, including '*Research Impact*' published by Springer Nature in 2021. In 2022, he published a well cited paper on research culture and in 2024 he co-authored a paper, analysing impact case studies submitted in REF2021. Professor McKenna has a wealth of research assessment experience. He was a member of the UK Research Assessment Exercise for Nursing in 2001, chaired the panel for nursing and midwifery in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, and chaired the sub-panel for dentistry, allied health professions, nursing and pharmacy (UoA 3) in both the 2014 and 2021 Research Excellence Framework assessment.

He has also chaired research quality panels for the Swedish Research Council and numerous panels for the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation. He has advised universities on research assessment in the USA, Ireland, Australia, Denmark, Slovenia, and South Korea. Based on this work, in 2019 and 2020, he received two Honorary Doctorates and held 7 international visiting professorships. In 2019, he was appointed Member of the Academia Europaea and in 2020 a Member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts. He will be a panel member on the Hong

Kong RAE 2026. He is also Vice Chair of Alzheimer's Society UK and Editor in Chief of the JPMHN.

Jan-Ole Hesselberg (Dam Foundation,

Jan-Ole Hesselberg is the Chief Program Officer at the Foundation Dam where his responsibility is securing the decision-making processes behind the 400 million NOK (35 million EUR) granted every year. He is currently pursuing a PhD where the topic is interrater reliability in grant peer review. He is a member of the National Research Ethics Committee for Medicine and Health Sciences (NEM). In 2022, he published the popular science book *"Better Decisions - about the forces that influence your judgments and how to deal with them"*.

Jawaria Karim, (Evidence Aid, UK)

Jawaria Karim: Jawaria is a Masters student studying Global Health at McMaster University, who is interested in globalization, social policy and health politics. She has experience research experience regarding various topics of health, including stroke rehabilitation, mental health and COVID vaccine hesitancy. Jawaria is supporting Evidence Aid with Business Development and Project Management projects.

Jonas Björk

Josie Jackson (Health and Care Research Wales (HCRW), Wales)



Josie Jackson is Head of Research Prioritisation, Commissioning, and Knowledge Mobilisation in Health and Care Research Wales (HCRW). She is interested in improving how research and evidence meet the needs of decision-makers, whether they are in policy roles or in practice. She likes to consider how we can learn and share with fields outside of health about what worked (and what didn't) to bring in new ideas to minimise research waste.

Her background is in environmental evidence and she has a PhD in bird conservation. She is the co-lead of the EViR Sustainability Working Group and strongly believes that we must work together to play our part in tackling our current dual crises, the nature crisis and the climate crisis.

Karen Robinson (Johns Hopkins University, EBRN, USA)



Karen A. Robinson, PhD is a Professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine in the Department of Medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine with joint appointments in the Division of Biomedical Informatics & Data Science (BIDS), and in the Departments of Epidemiology and Health Policy & Management at the university's Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Dr. Robinson conducts evidence syntheses and research on the use of evidence in making decisions. For over 20 years she has been an active member of Cochrane and

was an editor for two review groups (including the methodology review group). She is Director of the Johns Hopkins University Evidence-based Practice Center (EPC) and, within the EPC Program, serves as an Associate Editor and on the Methods Steering Committee. Within the Guidelines International Network (G-I-N) she has served on the steering committees for two groups (Tech; North America). She serves as a founding steering group member of the Evidence-Based Research Network.

Martijn Nolte (ZonMw, The Netherlands)



Martijn Nolte finished his master Medical Biology in 1997 from the University of Utrecht, The Netherlands, with a specialization in immunology. He obtained his PhD in 2002 at the Free University in Amsterdam on the physiology of the spleen. He then became postdoc at the Amsterdam Medical Center, followed by a second postdoc position at Cancer Research UK in London. In 2006, he returned to The Netherlands and set up his own lab at the AMC in Amsterdam. In 2011, he moved his group to Sanquin Blood Supply in Amsterdam where he became the scientific head of the Microscopy section of Sanquin's Research Facility. In September 2021, Martijn left Sanquin and became senior program manager at the ZonMw program *More Knowledge with Fewer Animals*. In this position, he encourages the development, acceptance and implementation of animal-free models. Where that is not (yet) possible, this program also stimulates the effective use of the results obtained with animal experiments, by supporting the generation and publication of systematic reviews and negative/neutral animal data.

Michael Bowdery (HCRW, UK)



Currently Head of Programmes with Health and Care Research Wales and the Welsh Government's Health and Social Services Research and Development Division and Chair of the EViR Funders' Forum. His responsibilities include: cross-funder partnership working; facilitation and management of Welsh involvement in UK programmes; and overall management of the Health and Care Research Wales grant schemes and research development infrastructure.

Michael has seven years of active research experience as a behavioural psychologist in the School of Psychology, Bangor University, and has worked with children with learning disabilities and challenging behaviour in care, play and educational settings. Prior to joining Research and Development Division, Michael worked as a Media Officer in the Office of the Chief Medical Officer, with responsibility for both media relations and the management of the Chief Medical Officer's website. He also has experience in crisis management, through secondments to the Welsh Government's Agriculture Department and Foot and Mouth Inquiries Team.

Ruth Foxlee (Cochrane Collaboration, UK)



Ruth Foxlee is Head of Change Management in Cochrane's Evidence Production and Methods Directorate. She has worked with Cochrane for over 20 years, both within Cochrane Review Groups and Cochrane's Central Executive Team, including roles in priority-setting, study identification, systematic reviewing, research integrity, editorial policy development, publishing, and organisational change. Ruth is currently programme lead for Cochrane's Future of Evidence Synthesis Programme, a multi-project initiative working toward delivering widespread change in Cochrane's systems, processes and policies.

Sigrid Hegna Ingvald (Dam Foundation, Norway)

Sigrid Hegna Ingvaldsen is a Research Advisor at the Foundation Dam where her responsibility is development of the Foundation Dams grant programs and research on research in health-related fields. She has previous research experience from medicine and neuroscience and have completed a PhD in medicine and health sciences at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

Staffan Arvidsson (Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare (Forte), Sweden)



Senior Research Officer at Forte, The Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare.

Staffan is responsible for Forte's National Program on Implementation Research and for the development of Forte's Impact Grant. Staffan is also one of three national experts in the Health Cluster of Horizon Europe.

Stella Jacobson (Forte, Sweden)

Head of Unit at the Department of Research, The Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare

Stella is Head of Unit at the Department of Research and manages a team of Research Officers and Senior Research Officers. Stella is also the coordinator for Forte's Analysis Group as well as coordinating activities related to strengthening co-production in research.

Ulrica von Thiele Schwarz (Mälardalen University, Sweden)



Ulrica von Thiele Schwarz is professor of Psychology at the School of Health, Care and Social Welfare at Mälardalen University, Sweden. She is also an affiliated senior researcher at Medical Management Centre, Karolinska Institutet. Her research is concerned with how to design, implement and evaluate interventions in organizations so that the value for service users, staff, organizations and the system at large can be maximized. The research covers multiple actors and system levels, from how research can be conducted to be more valuable to end-users and the role of politicians and boards of directors for successful change initiatives, to how leaders and employees can co-create change. The research covers a broad range of different types of initiatives (e.g., evidence-based programs, deimplementation of low value care etc) in various settings (e.g., primary care, social services).

Violina Sarma (HCRW, Wales)



Violina is Head of Health and Social Care Research Environment in Health and Care Research Wales (HCRW). She has responsibility for overseeing a range of initiatives to improve how research is undertaken in both health and care settings. She is a member of the EViR EDI working group and is currently leading on the coordination of EDI activities across HCRW and developing an EDI action plan.

Prior to this, she worked as a social researcher with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on projects like the Covid Infection Survey, Secure Data Services. Her research background is in decision-making with a PhD in Business and Management.

Xavier Bosch-Capblanch (Evidence Aid, UK)

Xavier Bosch- Capblanch: Xavier is a Medical Doctor, Public Health Consultant, faculty member of the Swiss School of Public Health (SSPH+) and Associate Professor at the University of Basel, with 30 years' experience in international health, 10 of which living in rural Sub-Saharan Africa settings. He is interested in methods to bring robustness to health systems research evidence and vaccination. He has led numerous initiatives in research, technical assistance and teaching, and has and is involved in consultative forums, such as the WHO Immunisation Practices Advisory Group and Immunisation Agenda 2030 Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group. On becoming an Evidence Aid Trustee in 2022, Xavier said *"In a world with growing, deeper and more extensive humanitarian crises, affected populations cannot tolerate interventions which are not rooted into sound evidence and decision-makers and implementers cannot ethically act without the required evidence supporting their decisions and plans. Evidence Aid is the most comprehensive and systematic effort to bridge the gap between evidence and action in the humanitarian context. It is a profound honour to being able to contribute to the full development of Evidence Aid."*

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