Supporting Cardiovascular Clinical Research in the UK

BHF CRC Strategy
2019 - 2022

BHF CRC
Clinical Research Collaborative

Introduction

The BHF Clinical Research Collaborative (BHF CRC), launched in June 2019, is funded through a generous program grant from UK's leading heart disease charity, the British Heart Foundation (BHF).

Hosted by the British Cardiovascular Society, who provide office space, financial oversight and human resources support, the collaborative is led by a full-time Chief Operating Officer, a Coordinator and an appointed senior Clinical Lead. It is supported by, and reports to, an Oversight Board appointed by the BHF.

The collaborative aims to support the planning and delivery of clinical research in heart and circulatory diseases in the UK. The BHF CRC will provide the infrastructure to facilitate, enhance and coordinate the research planning of existing cardiovascular and surgical societies.

Partners

The BHF CRC works in partnership with key stakeholders in cardiovascular care and clinical research including:

- The National Institute for Health Research
- BHF Centres of Excellence in cardiovascular research
- BHF Data Sciences Centre
- Cochrane Heart Collaboration
- Leading clinical trials units
- Comparable organisations promoting clinical research in different disease areas

Research Groups

The British Heart Foundation Clinical Research Collaborative will establish and support a collaborative network of specialist 'Research Groups' (RG). Each RG will coordinate clinical research planning and activity with focus on a:

- Type of heart disease or clinical problem e.g. heart failure, heart rhythm disturbance
- Treatment type or method of cardiac imaging or investigation e.g. cardiac surgery, echocardiography

Each RG is constituted as the research element of one or more of the national specialist professional societies (e.g. Cardiac Surgery Research Group is governed by the British Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons)

Mission

To support and develop cardiovascular clinical research in the UK

Vision

Cardiovascular clinical research in the UK will be of the highest quality with impact on international practice

Goals

Promote and Co-ordinate the Effective Planning and Delivery of Clinical Research

Add Value: Provide Solutions to Problems Faced by Our Stakeholders

Engage the Broader Research Community

Promote and Co-ordinate the Effective Planning and Delivery of Clinical Research

We will work with established national specialist societies to capitalise on existing areas of success and maximise the inclusion of specialist and sub-specialist groups in CVD to encourage and facilitate collaboration and research delivery.

- Work with and through the Research Groups of the national specialist societies, leveraging their natural and established authority in their field
- Establish a BHF CRC Steering Group from the Research Group leads, to enhance co-ordinated activity and to decide best use of CRC resources
- Provide venue, travel and administrative support to research groups meetings
- Promote collaboration and minimise competition in research prioritisation, planning and delivery

Add Value: Provide Solutions to Problems Faced by Our Stakeholders

We will add value by targeting the research development problems identified by our stakeholders and bring new resources and support to provide practical solutions.

- Provide a practical and contemporary IT support system based on Microsoft 365 environment and Microsoft Teams for the research groups to support collaboration within and between groups
- Promote Microsoft Teams meetings and collaborative file sharing as a cost-effective and efficient method of wider and more frequent engagement
- Establish links with the BHF Data Sciences Centre to consider automated solutions for outcome reporting vis ONS and NHS Digital
- Develop relationships with NIHR Clinical Trials Units (CTU), investing to secure research development support with methodological and statistical consultancy
- Partner with the Cochrane Heart Group to support the production of systematic reviews
- Share and promote best practice solutions

Engage the Broader Research Community

We will promote the wider benefits of research activity through transparent and inclusive research group constitution and function, ensuring the views of patients and clinicians are encouraged and heard alongside academics and industry in research development

- Encourage a common, democratic, and transparent constitution for Research Group membership and activity
- Engage with patients and other service users to promote appropriate representation in the development and delivery of research proposals.
- Promote engagement and equality of opportunity for NHS institutions with limited current research activity and the wider clinical workforce
- Support the development of future researchers: engage with doctors and other healthcare professionals in training to raise the awareness of clinical research and to support the training offered by the specialist societies
- Develop a public facing website to promote the BHF CRC and cardiovascular clinical research
- Invest in shared projects, such as education and promotion through the BCS and at major national society meetings