

WA Health Translation Network

COVID-19 Research Collaboration

Minutes

Tuesday 28 April 2020, 3.00pm – 4.00pm

Via Zoom

<https://www.wahtn.org/wa-covid-19-research-coordination/>

1. Welcome and update

Gary Geelhoed commented that with the flattening of the curve and the relatively low number of cases the approach to both research and the attitude of potential donors were changing.

Minutes

The Minutes from this meeting and all previous meetings are circulated as quickly as possible and uploaded to the WAHTN COVID-19 website. Please provide feedback to Gary Geelhoed.

Guiding document

The current document was provided to members and is on the WAHTN COVID-19 website.

Members were reminded to provide feedback. The document is draft and includes an indicative budget, which is all subject to change.

Contact Spreadsheet

Gary Geelhoed reminded attendees that the COVID-19 Research Collaboration contacts spreadsheet is requires updating and would be grateful if members could providing missing information to the WAHTN team. It can be found on the WAHTN website.

2. Funding

WA Department of Health

The outcomes of the Research Grants will be announced by the WA Minister for Health shortly. Gary Geelhoed noted that as the COVID-19 environment is evolving rapidly, the Grant program will be reviewed after 3 months.

Foundations

Currently exploring options related to hospital foundations and philanthropic avenues. A Foundation will contribute over \$100K to clinical trials in their AHS.

Others

- Linear Clinical Research announced it is conducting a Phase 1 trial of a vaccine candidate.
- The discussions with regards to possible funding opportunities with HBF are progressing.
- Chief Scientist Peter Klinken has secured additional funding for research proposals which will be announced in due course.

Minister for Health Community Studies (Peter Leedman)

The Minister for Health asked for advice and ideas on targeted testing and which groups would be representative of high risk key groups within the community. Currently the groups identified are; FIFO workers; Schools; Paramedics; and health care workers. These groups would be linked in a highly collaborative manner.

A funding document, DETECT, has been submitted to the WA Department of Health.

There is interest from the resources industry to be within the umbrella.

Aligning mental health areas in terms of outcome measurements to learn more about the impact of the community as a whole.

Fiona Wood queried the inconsistencies relating to airport and FIFO worker testing. How to ensure the whole of the aircraft is appropriately screened. It was suggested that Rio Tinto should be approached in the first instance.

The initial document outlining the project is currently with the Minister but will be circulated in due course.

3. Updates from Key Areas

Dominic Mallon

A collaborative Immunology group has been established to meet and discuss the broader options available for detecting immunity, particularly those that have recovered from COVID-19. Dominic encouraged members of the group to contact him if they wished to be included.

Dominic Mallon noted that whilst there are various point of care testing kits available, they vary in quality and noted that caution should be used when using the kits on an ongoing basis as they may not provide an accurate diagnosis.

COVID-19 Research Response (CRR) (Toby Richards)

Completed feasibility and testing phase setting up the protocol in SMHS on south; data sample collection commenced in the EMHS this week; and a team has started setting up a template at NHMS.

There is now a unique opportunity where all 3 metropolitan area health services are working together and how we can adapt to use these services aside from COVID-19.

Put together a proposal / formal plan of what can be enacted.

Emergency Medicine (Daniel Fatovich and Glenn Arendts)

Recruited patients into the Emergency Medicine Critical Illness and Shock study.

CIVIC (Jacquita Affandi)

CIVIC has been launched.

Assisted and working with the DETECT project.

Australian National Phenome Centre (ANPC) (Jeremy Nicholson)

Jeremy Nicholson is continuing to pursue the international connections and met with an international group with over 30 different groups who similar instrumentation to the ANPC and have COVID-19 samples in their labs already. ANPC is assisting to coordinate the international metabolic phenotyping approach.

ANPC is linked with Cambridge University and is completing metabolic analysis on over 1500 different quantitative subjects.

North Metro Health Service (NMHS)

Gary Geelhoed reporting for Aron Chakera that there was progress and no major problems with Biobanking and NMHS.

East Metro Health Service (EMHS) (Graham Hillis)

Recruited 7 patients and have baseline data and samples.

David Smith

Continuing to work on genome sequencing.

Screening neutralisation approach being conducted with live virus and looking at developing a program that is currently in place for Dengue patients (serum and cells).

University of Western Australia (Tim Colmer)

One cohort that hasn't been discussed is the Australians returning home. Can this group access this group before they end up in hospitals?

There is a return travellers protocol, however, Darren Gibson will ascertain what the WA Department of Health is actioning in this area and will inform the group next week.

University of Notre Dame Australian (UNDA) (Bahareh Badrian and David Playford)

Researchers are engaging with the mental health group.

Looking internally on how UNDA can support COVID-19 research through funding schemes. This is currently in development.

David Playford informed the group of the Telehealth project looking into collaborative opportunities. Whilst you can talk to patients but cannot examine them and what avenues can be pursued to collect better patient data in this environment.

How can we harness data using artificial intelligence to get a more comprehensive patient management plan using existing technologies. David Playford, Fiona Wood, Rob Newton and Pip Brennan will connect and discuss this.

Edith Cowan University (ECU) (Rob Newton)

Moving ahead with projects ECU discussed last week, particularly with regards to MSWA on how people with chronic conditions are coping with COVID-19 issues and how that is affecting them. How do we deliver services and quality therapy to these patients.

New proposals developed related to Para medicine researchers.

Consumer and Community – Deb Langridge

Survey has been distributed to consumers to get feedback from general public about the importance of COVID-19 research and the consent process. Nearly 200 responses to date and will be open for another week. The feedback has been positive and the CCHR team will collate and share this information with the group and at a broader level with researchers.

Online training will commence shortly with the Community Representative Pool which will align well with research grants.

4. Trials

ASCOT (Asha Bowen)

In Western Australia, awaiting the medication to arrive and then recruitment can commence.

PepCoCo (Jonathan Carapetis)

The PepCoCo trial has been funded externally and the trial will go ahead. Formal announcement to follow.

5. Website

WAHTN's website dedicated to the COVID-19 response is evolving and is continuing to be updated. Gary Geelhoed asked members to provide him with information they wish to have included.

6. Other business

Gary Geelhoed mentioned the Australian Health Research Alliance (AHRA) and how other Translation Centres are looking into the broader economic cost of the shutdown and noted we should explore this side to have a balanced view.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be scheduled on Monday 4 May, 3pm