

## Parenting programmes for preventing unintentional childhood injuries in the under 5s

### Introduction

The aim of the HTA programme is to ensure that high quality research information on the costs, effectiveness and broader impact of health technologies is produced in the most efficient way for those who use, manage, provide care in or develop policy for the NHS. Topics for research are identified and prioritised to meet the needs of the NHS. Health technology assessment forms a substantial portfolio of work within the National Institute for Health Research and each year about fifty new studies are commissioned to help answer questions of direct importance to the NHS. The studies include both primary research and evidence synthesis.

### Question

*Are parenting interventions effective in the prevention of childhood injuries in children under 5 years?*

- 1 **Technology:** To develop a parenting programme, delivered by health professionals.
- 2 **Target group:** Families of children under 5 years, who have had a significant injury in the last twelve months.
- 3 **Setting:** Researchers to specify and justify.
- 4 **Control or comparator treatment:** Normal care.
- 5 **Design:** Development and feasibility in first phase with main trial broadly scoped. The proposal at this stage should only include costs for the preliminary phase of the research. The HTA programme anticipates funding the applicants to do the main study provided they have met their clearly specified criteria for success. A decision to fund the main study will be taken at a later date.
- 6 **Primary outcomes:** Reduction in number of injuries in the under 5s. There should also be a broad range of secondary outcomes that include maternal and family outcomes i.e. events in the family (siblings as well as the index child).
- 7 **Minimum duration of follow-up:** 3 years.

### Background to commissioning brief:

*In industrialised countries injuries are the leading cause of death in childhood, accounting for 40% all child deaths between the ages of one and 14 years. In the UK, there are approximately 10.7 million children under the age of 15 years of whom approximately 35,000 children have an agreed children protection plan, although 10% of children are at risk of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect. More than 350 children die from an injury, 119,000 are admitted to hospital and almost two million attend emergency departments each year following injury. There is a steep social class gradient in child injury mortality and morbidity and some evidence that the gradient in injury mortality may be widening.*

*The majority of injuries in pre-school children occur at home, but there is little meta-analytic evidence that home safety interventions improve a range of safety practices or reduce injury rates and little evidence on their effect by social group.*

*Given the range of positive effects demonstrated by parenting interventions, it is plausible to hypothesise that they may also be effective in preventing unintentional injury in childhood. There are several mechanisms by which this may occur. Research is therefore required in the form of a randomised controlled trial with an explicit theoretical basis and hypothesised causal pathway linking the parenting intervention to the occurrence of childhood injury.*

### Notes to Applicants

For many of the questions posed by the HTA programme, a randomised controlled trial is likely to be the most appropriate method of providing an answer. However, there may be practical or ethical reasons why this might not be possible. Applicants proposing other research methods are invited to justify these choices.

Applicants are asked to:

1. Follow the Medical Research Council's Good Clinical Practice guidelines (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/pdf-ctg.pdf>) when planning how studies, particularly RCTs, will be supervised. Further advice specific to each topic will be given by the HTA programme at full proposal and contract stages.
2. Note that trials involving medicinal products must comply with "The Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004". In the case of such trials, the DH expects the employing institution of the chief investigator to be nominated as the sponsor. Other institutions may wish to take on this responsibility or agree co-sponsorship with the employing institution. The DH is prepared to accept the nomination of multiple sponsors. Applicants who are asked to submit a full proposal will need to obtain confirmation of a sponsor(s) to complete their application. The DH reserve the right to withdraw from funding the project if they are not satisfied with the arrangements put in place to conduct the trial.

The MHRA ([info@mhra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@mhra.gsi.gov.uk), <http://www.mhra.gov.uk>) can provide guidance as to whether your trial would be covered by the regulations. The DH/MRC website (<http://www.ct-toolkit.ac.uk/>) also contains the latest information about Clinical Trials regulations and a helpful FAQ page.

## **Research networks**

The HTA programme expects, where appropriate, that applicants will work with the relevant research network.

## **Making an application**

If you wish to submit an outline proposal on this topic, complete the on-line application form at <http://www.hta.ac.uk/funding/standardcalls/index.shtml> and submit it on line by **15<sup>th</sup> April 2009**. Applications will be considered by the HTA Commissioning Board at its meeting in July. For outline applications, if shortlisted, investigators will be given a minimum of eight weeks to submit a full proposal.

***Applications received electronically after 1300 hours on the due date will not be considered.***

***Please see GUIDANCE ON APPLICATIONS overleaf.***

## Guidance on applications

### Required expertise

HTA is a multidisciplinary enterprise. It needs to draw on the expertise and knowledge of clinicians and of those trained in health service research methodologies such as health economics, medical statistics, study design and qualitative approaches. The HTA programme expects teams proposing randomised controlled trials to include input from an accredited clinical trials unit, or one with equivalent experience. Applicants are also expected to engage a qualified Trial Manager for appropriate projects. A commitment to team working must be shown and applicants may wish to consider a collaborative approach between several institutions.

### Public involvement in research

The HTA programme recognises the benefit of increasing active involvement of members of the public in research and would like to support research projects appropriately. The HTA programme encourages applicants to consider *how* the scientific quality, feasibility or practicality of their proposal *could* be improved by involving members of the public. Examples of how this has been done for health technology assessment projects can be found at <http://www.hta.ac.uk/PPIguidance/>. Research teams wishing to involve members of the public should include in their application: the aims of active involvement in this project; a description of the members of the public (to be) involved; a description of the methods of involvement; and an appropriate budget. Applications that involve members of the public will not, for that reason alone, be favoured over proposals that do not but it is hoped that the involvement of members of the public will improve the quality of the application.

### Outcomes

Wherever possible, the results of HTA should provide information about the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of care provided in its usual clinical setting and for the diverse subjects who would be eligible for the interventions under study. The endpoints of interest will in most cases include disease specific measures, health related quality of life and costs (directly and indirectly related to patient management). Wherever possible, these measurements should be made by individuals who are unaware of the treatment allocation of the subjects they are assessing. We encourage applicants to involve users of health care in the preparation of their proposal, for instance in selecting patient-oriented outcomes. A period of follow up should be undertaken which is sufficient to ensure that a wider range of effects are identified other than those which are evident immediately after treatment. These factors should guide applicants in their choice of subjects, settings and measurements made.

### Sample size

A formal estimate should be made of the number of subjects required to show important differences in the chosen primary outcome measure. Justification of this estimate will be expected in the application.

### Communication

Communication of the results of research to decision makers in the NHS is central to the HTA Programme. Successful applicants will be required to submit a single final report for publication by the HTA programme. They are also required to seek peer-reviewed publication of their results elsewhere and may also be asked to support the NCCHTA in further efforts to ensure that results are readily available to all relevant parties in the NHS. Where findings demonstrate continuing uncertainty, these should be highlighted as areas for further research.

### Timescale

There are no fixed limits on the duration of projects or funding and proposals should be tailored to fully address the problem (including long-term follow-up if necessary). Applicants should consider however that there is a pressing need within the NHS for this research, and so the duration of the research needs to be timely.