

Call for Applications Clinical Studies Group Lead in Orthopaedics

Applications are invited from Senior Orthopaedic Surgeons with extensive experience in clinical investigation to lead and develop a Clinical Studies Group in Orthopaedics. The main remit of the role is to drive forward a national agreed strategy for clinical trials and related studies in orthopaedic surgery. Appointment is for a 3 year term in the first instance and is remunerated at the rate equivalent to one PA per week with an appropriate allowance for expenses involved in developing the work.

Arthritis Research UK

Arthritis Research UK (formerly Arthritis Research Campaign) is the leading funder in the UK of research into the causes, consequences and management of musculoskeletal disorders. Although the major disease areas of interest are the arthritic disorders, Arthritis Research UK supports research in all musculoskeletal disorders that lead to pain and disability.

Arthritis Research UK funds around £30 million of research per year with an increasing emphasis on supporting strategically driven as opposed to response mode research. All our funded research is subject to stringent peer review with input from stakeholders as to its value to the charity.

Clinical Studies Group Initiative

Arthritis Research UK established seven clinical studies groups (CSG's) in 2007 in the following areas: adult inflammatory joint disease, spondyloarthropathies, auto-immune connective tissue diseases, osteoarthritis and related disorders, metabolic bone disease, regional and widespread pain syndromes and paediatric rheumatic disorders. The CSG's are charged in developing with all relevant stakeholders a nationally agreed consensus of the priorities for clinical trials and other related studies investigating the role of different interventions. Each CSG is lead by a senior clinical academic who appoints a small working group to assist in the task.

The development of priorities emerges from several different tasks the CSG undertakes including, but not exclusively: seeking ideas from the relevant community, formal literature reviews, face to face workshops and expert working groups in specific fields.

Each CSG identifies the best questions in a particular field and then seeks international opinion as to their importance, novelty and appropriateness. Those considered as suitable for developing into a formal study are then mentored to success with input from methodologists. Arthritis Research UK CSG proposals may be submitted to Arthritis Research UK, NIHR or for joint funding depending on the views of the CSG.

Current Orthopaedic Input into CSG

Currently there is formal orthopaedic representation on the following disease area relevant CGS's (with main interventional areas of interest): Osteoarthritis (management of end stage disease), Metabolic Bone Disease (management of osteoporotic fracture), Inflammatory Arthritis (surgical management) and Musculoskeletal pain (including surgical management of back pain syndromes, shoulder syndromes etc).

Need for Specific Orthopaedic CSG

The remit of the proposed CSG will be both to cover (i) those musculoskeletal disorders that are not encompassed within the remit of the current CSG's, examples of which include (but not exclusively) bone and joint infection, sporting injury and (ii) aspects of peri-operative and surgical care that are generic to a number of musculoskeletal disorders such as the prevention of surgical complications. Studies outside the role of interventions are not within the remit of the CSG and other Arthritis Research UK funding streams are available

Proposed Membership of Orthopaedic CSG

The first task of the new lead will be to establish a working group to advise the Lead on all aspects above. There is no fixed formula for the group but the composition and membership will need to be approved by the Medical Director of Arthritis Research UK. A membership size of 6-9 individuals, excluding the lead is envisaged but the CSG may decide to establish subgroups in substantive areas of the Group's interest with each group reporting back to the parent CSG. The Group itself should aim to encompass the necessary stakeholders and as a matter of policy must include an active lay individual. The group may decide to include specific areas of expertise such as paediatrics and, or rehabilitation. The group should also include an experienced methodologist.

Specific Roles of CSG Lead

In addition to appointing the CSG the Lead has the following additional roles:

- As a matter of diary priority (dates fixed a year in advance) to participate in monthly one hour telephone conferences with the other CSG leads
- As a matter of diary priority (dates fixed a year in advance) to participate in the twice yearly overnight face to face meeting of CSG leads
- To provide updates on the work of the CSG and any subgroups which will be published by the Arthritis Research UK web team on its website
- To organise within group telephone conferences, workshops or other consensus building activities to derive priorities for research questions.
- To seek external (overseas) opinions on the priority that should be accorded to the resulting questions.

In general the CSG lead will be the responsible individual within Arthritis Research UK to ensure that the consensus orthopaedic view on priorities for clinical trial and related research is presented and that it is translated into proposals for funding by appropriate members of the academic orthopaedic community. Ensuring the confidence of the orthopaedic community is a key underlying goal and that the functioning of the Group is not seen to be a 'closed club' but rather the activities they support are seen to be of benefit to their entire constituency. It is strongly advised that, where possible, the principal investigators who are chosen to lead on presenting proposals for funding are outside the membership of the Group, at least in the initial period.

Resources Provided

The lead, or their employing authority, is reimbursed for the equivalent of one unit of Programmed Activity (PA) at the current salary level. A fixed annual sum of £20k per year is also provided, against agreed items of expenditure which can be used for administrative support, funding workshops and other face to face meetings. CSG leads have their travel expenses reimbursed for attendance to all CSG leads' meetings.

Arthritis Research UK employs a part time information scientist who can undertake searches of current trial databases and of existing reviews and meta-analyses to guide priority setting.

Arthritis Research UK also employs a part time research assistant who will proof read, review and upload CSG material onto the appropriate parts of Arthritis Research UK website where a dedicated section to the work of the CSG will be established.

Person Specification

The most important attributes required are an enthusiastic acceptance of the philosophy behind the establishment of the CSG initiative and a dedication to ensuring its success. The need to lead and establish consensus, which is acceptable to the majority of the community is key and the Lead will need an appropriate balance between diplomatic negotiation and action.

It is envisaged that the Lead will be a senior orthopaedic surgeon, who is able to formally commit to make the necessary time available. It would be expected that the Lead has experience in participating and ideally chairing groups or activities with similar goals in the past.

Application process

There is no formal application form. Individuals who are interested in applying for the post are encouraged to contact Arthritis Research UK Medical Director, Professor Alan Silman, with any questions or concerns.

Applications should comprise a brief CV giving details of important previous and current post, roles in relevant committees and listing 10 most relevant publications. This should be accompanied by a 1000 word maximum statement which covers relevant previous experiences and expertise and outlines how the applicant will develop the work of the CSG.

Applications should be submitted by 26 July 2010

Contact: Claire Fantom (c.fantom@arthritisresearchuk.org)

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview on 2 September, probably in Chesterfield, although the venue will be decided depending on the most convenient location for applicants.