

Practical sessions – Examples of proposals/budgets that were granted funding versus those that were declined

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For ECAVI VACCINE ACADEMY



1. Introduction

2. Successful and unsuccessful grant applications

3. Summary and Conclusion

Brian Godman – research activities

- PhD research activities (starting in 2006) initially in 7 EU countries to:
 - Increase the prescribing of generics first line and drive down their prices to enhance prescribing efficiency
 - Optimise reimbursement/ funding decisions for new drugs and their subsequent utilisation
- Extended across Europe and globally researching. Research interests including activities to improve the quality and efficiency of prescribing/ dispensing across multiple disease areas/ product classes including infectious and NCDs
- Co-Founder of Piperska (Europe - 2008) and MURIA (2015)
- Over 350 peer reviewed publications/ acceptances in the past 13 across multiple continents/ countries including Africa. African countries worked with include Botswana, Cameroon, Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland (Eswatini), Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe
- Successful as well as unsuccessful grant applications

There are key issues and hurdles to address when preparing grant applications/ proposals

- Grant applications are becoming increasingly competitive as new Universities and groups seek scarce resources – enhanced by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Consequently, a clear understanding of the disease area and application process are vital for progression as typically multiple steps are involved including successive review stages. In addition, a clear idea of the patient/ other benefits arising from your research and its translation to other settings/ countries
- Clear timelines, transparent and robust budget processes and a proven track record with colleagues are also increasingly vital - a proven track record helps ensure reviewers/ grant application bodies view your group as a 'safe pair of hands'
- Any inside knowledge about the personnel/ organisations providing the funding also helps to better shape any proposal/ discuss key elements in advance (take hold of any opportunity)

As stated yesterday - Przeworski and Salomon sum up a proposal as follows:

'A proposal's overt function is to persuade a committee of scholars that the project shines with the three kinds of merit all disciplines value, namely:

- Conceptual innovation
- Methodological rigor
- Rich, substantive content

But to make these points stick, a proposal writer needs a feel for the unspoken customs, norms, and needs that govern the selection process itself'

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Key projects I have been involved with – success and failures

- Successful projects:
 - ❑ Newton/ MRC – Brazil
 - ❑ Newton/ MRC – Kenya
 - ❑ Newton/ MRC – South Africa
 - ❑ Commonwealth Pharmacist Association – Ghana
- Unsuccessful projects:
 - ❑ Newton/ MRC – South Africa
 - ❑ STINT (Sweden) – South Africa
 - ❑ Commonwealth Pharmacist Association – Zambia
 - ❑ Pfizer – Infectious Diseases – Nigeria (believe one of the reasons was that potential units were chosen in advance as no obvious reasons for initial rejection with a strong proposal and track record of the teams)

Successful project – Brazil – Strathclyde and UFMG, Brazil

- The project involved researching ways to collect information from outpatients on the effectiveness of anti-TNFs in inflammatory diseases include RA as well as measure the effectiveness and safety of insulin glargine in the population with patient level data
- Believed successful as:
 - ❑ Strong track record of joint publications of UFMG and Strathclyde personnel – demonstrating that we can successfully work together
 - ❑ Strong track record with both universities using national patient level data to analyse current treatment patterns
 - ❑ UFMG had already successfully conducted research with outpatients whilst they were waiting for their appointments – so showed this methodology could be successfully used
- Overall – proved a successful collaboration with multiple publications, etc., paving the way for future projects

Successful project – Strathclyde and University of Nairobi, Kenya

- Projects involved developing sustainable innovations to improve the rational use of medicines for infectious diseases and NCDs. This included ways to improve antibiotic utilisation across sectors including reducing self-purchasing of antibiotics
- Reasons why believe successful:
 - ❑ Strathclyde/ Scottish team – strong track record with researching/ improving the management of infectious diseases in Scotland as well as undertaking patient level research in both infectious diseases and NCDs
 - ❑ Scottish personnel strong track record with undertaking research into infectious and non-infectious diseases across Africa
 - ❑ Strathclyde and Kenyan team had already published/ submitted a number of joint papers – so established working practices. Overall seen as a ‘safe pair of hands’
 - ❑ This relationship has already generated a considerable number of papers/ abstracts which is progressing

Successful project – Strathclyde and SMU, South Africa

- Built on the unsuccessful STINT project between SMU and the Karolinska Institute (concerns with explanation/ details of the methodology and previous findings in Botswana)
- The project principally involved seeking ways to improve collection/ monitoring of antimicrobial utilisation across sectors
- Believe funded as:
 - ❑ Strathclyde/ Scotland – strong track record with improving infectious disease management/ reducing AMR as well as conducting patient level research
 - ❑ Scottish team – strong track record in conducting infectious disease research in sub-Saharan Africa including PPS and other studies
 - ❑ SA team – strong track record with conducting infectious disease research in SA in the public sector (also private)/ strong relationships with the MoH in Pretoria
 - ❑ Proven track record of working together including a number of published/ submitted papers - continuing

Successful project – Scotland/ Strathclyde and Ghana – Commonwealth Pharmacy Association

- Funding to improve the utilisation of antibiotics in Ghana through establishing antimicrobial stewardship groups
- Believe funded as:
 - ❑ Strathclyde/ Scotland – strong track record with improving infectious disease management/ reducing AMR – SAPG - as well as conducting patient level research
 - ❑ Scottish team – strong track record in conducting infectious disease research in sub-Saharan Africa including PPS and other studies including AMS groups
 - ❑ Proven track record of working together with the team in Ghana including a number of published/ submitted papers – showing successful working
- The partnership has generated teaching slides and joint publications/ abstracts including actively researching ways to reduce inappropriate use of antibiotics for SSIs – timing of the first dose as well as post operation. This is continuing
- Not successful in Zambia as less of a track record

Unsuccessful project – Strathclyde and another University in South Africa (Newton/ MRC)

- The proposal centred on potential ways to analyse and improve the management of both infectious and non-infectious diseases across South Africa and wider
- Believe not funded as:
 - ❑ Concerns with ability of working together as some previous publications – but not extensive
 - ❑ Concerns with the ability of the SA team with conducting extensive drug utilisation research in the public sector in SA
 - ❑ Lack of patient level data in the public sector – and not sure how to develop this as limited interactions/ joint research with the MoH in Pretoria
 - ❑ Limited team in SA to follow the project through
 - ❑ Concurrently funding the project in Brazil (seen as a 'safer pair of hands')

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In conclusion as stated yesterday

- Need to make sure in advance that your proposal grabs attention in its title, format, and content and be as novel as possible
- This will be helped by knowing (as far as possible) who are the key decision makers and what are their needs/ wants/ wishes – as a number of potential groups are sometimes short listed in advance with the RFP tailored to their capabilities
- A proven track record in the disease area/ related disease area and the methodology is vital as well as a proven track record with some of those taking part across the universities/ countries is invaluable to give the reviewers/ funders confidence that the objectives of the proposal can be achieved
- Make sure diversity in the project team and how you intend that the findings translational and bring on new students
- Make sure the budget is consistent with the study aims and is realistic – in addition have contingency plans to avoid pitfalls

Thank You

Any Questions!

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