

Final Report for HTMR Network Grant N84

Title: What might a Global Health Trials Methodology Research Agenda look like?

Applicants:

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Background and Summary of Original Objectives:

Methodological research into the design, conduct, analysis and reporting of trials is vital. Previous work has been done to identify trials methodology priorities in the UK through a survey distributed to the key stakeholder group of Directors of UK Clinical Research Centre (UKCRC) registered clinical trial units (CTUs). The topics deemed most important to trialists in the UK were methods to boost recruitment, choosing appropriate outcomes to measure and methods to minimise attrition.

Research priorities in the UK do not necessarily match those in the developing world and so the objective was to identify top priorities for methodological research in low to middle income countries (LMICs) by gaining insight from the trialists in these regions.

What was achieved:

A 2-round survey was distributed across various networks to researchers with experience working in clinical trials in LMICs. Round 1 asked participants to suggest research priorities and in round 2 participants were asked to grade the priorities in terms of importance. Rounds 1 and 2 were completed by 412 and 314 individuals, respectively. Over 80 countries were represented and the participants came from a variety of disciplines with differing trials experience. The top

priorities were identified as choosing appropriate outcomes to measure and methods related to training of research staff.

Individuals who completed both rounds of the survey were entered into a prize draw where the winner would receive free travel and accommodation to the International Clinical Trials Methodology Conference and Society of Clinical Trials 2017 (ICTMC SCT) conference in Liverpool, UK. The prize draw winner Fanny Rosas, a research nurse from Peru, attended the conference.

A final list of priorities, ordered by importance, was produced.

Outputs/Examples of impact:

In May 2017 a poster was presented at the ICTMC SCT. The abstract for the poster was published in TRIALS.

The full manuscript was published in February 2018: *Rosala-Hallas A, et al. Global Health Trials Methodological Research Agenda: Results from a priority setting exercise. TRIALS 2017.*

The authors were also invited to write a guest blog post for BioMed Central to accompany the manuscript: <http://blogs.biomedcentral.com/on-medicine/2018/02/05/improving-global-health-clinical-trials-where-to-begin/>

Both the manuscript and the blog were circulated amongst survey participants and were also shared via the Global Health Network.

Next Steps:

The involvement of LMICs in core outcome sets (COS) development and uptake is therefore a key area of concern and efforts should be made to improve this. The COMET initiative recognises this as a particular challenge of COS development and implementation, and is currently working with researchers from LMICs to offer bursaries for five LMIC researchers to attend and participate in COMET's seventh international meeting (15th-16th November 2018, Amsterdam). This is intended to be the start of a collaboration to develop a strategy for COMET to support the development, dissemination and use of COS in LMICs.

An application for an MRC Trials Methodology Research Partnership Grant which features Global Health as one of three key themes was submitted in June; the outcome will be known in November.