

L-EMeRG Objectives

March 2001

Strategy document for the Leeds Emergency Medicine Research Group. L-EMeRG

1. Summary.

Research within Accident and Emergency (A&E) medicine has remained predominantly on a small-scale and been undertaken in an ad hoc manner despite the clinical development of the speciality. Actively co-ordinated and integrated research needs to underpin clinical development if the speciality is to reach maturity. The following document outlines the development of a formal research strategy within the LTHT A&E service.

2. Introduction

2.1. Research issues generally in A&E

A&E as a specialty lags behind other small specialities in its research and academic activity and output. A handful of centres have traditionally been the main research centres and even they have struggled to produce large numbers of publications in high impact factor journals and to attract grant monies. This is probably due to a number of factors:

- A lack of a critical mass of interested clinicians
- No support mechanisms for interested parties
- Little availability of research scholarships and training for trainees
- Poor collaboration with allied specialities
- Little collaboration between academic A&E centres in different regions
- Poor support for the specialty from Universities
- Seen as a low priority area by pharmaceutical companies

2.2. National perspective-FAEM

The FAEM is increasingly aware of the problem of producing high quality research in our speciality and the difficulties in attracting research monies. A number of new initiatives are currently being developed by the Academic subcommittee of the FAEM in an attempt to improve productivity. These include the appointment of regional co-ordinators for research in each training programme. These appointments would provide a regional source of advice, improve local research training and run a regional research registry.

2.3. Local issues – University/Trust and departments

Leeds has traditionally had a reasonable output of small-scale projects, presentations and publications. Recently, despite increasing number of trainees with increased non-clinical time and an increase number of consultants output has decreased. There are a number of perceived reasons for this:

- A lack of resources
- No focus for advice for potential projects
- Poor supervision by senior clinicians
- Competition for time with other non-clinical activities
- Research not seen as important by trainees and consultants
- Difficulty of undertaking research in a stressful multidisciplinary environment

There is currently no University links within the specialty in Leeds and local R&D money would only be forthcoming on a reactive basis after some success

3 Aims and objectives

3.1 Aims

- To develop a clear and co-ordinated research agenda for A&E Medicine in Leeds.
- To provide multi-disciplinary support for all those interested in research in A&E Medicine in Leeds.
- To develop and enhance staff capabilities to define, perform, present and publish high quality research at a regional, national and international level.
- To significantly increase the quantity and quality of research publications produced by the Departments of A&E Medicine in the LTHT.
- To make the LTHT one of the leading institutions for high quality research in A&E Medicine in the UK within 3-5 years.

3.2 Objectives.

- Identify and develop core projects within specific research areas for the LTHT which are deliverable and likely to contribute significantly to the research base for A&E Medicine.
- Help individuals to develop their own research proposals, identifying those that are workable within a realistic time frame and providing local advice for project development.
- Help individuals to contribute to the development, co-ordination, analysis, presentation and publication of core projects.
- Develop regular course to teach core skills necessary for good A&E research practice, including :
 1. research methodologies
 2. protocol development
 3. project management skills
 4. ethics committee submission
 5. basic statistical training for research.
 6. submission of grant proposals to funding bodies
- Maintain and co-ordinate a register of all research activities in the Departments of A&E Medicine in the LTHT. Information from this register will be used to inform the Trust's R&D directorate and will be essential in future to attract funding for R&D activities.
- Co-ordinate presentation of research at regional, national and international meetings.
- Through the activities of L-EMeRG help to co-ordinate research activities in A&E Medicine within the Yorkshire region.
- Feedback to the Research Committee of the Faculty of A&E Medicine with an annual report.

- Work to develop a successful track record for research to attract funding for commissioned research from a variety of funding bodies.

4. Core areas of research focus

The core areas for research for the L-EMeRG have been identified by combining the views of senior clinicians in A&E Medicine within Leeds, taking into account the strengths and priorities of the Leeds Consortium for Research in Healthcare (made up of LTHT and the University of Leeds). Areas of clinical interest among senior clinicians have also been reflected in the topic choices.

The five core areas will be:

- Diagnostic technologies in acute coronary syndromes.
- Non-invasive ventilation for the management of COAD and pulmonary oedema.
- Management of thrombo-embolic disease.
- Use of ultrasound by Emergency Physicians in Emergency Medicine.
- Pre-hospital care medicine.

These proposed core projects have been submitted in outline to the:

- a) NHS Executive Northern and Yorkshire Research and Development Directorate in their priority setting exercise for Regional R&D programmes
- b) NHS Health Technology Assessment Programme.

The five areas have met with favourable feedback and will be developed into specific project proposals.

5. L-EMeRG stakeholders

In order for the proposed aims and objectives of the L-EMeRG to work and be successful, stakeholders will need to show enthusiasm, commitment, excellence in team working and perseverance!

The L-EMeRG committee will meet at intervals of 6 – 8 weeks and discuss strategic development and organisational issues. Minutes will be disseminated to all consultants, senior nurses and senior managers.

A Research Forum meeting will occur every 6 – 8 weeks and discuss individual projects, protocol development and ‘brain storm’ new ideas for research. In addition the Forum will act as an opportunity for teaching research methodologies and presentation of work prior to presenting at a national meeting. This meeting will be open to all individuals interested in research in Emergency Medicine.

5.1 From the consultant body, core members of L-EMeRG will consist of:

- Mr Graham Johnson (Chair)
- Dr Taj Hassan (Secretary)
- Dr Richard Hardern
- Dr Alasdair Gray

Other consultants will be welcome to take part in the Research Forum as their clinical and managerial duties allow and dependant on interest. Individuals may be co-opted onto specific projects depending upon their area of expertise.

5.2 It is important to appreciate, however, that the group should be multi-disciplinary from the outset. Members of the nursing staff in the two departments with an active

interest in research will be encouraged both to attend and appoint representatives to be core members of L-EMeRG.

5.3 The trainees within the Yorkshire region will be actively encouraged to attend and be asked to appoint representative(s) to be core members of L-EMeRG.

5.4 The staff grade physicians in A&E Medicine in the LTHT will be encouraged to attend and asked to appoint representatives to be core members of L-EMeRG.

5.5 Active liaison with the trust R&D department would be anticipated throughout

L-EMeRG development

5.6 As the group develops and defines links with the Departments of Biostatistics, Epidemiology and Economics, other members may also be co-opted onto the Group.

5.7 Once the Group is established, progress can be made towards creating representation from other Yorkshire departments with a view to the creation of Y-EMeRG.

6.0. Funding

If the desire is genuinely to develop Leeds into a centre of excellence for academic activity in the UK resources and funding will have to be found. Unfortunately similar to other new developments a certain amount of success will have to occur for money to become available. A number of sources of funding could be potentially available:

- Trust
- University
- Region
- Private industry
- Pharmaceutical industry
- Charities

7.0. Evaluating the L-EMeRG Strategy.

7.1 All on-going research projects will need to be registered at the outset. This will improve co-ordination as well as defining a baseline for research activities. Individuals will be asked to complete a copy of their research proposals for individual projects (appendix 1). The L – EmeRG will act to provide and co-ordinate support for research proposals and protocol development.

7.2 A formal study of the success of the L-EMeRG strategy will be carried out to identify areas for improvement and assess the confidence of individuals in various components of the strategy. This questionnaire study will be longitudinal in design and will provide essential feedback for the core group. The first questionnaire will be distributed in January 2000, with follow up at 6 and 12 months. Further details will follow.

8. Timetable for change.

November 1999: Feedback from stakeholders on the strategy document and appointment of 'core' representatives to the L-EMeRG.

January 2000: Feedback of all on-going research projects in the LTHT.

March 2000: Presentation to various groups of on-going work and strategy for the future.

End March 2000: First meeting of the L-EmerRG and the Research Forum. Subsequent meetings to occur at monthly intervals.

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