



ENSURING VALUE IN RESEARCH

Ensuring Value in Research (EViR) Funders' Forum

Spring 2025 Round Table Meeting Minutes

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35 international organisations were in attendance

Afa Insurance, Sweden
Association of Medical Research Charities, UK
Breakthrough Cancer Research, Ireland
Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Canada
Cochrane, USA
Dam Foundation, Norway
DLR Project Management Agency, Germany
Dutch Heart Foundation (Hartstichting), Netherlands
Dutch Research Council (NWO), Netherlands
ESSENCE, Switzerland
Fight for Sight, UK
Forte, Sweden
Health and Care Research Wales, Wales
Health Research Board, Ireland
HRB-TMRN, Ireland
HSC Public Health Agency, Ireland
Irish Cancer Society, Ireland
Johns Hopkins University, USA
KCE Trials, Belgium
KWF Dutch Cancer Society
Muscular Dystrophy Ireland
Medical Research Council (UKRI), UK
Myeloma UK
National Evidence-based Healthcare Collaborating Agency, South Korea
National Institute of Health, Italy
National Institute of Health Research, UK
PCORI, USA
QUEST Center for Responsible Research
Scottish Government, Scotland
Stroke Association, UK
University of Galway, Ireland
University of Southampton, UK
Welsh Government, Wales
WHO, Switzerland
ZonMw, Netherlands

Thursday, 27 March 2025

Virtual meeting.

Welcome to the 14th EViR meeting

Michael Bowdery (HCRW) welcomed all members from 35 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.

Launch of the updated Guiding Principles

Anne Cody (HRB, Ireland)

Discussion:

With the official launch of our updated Guiding Principles. EViR is working to better fit the ever-changing world of research funding. We see the principles as interconnected, each playing a crucial role in reinforcing the others to create a comprehensive and robust framework for research funding. The guiding principles reflect a point in time. This is the second iteration, and we expect to review and update them again in due course. It is up to each funder to decide how they reflect on their implementation of the guiding principles. To support this process, the self-audit tool will be updated to reflect this second version and members will be invited to use it.

Relevant links:

- [Session recording.](#)
- [Presentation.](#)

Using Evidence Synthesis to establish an evidence gap

Speakers: *Amanda Jane Blatch-Jones (NIHR, UK), Alejandra Recio – Saucedo (NIHR, UK) & Jan-Ole Hesselberg (Dam Foundation, Norway)*

Discussion:

Recently, there has been growing evidence that up to 1 in 7 papers are possibly fraudulent. Evidence Synthesis deals with this issue by excluding papers when discrepancies are found across systematic reviews. Evidence Synthesis takes a very strict approach. If such a paper turns out to not be fraudulent than it is very likely that this paper will be included in the work of other researchers.

Be sceptical of overly positive research results. Positive research results are more likely to be published. Additionally, these positive results are more likely to reach you when published. Hence, be sure to also look into implementation research that has been performed. Such research may suggest less favourable results than initially thought.

Relevant links:

- [Session recording.](#)
- [Presentation Amanda Jane & Alejandra.](#)
- [Presentation Jan-Ole.](#)

Open discussion on research funders regulations of AI

Chair: *Staffan Arvidsson (Forte, Sweden)*

Introducers: *Brent Hoffman (ZonMw, The Netherlands) & Steven Smith (Fight for Sight, United Kingdom)*

Discussion:

The main focus of this session was to find out the stance of research funders on AI. Due to privacy reasons we will not go into detail about the exact stances of the research funders except for the relevant links that were provided during the session.

The general stance of research funders is a wariness of AI usage and how to effectively, efficiently and safely use it. Hence, there is much to be gained in the appropriate usage of AI.

Relevant links:

- [Session recording.](#)
- [Presentation.](#)
- [Scoping Review AI PCORI](#)
- [AI in Research Ecosystem PCORI](#)
- [Toolkit pre-award processes reduce inequality](#)
- [Equitable AI Future](#)
- [EU Guidelines Responsible AI](#)
- [Statement on AI NIHR](#)
- [Statement on AI CIHR](#)
- [Statement on AI Taylor & Francis Group](#)
- [Statement on AI UK Government](#)
- [AI Funding NIHR](#)
- [UKRI Metascience AI early career fellowships](#)
- [Urgent action secure UK's AI research](#)
- [Statement on AI Canadian Government](#)
- [Strategies to improve impact of AI on health equity: Scoping Review](#)

Dissemination and Implementation Survey Update

Facilitator: *Barbara van der Linden (ZonMw, The Netherlands)*

Discussion:

A new Dissemination and Implementation survey will be put out to members in April/May. This activity will be performed by an intern at ZonMw who is currently improving on the previous survey. During the session it became apparent that D&I has become more important for almost all research funders since the 2019 survey. Hence, this new survey will likely provide EViR with an updated view of the research funding landscape in the area of D&I. We hope to present the survey results at the next Round Table meeting in October 2025.

Relevant links:

- [Session recording.](#)
- [Presentation.](#)

Reflections on measuring impact

Facilitator: *Michael Bowdery (HCRW, Wales)*

Discussion:

We are increasingly being asked about impact, but a large part of impact is the way in which research affects further research down the line. Additionally it is difficult to track the impact if the effects took a long time and often there are no resources for longitudinal tracking.

There is a broad understanding of various types of impact. What is being asked from us is to see better outcomes for people. However, a vast majority of what we do will only contribute to better outcomes and I not be the sole determinant of these. Also because we want to build on a body of evidence, not on only one study. The EViR Guiding Principles provide a good foundation to enable that eventual impact.

There are additional reasons why research may not be impactful, such as: Available funds; Access to those interventions; Protocols in place; Different health systems in different countries; Supply chain issues, etc.

Maybe, as funders, we need to develop a stronger narrative to explain the kind of impact that research does have. There has been very impactful research (such as the HTA project) that has taken 10-20 years to demonstrate the impact. In this instance, for each pound spend on the HTA program it has led to a 10-19 pound return. In this manner, we can make economic argument that transcends the need to show the impact of every individual study and show the general benefits of research.

Relevant links:

- [Session recording.](#)
- [Presentation.](#)

Friday, 28 March 2025

Virtual meeting. Day 2 focused on EViR work programme development. Hence, the report of Day 2 is limited to members.

Appendix - Presenters

Alejandra Recio - Saucedo (NIHR, UK)



Senior Research Fellow at the NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC) since 2018, focusing on Research on Research (RoR) and health services research. Leads NIHR research inclusion in the Centre for Business Intelligence and contributes to the design and delivery of the RoR strategy. Coordinate the RoR registry and hub <https://ror-hub.org/>.

Recent projects include a review of literature evidencing research investment and the evaluation of a reviewer development scheme. Chair of Advance HE Race Equality Charter panels. Prior experience in multidisciplinary health services research.

Amanda Jane Blatch-Jones (NIHR, UK)



Amanda is a senior research fellow based at the National Institute for Health and Care Research (University of Southampton) and has worked for the NIHRCC since 2008, holding a research position at the University of Southampton for more than 20 years. Amanda joined the Research on Research team in 2009, which is now situated within the NIHR Centre for Business Intelligence.

She has led several studies around 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>). Her work focuses on providing robust evidence and innovative insights to enhance research practices using various methodological approaches. With more than 15 years' experience of working in RoR, and she is committed to conducting high-quality interdisciplinary research that addresses uncertainties and gaps in the evidence to inform and facilitate improvements to research management policy and practices.

In addition to her day-to-day work, she is an editor for two journals and an advisory board member for another journal, regularly peer reviews for several journals (e.g., FACETS, BMC series, Trials, BMJ, PlosOne, F1000, iScience, SSM Health Systems), sits on several steering and advisory groups at the funder and institutional level, Chair/lead of the RoR EViR working group, member of the association for interdisciplinary meta-research and open science, and a PlosOne user panel member.

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 over 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.

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).

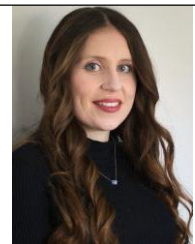
Brent Hoffman (The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMw), Netherlands)



MSc Biomedical Sciences & MSc Population Health Management. Brent is the current head of the EViR secretariat, where he manages the day-to-day of the secretariat, as well as focusing on improving the EViR network as a whole. Additionally, he is also working with Research on Research (RoR) where he is setting up the strategy of ZonMw regarding RoR in future years.

Brent has a background in Biomedical Sciences & Population Health Management which provides a unique perspective into healthcare related issues and the effects of the body, environment & society on said healthcare.

Brogan Ashley (Myeloma UK, United Kingdom)



Brogan's role is Head of Research at Myeloma UK, and in that role she oversees the organisations Innovation & Implementation and Research Grants teams.

The Innovation & Implementation team seeks to understand challenges in the diagnosis and management of myeloma and related conditions. It works with people affected by myeloma, as well as national & international experts to develop and implement tools and resources that support change to take place.

The Research Grants team funds and manages a portfolio of research projects that strategically address gaps in research with a line of sight to patient impact. They primarily fund translational research but also provide infrastructure funding to support the development of early phase myeloma clinical trials.

Cristina Lujan Barosso (United Kingdom)



Cristina has over eight years of experience in health research management, supporting researchers, managing funding processes, and working on international initiatives to improve health outcomes. Recently, she has been collaborating with funders from around the world to strengthen connections and share learning. She is particularly interested in how research can drive meaningful change and the importance of keeping equity, diversity, and inclusion at the core of that work.

Diana Persson (Afa försäkring, Sweden)



Diana works as a senior research officer at Afa Insurance, at the Research and Development department. She is responsible for research within health, prepares open calls, initiates new research programs and works actively with the dissemination and utilization of research results.

She is also responsible for planning events, lectures, seminars and other meeting activities within different subjects but all related to occupational health and safety as well as sick leave. A large part of her work involves networking and building relationships with different actors, organizations and others who can benefit from the organizations research.

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.

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.

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"*.

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.

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.

Steven Smith (Fight for Sight, United Kingdom)



Steven Smith is the Programme Manager (Research) at Fight for Sight where he is responsible for overseeing the grant portfolio, which involves tasks that include the monitoring of impact from funded work, as well as helping to run the grants application process.

Steven joined Fight for Sight in 2017, moving into the charity sector after completing a PhD in Biochemistry.

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.