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Version: Accepted Version

Article:

Milnes, L (2016) Considerations when costing research grants. *Nursing children and young people*, 28 (5). p. 12. ISSN: 2046-2336

<https://doi.org/10.7748/ncyp.28.5.12.s14>

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Nursing Children and Young People - Research Essentials

Author: Dr Linda Milnes, Associate Professor in Children and Young People's Nursing

Title: Considerations when costing research grants

Aim: To provide guidance to costing research grants

Essentials: Conducting research to a high standard requires funding and therefore submitting grant applications to funding bodies, which must include a detailed breakdown of costs. Costs have to be justified and demonstrate value for money, and all expediter related to the project must be accounted for right down to the smallest cost, for example tea and coffee for advisory group meetings and postage stamps. If peer reviewers and funding body panel members do not agree that the research is value for money then the application will be rejected. Therefore it is very important to allow time to configure detailed and accurate costs.

There are three distinct costs to research that can guide costing for a research study (Department of Health 2015) and outlined in Box 1,

Box 1: Differences between Research, NHS Support and Treatment costs.

Cost	Examples
Research All research activities required to achieve the outcomes of the study	Time the -investigators spend managing and advising on the research assistant or associate undertaking the research Travel and subsistence: travel associated with conducting data collection at different sites, conference registration and associated travel). Equipment: laptops, audio-recorders, iPad, software Consumables: paper, photocopying, postage, envelopes, flyers, vouchers, transcription of interview data, room hire, refreshments for advisory or steering group meetings Patient randomisation Open Access publishing costs
NHS service support Additional patient care costs associated with the research that would not continue after the research has stopped	Asking NHS employees to determine the suitability of patients for a research study and approaching them to determine participation Recruitment and consent activities including sending out letters, emails
Treatment Patient care costs associated with the new service/treatment	The administration of a trial drug, non-pharmacological intervention as part of a patient's treatment Training health care professionals to use a new treatment/therapy/way of working

The Department of Health (DoH 2012) have published guidance for Attributing the Cost of Health and Social Care Research (AcoRD).; Annex A gives clear examples of what activities fall under which type of cost, including costs associated before, during and after the research has been completed. For instance travel costs might be associated with visiting research sites in preparation for recruitment and data collection. It is important to involve the research and development unit set within the NHS Trust or University and they will offer support and guidance with the calculation of these costs for the final application.

Have you thought of?

Open Access Publishing

Many publishers are now moving towards Open Access Publishing. In order to publish your research some journals will now require an Open Access fee of between £1,500 - £3,000 per paper. This will be a direct research cost and most funders will support this fee but check the funder's guidelines.

Patient and public involvement payment

It is good practice to involve patients and the public in research most funders will expect grant proposals and the undertaking of the research to be informed by service users. This involvement can include user and carers being a co-researcher or a member of the research advisory group that might meet six monthly during the project. Costs should be calculated for the payment of service user's time as well as other associated costs e.g. the cost to hire a venue, refreshments, reimbursement of travel and parking for advisory group members. The INVOLVE (2015) website is an excellent resource and offers examples for calculating these associated costs and guidance on how to budget

Other support

The National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) Clinical Research Network is currently developing a template for researchers to use in the calculation of costs. If required, NIHR Regional Research Design Services will assist researchers applying for NIHR funding in completing the template.

It is advisable to check the guidelines of funding bodies for what they will and will not fund – for instance Charities have to make sure that public money is spent directly on research and do not usually support Directly Allocated or Indirect costs. The Association of Medical Research Charities offers clear guidance on research funding and eligibility and these are published in the AcoRD (Department of Health 2012) document.

Resources

INVOLVE webpage – <http://www.invo.org.uk/>

Department of Health, 2012. Attributing the costs of health & social care Research & Development (AcoRD). Available at <http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2012/05/attributing-the-costs-of-health-social-care-research-development-acord/>

Key Messages

- **Seek support for calculating costing for research grant applications from the institution's research support staff**
- **Check the guidance related to the funding body's call for research applications regarding what they will fund**
- **NHS Research and Development offices and/or Strategic Clinical Networks will offer guidance in calculating NHS Support and Treatment costs.**

Geek Speak

- **Directly Incurred Costs** – costs incurred directly from the project e.g. staff, travel, transcription, equipment
- **Directly Allocated Costs** – costs associated with the project but shared with other activities and are estimates e.g. co-investigator costs, estates, research facilities
- **Indirect Costs** – non-specific costs based on estimates e.g. personal, use of departmental services such as the library