

PROGRAMME OF RESEARCH ON ORGANISATIONAL FORM AND FUNCTION

CANCER SERVICES QUALITY: CA1 – ‘ASSESSMENT OF INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DIFFERENT MEASURES OF THE QUALITY OF CANCER SERVICES’.

Introduction

The SDO Programme wishes to commission **two** interrelated research projects in this field: the projects combine both primary and secondary research.

CA1: ‘Assessment of interrelationships between different measures of the quality of cancer services.’

CA2 : ‘Prostate cancer care: improving measures of the patient experience’

This brief describes **CA1**.

The main aim of **CA1** is to assess interrelationships between different measures of the quality of cancer services provided by NHS Trusts in England.

Background

Over the past few years several new measures of the quality of cancer services provided by NHS Trusts and by individual specialist cancer teams have become available. These measures assess different aspects of quality. Examples include:

- The National Cancer Standards, which assess the structure of cancer services and a range of process measures which are linked to outcome. All NHS Trusts providing cancer services were assessed using these standards during 2001.
- Data on access/waiting times - collected by all NHS Trusts.
- The National Cancer Patient Survey. This survey, published in 2002, assesses patients' experience of care. Over 65,000 patients with breast, colorectal, lung, ovarian and prostate cancer and Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma participated in the survey which involved 172 NHS Trusts.
- The Commission for Health Improvement/Audit Commission review of cancer services in 24 Trusts.
- Information from the Cancer Services Collaborative project
- Information on survival rates (both short and long term) is available from Cancer Registries and the Office for National Statistics.

Together with the Modernisation Agency and the National Cancer Director, we wish to commission work to capitalise on this recent data collection. This will involve re-analysis and comparisons between various datasets.

Objectives

The specific objectives for which we require this investigation are:

- To assess the interrelationships between different measures of quality for patients with specific tumour types (e.g. breast; colorectal and prostate).
- To assess variations in quality of services provided for different cancer types within individual NHS Trusts.
- To make recommendations on how the overall quality of the cancer service provided by an NHS Trust can best be assessed.

We want to know:

1. Which items are inter-related within surveys and can simpler versions of the surveys be derived?
2. Within a specific quality domain, do different surveys yield consistent findings e.g. do places that perform well in relation to one measure of access to care also perform well on other measures?
3. Within a specific tumour type, do Trusts perform consistently well across a range of quality indicators?
4. Do Trusts perform consistently well across a range of tumour types?
5. At a Trust level, do the issues raised by the Cancer Patient Survey correlate with those identified by qualitative (focus group) methods used by the Cancer Services Collaborative (CSC)?
6. How do teams/services in which the CSC is active perform in relation to those where the CSC is not active?

We are interested therefore both in the production of measures of quality which can be derived routinely from available data and in conclusions which can be drawn about the consistency of performance on quality measures within trusts and between trusts and for different types of cancers.

Content

Full proposals for research funding for project **CA1** should be submitted. A short review of current evidence should be included where applicable. Proposals should clearly demonstrate that the research will add to knowledge and that the proposed research has not already been or is not already being undertaken.

Applicants should demonstrate how they will undertake the proposed research. Detailed methods, (including both qualitative and quantitative methods where appropriate) should be described. Proposed outputs should be listed and should include an assessment of implications for change and for methods, which change agents can use.

Applicants will also be expected to demonstrate that they are able to draw on a broad range of both evidence and theory. Applicants should be able to demonstrate a broad awareness of international research as well as UK-based research in this field. Relevance to the NHS should be made explicit. Applicants will also need to demonstrate clear conceptual frameworks to consider the issues relating to quality of health care.

We anticipate that the work will be of a multidisciplinary nature incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research. Applicants should demonstrate that their team covers the necessary skills and range of disciplines including high quality organisational and behavioural science, especially in the field of performance management, psychometric skills, understanding of the patient experience and of quality issues in cancer care and of their measurement.

Applicants should familiarise themselves with relevant research already commissioned by SDO and by other NHS R&D programmes (such as the Policy Research Programme and the Health Technology Assessment Programme) and the relevant work of the Modernisation Agency to ensure that they can demonstrate that their proposals do not duplicate other research.

Applicants should refer to the general criteria for prioritising research topics, developed and agreed by the SDO programme board, available on the SDO website (www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk).

Outputs

Proposals should demonstrate awareness that the *principal final product* for **CA1** will be a detailed report that should:

- critically describe the background and available literature in relation to the topic and provide a rigorous and detailed analysis and conclusions of what is currently known about the topic area and of the strength of the evidence on which this is based
- critically describe the methods used in the research
- provide a rigorous analysis of the data gathered
- draw justifiable conclusions
- make recommendations on how the overall quality of cancer services provided by NHS Trusts can best be assessed.
- identify areas for further research and how they might be addressed. This could include reviews of the literature and/or primary research
- locate the findings in the current policy and practice context within the NHS.

Successful applicants will be asked to make a short oral presentation of their completed research to the SDO Programme Board. In addition, successful teams are expected to report on progress at annual intervals to the SDO programme and as required to the National Cancer Director and the Cancer Portfolio Director. We also anticipate that there might be informal discussions with NCCSDO during the research to clarify issues as they arise.

Research outputs will need to be presented both in an academic format and in a format that will be helpful to end-users, particularly those with responsibility for improving the quality of cancer services. One of the key audiences for the work will be those working in the NHS for example with direct clinical and clinical governance responsibilities.

Guidance Notes for submitting a full proposal

Full proposals should be submitted as part of a **one-stage process**. They should identify the proposed research team and describe the location and context of the proposed study. They should include a description of the methods to be used, and the intended outputs of the research. They should also include arrangements for project management, such as an advisory board and user input. Applicants should clearly outline plans for the dissemination of their findings.

In addition, applicants should indicate how they will:

- ensure that their team includes those with knowledge and skills which are sufficiently broad, to deal with the variety of topic areas and methodologies which will need to be considered.
- ensure the relevance of the research to bodies at national and local level which have an interest in these issues.
- demonstrate the involvement of users and other relevant stakeholders at each stage of the proposed research project;
- build in an active programme for disseminating the results, and discussing them with those who plan, manage and deliver services.

Application process

The process of commissioning the study will be **one stage** and applicants should submit **full proposals**. **One** proposal for project **CA1** will be selected. An organisation may submit proposals for both **CA1 and CA2** projects if they wish.

Applicants must submit proposals using the A4 Full Proposal application form, which is available as a Word 97 file or Rich text format from:

- the SDO website: <http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/cancerservicescall.htm>, or
- by Email from: damian.o'boyle@lshtm.ac.uk

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

Applicants are asked to submit proposals by **Wednesday 25th June 2003 at 1pm to:**

Mr Damian O'Boyle
Commissioning Manager
NCCSDO
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
99 Gower Street
London
WC1E 6AZ

TWENTY-FIVE HARD COPIES of the completed A4 Full Proposal application form 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.**

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

Funding of up to **£250,000** is available for funding **one** project in this topic area. **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 above.

Following submission of full proposals successful applicants will be notified no later than the **end of August 2003**. The project should take no longer than **two years** to complete and start no later than **October 2003**. Please note that these dates are approximate and may be subject to change.

In addition, applicants should indicate how they will work with the SDO Programme and relevant stakeholders to build in an active program for disseminating their research findings in policy, practice and research contexts.

Please clearly label the outside of the envelope in which you submit your proposal with the following: **‘Tender Documents’**. 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.

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.