



Health Research Classification

Presentation to ESF

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CIHR Mandate

- **CIHR's mandate is to "excel, according to internationally accepted standards of scientific excellence, in the creation of new knowledge and its translation into improved health for Canadians, more effective health services and products and a strengthened Canadian health-care system."**

- **CIHR consists of 13 "virtual" institutes, a structure that is unique in the world.**
 - **Each institute supports a broad spectrum of research in its topic areas and, in consultation with its stakeholders, sets priorities for research in those areas**

Background

- **Current research classification system (RCS) adopted in 1995 no longer reflects the research programs and researchers funded by CIHR and its Institutes.**
 - Key word searches are being used to report on CIHR funding and outcomes
 - Current reporting practices are resource intensive and can lead to inconsistent results and double counting.
- **A new RCS is required to enable CIHR to report on its effectiveness in achieving its mandate and strategic directions. The RCS must:**
 - Cover the full spectrum health research – from biomedical to population and public health - across all areas of health and disease
 - Enable the direct link of funding to research objectives
 - Be a common, stable system allowing meaningful comparisons between different CIHR programs and with other organizations
 - Be open source and freely available

Background

- **CIHR evaluated many RCS in the last 5 years.**
 - Adoption of the UK HRCS considered
- **Many of CIHR's partners (provincial health organizations and charities) have adopted a RCS created by a provincial research funding organization**
 - Developed in 2002 and is based on 32 international standards and Comprised of 3 mutually exclusive dimensions
 - Includes a comprehensive list of research subjects / topics in all sectors of research
 - Does not fully address CIHR's needs in the areas of aboriginal and population health, health services, multi/inter-disciplinary research and research methodologies
- **For comparability with other Canadian research funders and Canadian Researchers' familiarity, CIHR selected this RCS as its baseline classification system**
 - Project to identify and address gaps and enable linkages to international systems such HRCS
 - ⁴ Implementation planned for 2012

RCS Purpose and Uses

- **Purpose:** To collect and classify data related to health research expertise and activities in a standardized manner for analysis and reporting.
- **RCS Uses:**
 1. To categorize CIHR expenditures by specific research areas
 2. To understand research landscape and community capacity by categorizing applications received
 3. To identify researcher expertise and recruit experts
 4. To match peer reviewers to applications
 5. To evaluate outcomes in specific research areas

Proposed Research Classification System

| Dimension | Definition | Examples | Possible Uses |
|---|--|---|--|
| Discipline ('in What') | The branch of knowledge/area of study characterizing: a) an individual's academic/non-academic training b) an individuals project/program of work c) the broad nature of a specific project/program of work | Health Administration; Genetics; Physiotherapy | To Classify Researcher Expertize To Classify Research Activities / Expenditures Matching Peer Reviewers to applications |
| Area of Research ('On What') | The natural, technological, social or health-related phenomena being studied or applied | Gene Therapy; Virus, Antivirals; Vaccines | To Classify Researcher Expertize To Classify Research Activities To Classify Research Outputs Matching Peer Reviewers to applications |
| Field of Application ('Why') | The natural, technological, social or health-related area in which the project/program is intended to have an impact | Biomedical aspects of health; pathogenesis and treatment of diseases; Public Health; Health System Management | To Classify Researcher Expertize To Classify Research Activities / Expenditures Matching Peer Reviewers to applications |
| Research Methodologies ('How') - NEW | A body of practices, procedures, and rules, and technologies employed to conduct the research | Quantitative and qualitative; Participatory action research, Biostatistics RCT, FMRI | To Classify Researcher Expertize To Classify Research Activities / Expenditures Matching Peer Reviewers to applications |
| Population ('On Who') - NEW | A particular group of individuals or items that share one or more characteristics on which the research is being conducted | Women, Children, First Nations | To Classify Research Activities / Expenditures Matching Peer Reviewers to applications |

Challenges

- **Comparability with other Canadian and International Funding Organizations**
 - Standardization where possible
- **Data quality and integrity**
 - Researcher-led approach planned
 - Easily consumable with minimal instruction
 - Appropriate quality assurance process is yet unknown
- **Appropriate granularity of terms to include in each dimension**
- **Continued relevance and completeness**
 - Must be an iterative process which ensures that it continues to evolve to meet the needs of CIHR and its stakeholders