

Vascular Society: Research

Our Aims:

The Vascular Society is committed to driving excellence in non-cardiac vascular disease research and improving outcomes for patients by:

- Increasing the opportunities for patients to get involved in vascular research
- Raising the profile and impact of vascular research
- Developing the research leaders of the future
- Increasing investment in research activities and programmes of study through sustainable research funding streams.

Background

Over recent years the VS Research Committee has directed Circulation Foundation funding towards the support of a small number of individuals with awards such as the President's Early Career Award, The Surgeon Scientist Award and the George Davis Visionary Awards. This approach has resulted in significant advancement of knowledge, individual career development and subsequent leverage of additional awards and funding and has proven to be very successful.

However, this approach is resource intense and consequently there has been significant reliance on the Circulation Foundation to provide continued funding. 2015 provided a time for consolidation and review, with a focus on fulfilling commitments to existing grants and as a consequence no new awards were made.

Moving forwards

Our longer-term aim is to increase the sustainability of the research we support. We would also hope to increase the number of research projects, the numbers of patients involved in research, the opportunities for trainees to participate in research and finally broadening our support for research led by vascular nurses, vascular technologists, allied health professionals and other professions.

There are significant opportunities to increase our research footprint, such as the national drive for more surgical trials to be included within the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) portfolio, the focus on innovation and the potential afforded by NIHR infrastructure support.

Whilst the Circulation Foundation has provided significant research funding, we need to have sustainable and significant funding to support our longer term research ambitions. As such, there is a requirement to explore additional, diverse funding streams and to broaden our vascular research involvement in a fashion that is complimentary to the existing strategy.

Determining our research portfolio

One of our first steps in this process was the support by VS Council and the Circulation Foundation for the appointment of a Royal College of Surgeons Surgical Specialty Lead in Vascular Surgery.

In collaboration with the RCS SSL, the Research Committee will develop a proposal and action plan in stages. A first step will be to scope and prioritise areas of specific interest, using a Delphi methodology. This will enable us to develop a three-year strategy that is more likely to be successful in securing external funding for vascular research. By involving surgeons, radiologists, nurses, technologists, patients and the

public, we hope to impact on both the NIHR research calls and also individual's success in winning NIHR and other external grant funding.

Financial Leverage and Research Funding Streams

The NIHR portfolio consists of high-quality clinical research that are eligible for consideration for support from the Clinical Research Network in England. Research activity (recruitment) data from the NIHR CRN Portfolio is used to inform the allocation of NHS infrastructure funding for research.

<https://www.crn.nihr.ac.uk/can-help/funders-academics/nihrcrn-portfolio/>

If Circulation Foundation or other awards are based upon a peer review process that is 'independent, expert and proportionate', the resultant studies are potentially eligible for NIHR Portfolio Status, which has the impact of increasing the kudos of the award, increasing the financial leverage of the award and providing access to NIHR infrastructure (research nurses etc.) to help with study recruitment and ensure successful delivery. It also enables us to support national studies and provide opportunities for vascular trainees to be exposed to research whilst training.

We have already taken steps to ensure that as many of our awards as possible are eligible for NIHR adoption and should seek to maximise the opportunities that NIHR portfolio adoption offers. We are also seeking to develop other sources of research funding.

Strategy

1. Support Individuals

Continue to support individuals through grants such as the Presidents Early Career Awards, the Surgeon Scientist Award, the George Davies Visionary Award and the George Davies Early Career Award; dependent on Circulation Foundation funding. These will be advertised as and when funding streams permit.

2. Support collaboratives

Support teams such as the RCS Vascular Surgical Research Group to successfully develop and deliver externally funded research.

3. Priority setting

Feed into research priority setting at a national level.

4. Demonstrate impact

Develop robust reporting and outcome dissemination to ensure results feed into practice.

5. Celebrate our success through promotion and events.

Delivery

Grants for individuals will be advertised on an annual basis dependent upon the resources available. Applications will be independently peer reviewed by experts and awarded based upon a competitive process.

Vascular Society Research Committee

Chair:

Prof Chris Imray

Chair of the Circulation Foundation:

Gill Green

RCS Specialty Surgical Lead:

Prof Chetter

Vascular and Endovascular Research Network

Members

Phil Stather
David Sidloff
Prof Rob Hinchcliffe
Mr Bijan Moderai
Mr David Russell