

NHS SDO R & D PROGRAMME

PROGRAMME OF RESEARCH ON STUDYING HEALTHCARE ORGANISATIONS

UNDERSTANDING ORGANISATIONS

OP111 - A LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE STRUCTURE AND PERFORMANCE OF NOT-FOR-PROFIT HEALTH CARE ORGANISATIONS

OP112 - UNDERSTANDING PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND NON- HIERARCHICAL ORGANISATIONS

Introduction

A key area of research interest for the SDO Programme is the relationship between the form and structure of organisations and their performance. Following the commissioning of a position paper examining the relationship between organisations (Ferlie and McGiven 2003) a scoping exercise about the relationship between organisational forms and structures was undertaken (Sheaff et al, SDO/55/2002). A key purpose of this research was to identify what is known and not known about the relationship between organisational factors and performance. This scoping paper concluded that there was a need for policy-relevant research examining the impact of not-for-profit health care organisations. Moreover, it was revealed that a particularly under-researched area were the structures of non-hierarchical organisations such as GP co-operatives, professional partnerships, and provision of NHS services in collaboration with local authority and voluntary sector bodies. It was observed how physician support was essential in the effective functioning of healthcare organisations and that, as a result, non-hierarchical organisations and professional partnerships had become encouraged to promote professional engagement. As a result, trans-professional groups have been playing an increasing and considerable part in the delivery of NHS services and have become more formally recognised and managed (Swan et al, 2002; Bate, 2000).

OP111 - A LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE STRUCTURE AND PERFORMANCE OF NOT-FOR-PROFIT HEALTH CARE ORGANISATIONS

The SDO programme is inviting proposals to conduct a systematic literature review on the structure and performance of not-for-profit health care organisations. The rationale for the literature review is that parallels between NHS structures and other public sector areas (such as education) have been under-explored. Moreover, few comparative analyses have been undertaken of the structural differences and implications for outcomes in not-for-profit healthcare organisations between the UK, Europe and other countries. The purpose of the review will be to examine the structures of not-for-profit public sector organisations in an attempt to widen the range of policy options for organisational structures that are possible in systems such as the NHS. The review should analyse structural and organisational differences and compare their effect on outcomes between public, voluntary, and other not-for-profit organisations.

Applicants will need to be able to demonstrate clear conceptual frameworks to consider the issues of organisational structure, relative performance and outcome measures. Moreover, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they are able to draw on a broad range of both evidence and theory. The review should, where appropriate, encompass other types of service organisation outside of the health care field. Relevant comparators may include studies from both the public, independent not-for-profit, and voluntary sectors, from a range of countries. Such research should, however, be relevant within the context of current and emerging organisational structures in the NHS, and this relevance should be made explicit. Potential applicants are advised to refer to, and demonstrate familiarity with, available NCCSDO documentation within the Programme of Research on Studying Health Care Organisations, including those references referred to above. <http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/studyinghealthcare.htm>.

Content of the reviews of the literature

The aim of this literature review is to inform the SDO Programme about the structures and performance of different types not-for-profit public sector organisations in an attempt to widen the range of policy options for organisational structures that are possible in the NHS.

The literature review should include the following elements:

- A systematic review of the available published and grey research literature that examines evidence on organisational structure and performance from the UK and other countries, and from a broad range of not-for-profit service organisations.

- The literature review should present and distil the scope and variety of organisational structures of relevance to the UK NHS and attempt to undertake some comparative analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each in that context.
- The review should be sufficiently comprehensive and rigorous. Attention, in particular, should be paid to structures of commissioning (securing) services; structures of service provision; and the link between the two.
- Consultation with relevant advocacy groups should be undertaken to support the identification of appropriate literature and evidence. Researchers may also wish to consult with private not-for-profit and voluntary sector service providers and other researchers with an interest in this area.
- Reviews must be directly policy-relevant to the current policy context of the NHS in England. This will include reference to the full range of health-related initiatives, policies and developments that have been launched in recent years.

Methods

Applicants for this study should provide a clear conceptual and theoretical grounding for this research. In terms of the literature review, the research needs to provide:

- The theoretical basis for the literature review;
- Methods for retrieving relevant published and grey literatures, including the use of hand searches and electronic databases;
- Methods for judging the quality and relevance of the literature available, and for summarising the results; and
- Methods and justifications for defining the scope and limitations of the review.

Applicants should demonstrate that they have a research team in place with the appropriate research skills. Indication should be provided about how they will work with the SDO Programme and relevant stakeholders to build in an active programme for disseminating their research findings in policy, practice and research contexts.

Outputs

The principal output of this research project will be a detailed report consisting of a review of the literature on the structure and performance of not-for-profit health care organisations. The report will also need to include:

- A short and coherent executive summary of no more than three pages;
- A full account of the methods used in the literature review, including a critical appraisal of these methods;
- Rigorous and detailed conclusions that attempt to examine the relative performance of different organisational structures;
- A commentary that indicates how these findings relate to current policy and practice in the NHS, and the key lessons to be learned; and
- An agenda that establishes the key areas for further research and the appropriate methods that should be used in this research.

OP112 - UNDERSTANDING PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND NON-HIERARCHICAL ORGANISATIONS

As part of an ongoing SDO research investigation into the organisation, function and impact of non-hierarchical structures in the NHS, the SDO programme is inviting a proposal to conduct an analysis into the structure and impact of professional partnerships and non-hierarchical organisations in healthcare. The purpose of the research will be to identify and examine the role and impact of non-hierarchical organisational structures that already exist, or are appearing, in the NHS both to the delivery of policy outcomes and to the effectiveness of governance and management objectives. In particular, the research is aimed at understanding the internal structures and workings of professional partnerships, GP co-operatives, independent practice associations (perhaps encompassing limited companies), partnerships with local authorities and the voluntary sector; and 'open source' knowledge management structures. The research is not intended to examine specifically created clinical networks whose work is already being commissioned <http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/networkscall.htm>.

Applicants will need to be able to demonstrate clear conceptual frameworks to consider the issues of organisational structure, relative performance and outcome measures. Moreover, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they are able to draw on a broad range of both evidence and theory. Potential applicants are advised to refer to, and demonstrate familiarity with, related NCCSDO documentation within the Programme of Research on Studying Healthcare Organisations, including those references referred to above <http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/studyinghealthcare.htm>.

Current call for proposals

The SDO Programme is prepared to fund **one** empirical project on the subject of understanding professional partnerships and non-hierarchical organisations. Submissions should be based on an in-depth and comparative empirical examination of existing and/or newly developing non-hierarchical forms of organisation. Within this call, research will not be funded on the management and organisation of professional and clinical networks as this is being examined separately <http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/networkscall.htm>.

The main purpose of the research will be to examine the processes through which different types of professional partnerships operate and how such arrangements impact on the cost, quality and effectiveness of care that is provided, including any changes to the user or patient experience. The research should examine the way in which commissioning agencies (such as PCTs) and/or provider organisations interact with and/or develop and create such organisations. Applicants are free to make suggestions on the subjects of their research, but are expected to submit proposals that entail detailed empirical and longitudinal examination and allow for comparison between different non-hierarchical forms. Selection might be based on certain professional groups, client groups or clinical areas.

The aim of this research is to inform the SDO programme about the structures and performance of professional partnerships and non-hierarchical organisations. In particular, the following questions should be addressed:

1. What are the structures and internal organisational arrangements of non-hierarchical organisations and partnerships?
 - a. What are the goals (explicit and implicit) of such organisations and why/how are they established?
 - b. How are professional partnerships and non-hierarchical organisations co-ordinated, and what makes for a successful co-ordination strategy?
 - c. What are the key elements to the internal management of such organisations?
 - d. How do professionals within such organisations interact with each other and how do they regulate themselves?
2. What is the nature of the governance and incentive arrangements that are placed on these organisations from external bodies? Is there an effective form of regulation, and if so what is the nature of this?
3. How do such forms of organisation impact on outcomes in terms of:
 - a. Securing professional engagement;
 - b. Impact on clinical workloads, job satisfaction and morale;

- c. Impact on clinical quality and development of best practice,
- d. The development of innovative practice;
- e. Adherence to external performance targets;
- f. The cost-effectiveness of service provision; and
- g. Patient outcomes/experiences.

Methods

Applicants for the study should provide a clear conceptual and theoretical grounding for this research, and should be encouraged to explore a variety of research methods. Applicants should clearly outline their proposed methods for carrying out this research including a process for identifying relevant professional partnerships and non-hierarchical organisations in the NHS. The nature of the research study requires the development of a variety of qualitative and quantitative research methods and may include the collection of statistical and other data where appropriate. Applicants should explain clearly how findings from their particular study will have broader relevance for the NHS.

Applicants should demonstrate that they have a research team in place with the appropriate research skills. Indication should be provided about how they will work with the SDO Programme and relevant stakeholders to build in an active programme for disseminating their research findings in policy, practice and research contexts .

Outputs

The principal output of this research project will be a detailed report containing an account of the research and its findings. The report will also need to include:

- A short and coherent executive summary of no more than three pages;
- A full account of the methods used in the research project, including a critical appraisal of these methods;
- Rigorous and detailed conclusions that attempt to examine the operational structure, performance and outcomes of organisations based on professional partnerships and/or non-hierarchical arrangements;
- A commentary that indicates how these findings relate to current policy and practice in the NHS, and the key lessons to be learned; and
- An agenda that establishes the key areas for further research and the appropriate methods that should be used in this research.

Application process

The process of commissioning **OP111** will be in **one stage**. Applicants must submit proposals using the **Literature Review application form**.

The process of commissioning **OP112** will be **in two stages**. Applicants must submit proposals using the **Outline proposal application form**.

All forms are available as Word 97 files or in Rich text format from:

- the SDO website: <http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/calls.htm> or
- by Email from: barbara.langridge@LSHTM.ac.uk

Please do not use any previously obtained version of an SDO Programme application form.

Applicants for OP111 should submit proposals by Wednesday 1st December 2004 at 1.00 pm.

Applicants for OP112 should submit proposals by Wednesday 15th December 2004 at 1.00 pm.

Applicants are asked to submit proposals to:

Barbara Langridge
Commissioning Manager
NCCSDO
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
99 Gower Street
London
WC1E 6AZ

TWENTY-FIVE HARD COPIES of the completed forms should be submitted together with a **copy on disk or CD**. Please note we will not accept electronic submissions or hand written proposals.

No late applications will be considered. Please ensure that your proposal is submitted prior to the correct closing date above.

Guidance notes for the completion of the forms can be found at the front of the application form.

Applicants should note that value for money is an important consideration in respect of this research. Proposed costs of the project should not exceed the limits stated below.

Funding of up to £90,000 is available for OP111. Following submission of literature reviews, successful applicants will be notified no later than March 2005. The project should take no longer than 9 months to complete and start in April 2005.

Funding of up to £300,000 is available for **OP112. Following submission of outline proposals successful applicants will be notified no later than January 2005. They will then be invited to submit full proposals by April 2005. The outcome of the review of full proposals will be notified by May 2005. The project should take no longer than 3 years to complete and start in June 2005.**

Please note that these dates are approximate and may be subject to change.

Please clearly label the outside of the envelope in which you submit your proposal with the following: 'Tender Documents OP(Appropriate Reference Number)'. This will enable us to identify proposals and keep them aside so that they may all be opened together after the closing date and time.

Teams should ensure that their proposal complies with the Research Governance Framework, which can be found on the Department of Health website, or via a link on the SDO website under the 'Call for Proposals' page.

Before funding, successful teams will be required to provide proof of research ethics committee approval for their project, if this is required (information regarding this can be found on the SDO website under the 'Calls for Proposals' page).

We anticipate that there will be informal discussions with NCCSDO throughout the duration of the project regarding the final report.

Applicants should visit the SDO website: <http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk> to familiarise themselves with the work of the SDO Programme in general and with previous scoping exercises in other topic areas.

Successful applicants may be required to present their completed work to the SDO Programme Board.

Addendum

This document was published by the National Coordinating Centre for the Service Delivery and Organisation (NCCSDO) research programme, managed by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

The management of the Service Delivery and Organisation (SDO) programme has now transferred to the National Institute for Health Research Evaluations, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC) based at the University of Southampton. Prior to April 2009, NETSCC had no involvement in the commissioning or production of this document and therefore we may not be able to comment on the background or technical detail of this document. Should you have any queries please contact sdo@southampton.ac.uk.