



MRC/NIHR funding for the methodological challenges in the utilisation of PROMS

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Chair of MRC/NIHR Methodology Research Programme (MRP) Panel

6 July 2010

Plan of Talk



- Context of MRP (MRC/NIHR)
- Overview of Methodology Workstream
- MRP funding streams and e.g.'s of projects
- Types of strategic initiatives
- MRP funding for PROMS
- Further information and contacts

MRC Mission

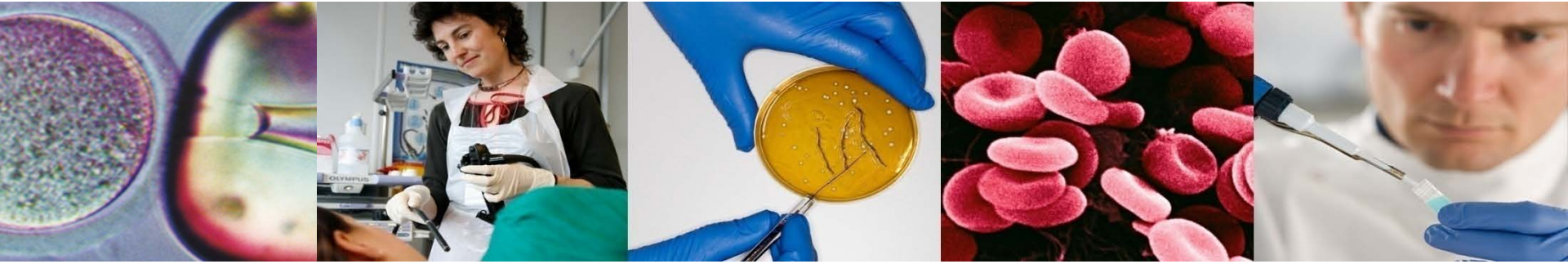
MRC

Medical
Research
Council



- Encourage and support research to improve human health
- Produce skilled researchers
- Advance and disseminate knowledge and technology to improve the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the UK [and worldwide]
- Promote dialogue with the public about medical research

A coordinated health research strategy



- Partnership between MRC and NIHR critical
- Already delivering under the Office for the Strategic Coordination of Health Research (OSCHR):
 - Strategically coherent approach to publicly-funded health research
 - Coordination of improvement in translation of basic research into health and economic benefit
- Strategic coordination in key areas; clarity on agreed 'lead areas'; new programmes and calls already launched
- Devolved Health Departments now partners in OSCHR

Where the Methodology Workstream fits within the MRC Remit

MRC Vision

- To develop a high quality national platform in methodology research
- To establish the UK as a world class leader in methodological innovation in health research

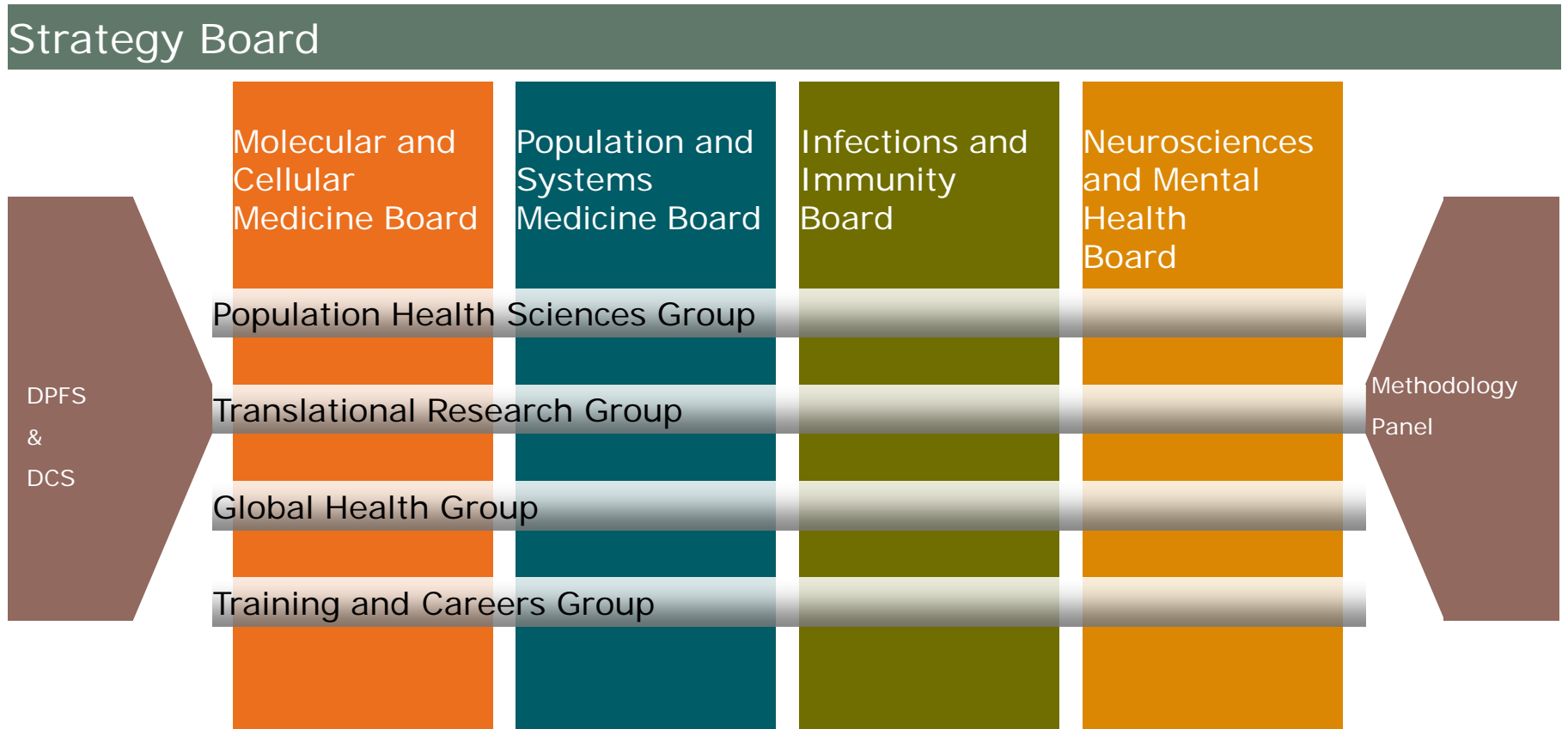
OSCHR (Office for the Strategic Coordination of Health Research)

- OSCHR oversees strategic areas of joint working between MRC and NIHR
- Coordination of improvement in translation of basic research into health and economic benefit

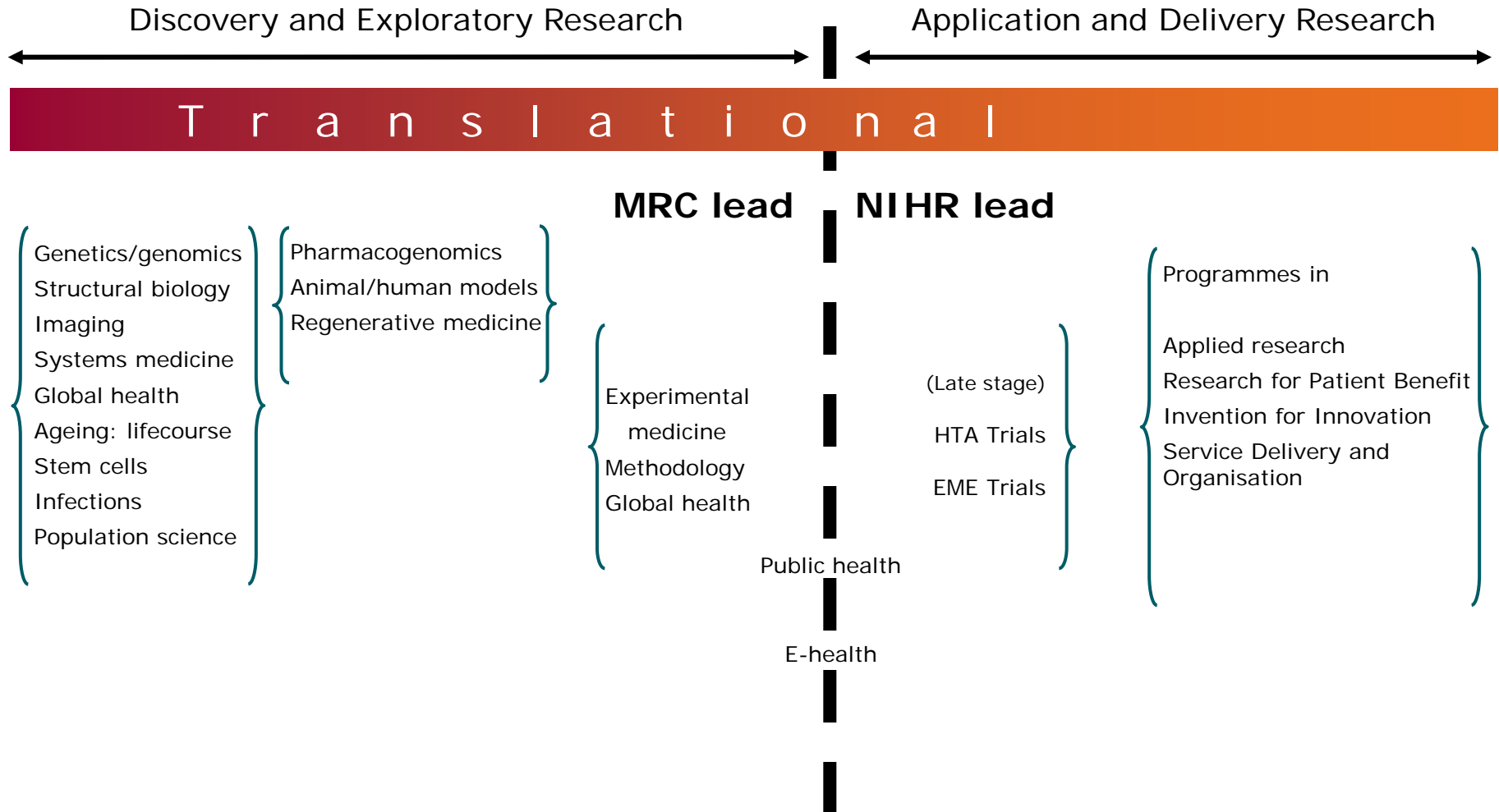
OSCHR Methodology Workstream

- MRP forms part of the joint methodology workstream (MRC & NIHR (£4.5m & £1m))
- MRC is the lead organisation
- Underpinning workstream

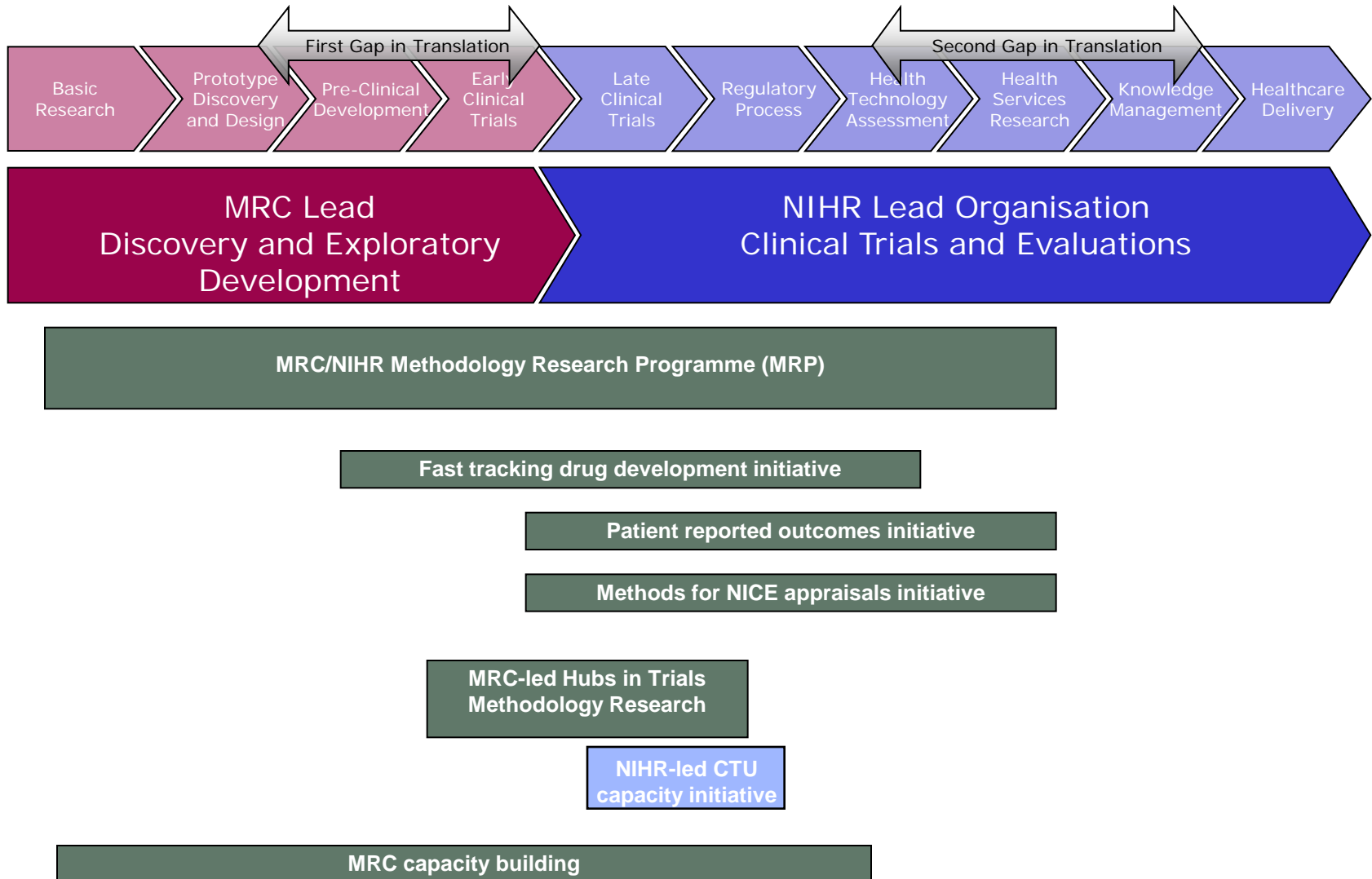
MRC Strategic structure



Current foci of MRC activity



Methodology workstream activities



MRC Fellowships

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- Methodology Research Fellowship
- MRC Career Development Award in Biostatistics
- Economics of Health
- Special Training Fellowship in biomedical informatics (computational biology, neuroinformatics and health informatics)

MRP Funding streams



The programme has two funding modes:

- **Investigator-led Research** (response mode)
 - Essentially normal response mode funding
 - Research grants accepted to 3 annual deadlines
 - Grants must be within Panel remit
- **Needs-led Research** (commissioned)
 - Commissioned research
 - Topics solicited from stakeholders and developed into a funding brief
 - Applicants respond to the advertised funding brief

MRP Funding remit



Comprises research on methods developments that are generalisable beyond a specific case-study, to underpin:

- the biomedical sciences
- experimental medicine
- clinical trials
- population health sciences
- health services research and health policy

MRP can also commission methodologically important research e.g. methods to support NICE in its decision making

Examples of MRP funded projects



- **Irene Higginson** (KCL)
MORECare: Methods of research for end-of-life care.
- **Susan Michie** (University College London)
Methods for strengthening evaluation and implementation: specifying components of behaviour change interventions.
- **Christophe Fraser** (Imperial College London)
Estimating the impact of social structure on epidemics and predicting the impact of targeted interventions.
- **John Brazier** (University of Sheffield)
Validating generic preference-base measures of health in mental health populations and estimating mapping functions.
- **John Whittaker** (LSHTM)
Exploiting genetic information in the estimation of disease risk.
- **Conor Patrick Farrington** (Open University)
Inference for infectious diseases from multivariate serological survey data.
- **Kate Tilling** (University of Bristol)
Developing and disseminating robust methods for handling missing data in epidemiological studies.

MRP Funding activities

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- **Investigator-led research**
 - Applications follow the same rules and peer-review process as standard MRC research grants
- **Needs-led research**
 - MRC-NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)
 - Methods to support NICE in its decision making
- **Highlight notices**
 - Complex interventions
 - PROMS

Types of strategic initiatives



- Stimulating Research through:
 1. Highlight Notices (still live on MRC website)
 - Methods research for Complex Interventions: methods development research to support the use and evaluation of complex interventions in health research.
 - Methodology underpinning Patient Reported Outcome Measures: encourage methods development research aimed at improving the generation and validation of PROMs and/or improving the interpretation and evaluation of PROMs
 2. Calls for Proposals

'Methodological research to underpin NICE decision making' a £1.8m call for proposals run in 2009 and 8 research projects were supported under this call.
 3. Large Scale Investments

Hubs in Trials Methodology Research (HTMR). A >£16m initiative to set up UK hubs to support a UK-wide methodological platform in trials research.

Types of strategic initiatives



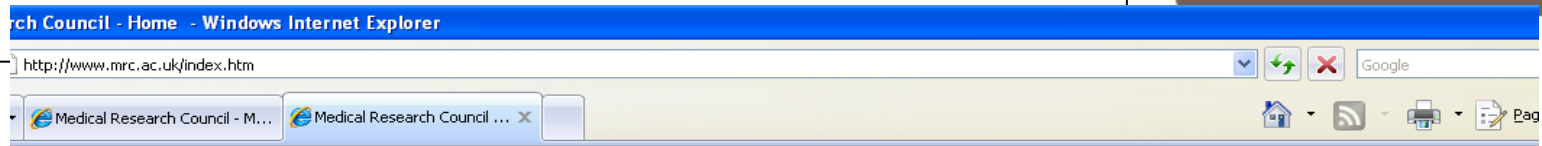
- Stimulating Research through:
 1. Highlight Notices (still live on MRC website)
 - Methodology underpinning Patient Reported Outcome Measures
 - Encourage methods development research aimed at improving the:
 - generation and validation of PROMs
 - interpretation and evaluation of PROMs

MRP Funding remit – key issue



- Comprises research on (underpinning) methods developments that are generalisable beyond a specific case-study
- Not development of a PROM, nor evaluation of one or more in a given context (NIHR HSR?)
- How best to develop PROMS; novel methods of evaluation/comparison of PROMS
- If in doubt, check with the MRC Office (see later for details)

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Sir Leszek Borysiewicz interviewed

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
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Hubs for trials methodology research (HTMR)

» **Methodology Research Programme**

Models of disease

New Dynamics of Ageing Programme

Research platform for induced Pluripotent Stem (iPS) cells

UKCRC Translational Infection Research Initiative

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Methodology Research Programme

MRC working with NIHR to deliver the single joint health strategy

The Methodology Research Programme is a new funding programme led by the MRC as part of the MRC/NIHR single health research strategy, ([press release](#)).

To strengthen the evidence base for health research, the MRP will oversee and implement the evolving MRC/NIHR strategy for high quality methodological research. In addition to the MRC and NIHR funding partners, the MRP will also take account of the needs of other stakeholders including the devolved administrations, industry R&D, and regulatory/advisory agencies and other public bodies.

The MRP will fund investigator-led and commissioned research proposals from across the UK.

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Remit

The MRP's remit is broad and covers the interests of the MRC and NIHR. The programme includes research on methods development to underpin the biomedical sciences, experimental medicine, clinical trials, population health sciences, health services research and health policy, including:

- > Methods for the design and analysis of PRIMARY descriptive and evaluative studies.
- > Methods for the design and analysis of SECONDARY studies involving reviews and evidence synthesis of descriptive and evaluative studies.
- > The design, process and analysis of clinical trials including improved methods for the assessment of risk, efficacy, safety and other issues related to regulatory approvals for new medicines, devices and diagnostics.
- > Methodologies in the applied disciplines underpinning research in the

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Further information and contacts

- Website

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