

Having an idea about what to research.

The idea for a new research project may come from many sources:

- a clinical case
- departmental guidelines
- general reading
- audit topics
- current journal topics
- discussion with colleagues

Many start research projects that are never completed because they have not assessed the viability of the project, or worse complete projects that are then not accepted for publication.

One method of assessing the idea you have had is with the “FINER” criteria for new research. Is your idea:

- **F**easible
- **I**nteresting
- **N**ovel
- **E**thical
- **R**elevant

At this stage, discuss your idea with colleagues and those with an interest in the field. This will develop your idea and prevent duplication of previous work.

Try writing the paper without the results; this will give you a frame for the final paper. Present your idea to the local research forum for feedback on the structure of your project.

Most importantly be realistic about the amount you can accomplish with the time and resources available. While completion of a large randomised trial may look like a good idea, a postal questionnaire may be a more realistic first project. If others are involved in the project make sure they will have the time and enthusiasm to help you finish it. As a general guide make an estimate of the time you think the project will take, then double it for a more realistic estimate! Some people find setting deadlines for completion of each stage of their work helpful, having colleagues or seniors monitor these may help you stick to them.

Initially try projects that:

- Require little funding
- Involve common conditions
- Have well defined outcomes
- Have short intervention to final outcome times
- Can be completed in the time you have available

Further more detailed information can be gathered from the Faculty of A&E Medicine website. This site will also give you excellent information on a whole host of issues related to research in Emergency Medicine.

<http://www.faem.org.uk/technical.html>

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