

Sharing of experience

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My
declaration....

I am just an ordinary person

Failed 2-3 times before I get
my first HMRF grant approved

My personal views

A game to play ...What kind of game is this ?

- Is it chess ?
- Is it darts ?



Don't get
disqualified
before any reviews...

- Read the instructions !
 - Who is eligible ?
 - What kind of projects are eligible ?
 - Clinical or readily translatable
 - What are the thematic priorities ?

知己知彼...know what they will assess you on ..

- Originality and Impact
- Research Questions, Aims, and Hypotheses
- Subjects and Subject Methodology
- Outcomes and Data Analysis
- Research Capability
- Budget
- Ethical and Safety Considerations
- Overall Comments and Conclusion (Strengths & Weaknesses)

Reviewers are..

- Experts in the field but may not be expert in your particular topic
- Busy people

So, You need to ...

- Use simple , straight forward concise language
- Use easily understandable flow charts or diagrams to illustrate
- Very clear in your mind what you want to say

Originality and impact

- What is the importance and impact ?
- How will the research benefit patients/ health care system ?
- How will it affect clinical practice ?
- How will it inform health policy in HK or internationally ?
- Any potential facilitators and barriers ?

Example

Can HPV self sampling in the community improve cervical cancer screening rate ?

Reviewer 1 :

The proposed project is innovative regarding the application of HPV self-sampling strategy in Hong Kong. The self-sampling might be a convenient and effective approach to improve the screening rate of HPV. The research will have public health significance. It will help to establish an easy way of early identification of women with HPV infection. The study will be beneficial for identifying those HPV infected women with pre-malignant change in the cervix, which will decrease case numbers of cervix cancer and reduce corresponding disease burden. The research finding can inform health policy making through involving NGOs in promoting self-sampling of HPV in the future.

Reviewer 2

- “ I DO NOT think this proposal is particularly innovative. Cervical cancer screening has been around for a very long time. We know that HPV causes the bulk of Cx cancers. We also know that self sampling works....”

What went wrong .. Why such difference in opinion ?

- Reviewer 2 did not pick up the “ innovative component “

Explained clearly in the introduction

Start with basic backgrounds

Can use subheadings

Need to state explicitly the novelty, significance, clinical relevance and impact to health care system in HK

Research Questions , Aims and Hypothesis

- Specific, clearly expressed and realistic ?

- Don't be too ambitious
- Think clearly what should be the primary research questions
- Would there be secondary research questions ?
- State the aim and hypothesis
- Can be in point form

Subjects and Study Method

- Is this the best design to answer the research question ?
- Is the sample size calculation correct ?
- Is the sample size realistic ?
- Are the study procedures feasible in reality ?

- If the design is wrong, it can be a fatal error .. Think very carefully- can the design actually prove your hypothesis ?
- Sample size and statistics – get a statistician to help
- Need to ensure that you can actually achieve the sample size (will not pass the interim report...)
- Need to adhere to the study procedures if you actually get the grant .. So , don't make it impossible for yourself...

Outcome and Data Analysis

Are the primary and secondary outcomes clearly defined ?

Are the potential problems anticipated and addressed ?

Is the statistical design appropriate ?

- Primary outcome – match primary research questions
- Find a place in the proposal to specifically mention potential problems
- Get statistician's input

Research Capability

- Research team's expertise
- Track record of investigators
- Existing facilities

- Assess what expertise are needed
- Get people with the required expertise into your team-
- Assess your own track record, if feels insufficient, get a collaborator with good record
- State the role of each clearly and convincingly

Budget

- Is it justified and reasonable ?

- Just have to be reasonable
- Ensure all costs are accounted for
- Changing budget allocation is troublesome when you got the grant

Provide details and justifications on the following budget item: “Biostatistician consultation fee” (\$50,000). Submit a revised budget using the template specified in the attached checklist.

Ethical and safety

- Think of all possible ethical issues (or non- issues) and address them specifically
- Best if you have already obtained ethical approvals

Grading for applications	Meaning
<p style="text-align: center;">4 Recommended for support</p>	<p>Nil or very minor issues to address only</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3 Recommended for support subject to clarifications/ amendments</p>	<p>Minor revision and clarification required for a successful delivery</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2 Not recommended for support at present</p>	<p>Major revision required for significant improvement</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">1 Not supported</p>	<p>Minimal impact on research / flaw in methodology/ incomplete application/ out of scope of the fund</p>

Reviewer's comments -

- Answer carefully
- Point by point

Thank you very much for sending us valuable comments and your kind consideration.

GRB

GRB1: Provide evidence that the number of people undergoing surgery and shown to be non-malignant is large enough to allow for the accurate selection of strategies to predicting malignancy in women with a pelvic mass.

A: The number of people undergoing surgery and shown to be non-malignant (ie benign) can be estimated from past hospital statistics. We plan to recruit patients from 3 hospitals – Queen Mary, Pamela Youde and United Christian/Tseung Kwan O (The department of O&G in UCH and TKO operate as a single unit). In general, if a mass is suspected to be malignant, the patient would undergo an open abdominal procedure to remove the mass instead of a laparoscopic procedure. For large benign masses, abdominal route may be chosen instead of laparoscopic route. For this study, both abdominal route and laparoscopic route would be included.

Queen Mary Hospital

As evident from latest published statistics from 2013 (see appendix 1), the number of people undergoing surgery for removal of pelvic masses as follow

<i>Ovarian cystectomy (abdominal)</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>(Page 57)</i>
<i>Salpingo-oophrectomy / Oophrectomy (abdominal)</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>(Page 57)</i>
<i>Laparoscopic ovarian cystectomy</i>	<i>117</i>	<i>(Page 60)</i>
<i>Laparoscopic oophorectomy/salpingoophrectomy</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>(Page 60)</i>
<i>Total from QMH in 1 year</i>	<i>308</i>	

Summary

- Careful think through all the details
 - Demonstrate very clear thought process
 - The design can answer your research question
 - The outcome is the answer to your research question
 - The methodology is realistic and feasible (otherwise, obtaining the grant will be the beginning of your nightmare, because you have to adhere to the protocol and produce the intended output)

- Use simple language , not too technical
- Check grammar and spelling (you don't want the reviewer to think you are sloppy)
- State important concepts explicitly (eg what is innovative, how is this different from others, what are the implications etc)
- Use diagrams to illustrate workflow



Good Luck
