



INTRODUCTION OF THE HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH FUND

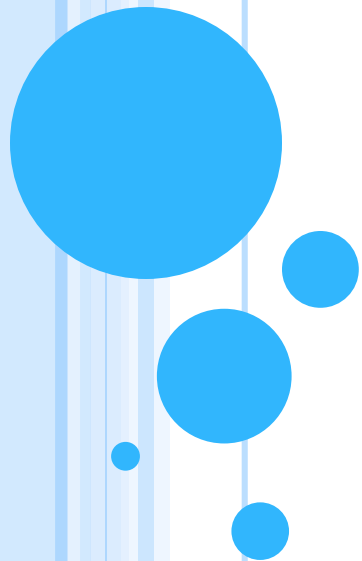
Dr Richard COLLINS
Chief Scientific Reviewer (Research Office)
Food and Health Bureau

**Briefing Session for
the 2021 Open Call for Investigator-initiated Projects**

OUTLINE

- Overview of the Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF)
- Areas of Projects
- Important Points to Note
- Peer Review Process
- Application and Timeline

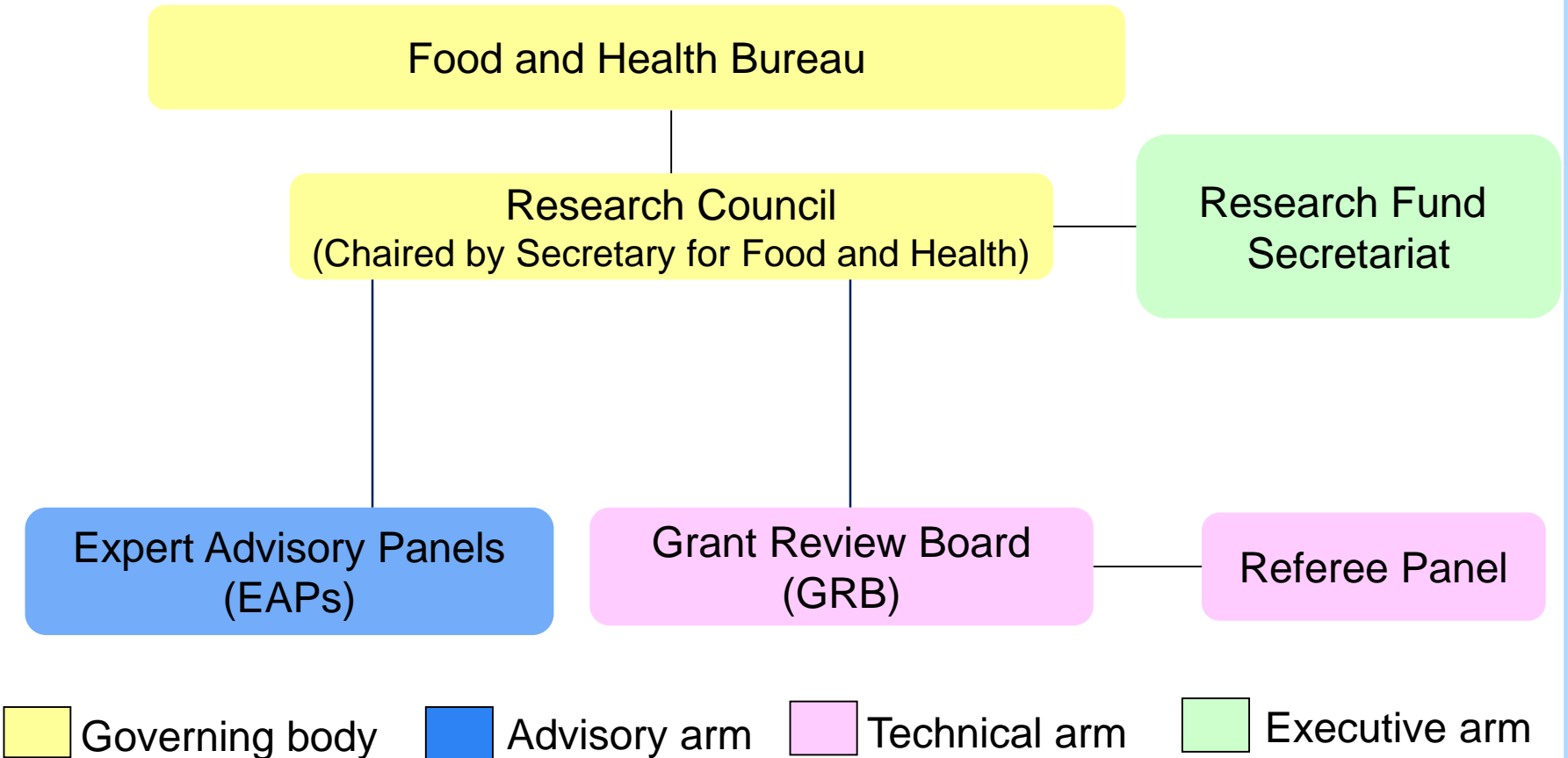
OVERVIEW OF HMRF



OVERVIEW OF HMRF

- Administered by the Food and Health Bureau (FHB)
- Established in Dec 2011 (10th anniversary)
 - 2021 marks the 10th annual open call
- Mission of HMRF
 - To build research capacity...through the generation and application of evidence-based scientific knowledge in health and medicine to encourage, facilitate, and support health and medical research to:
 - Inform health policies
 - Improve population health
 - Strengthen the health system
 - Enhance healthcare practices
 - Advance standard and quality of care
 - Promote clinical excellence

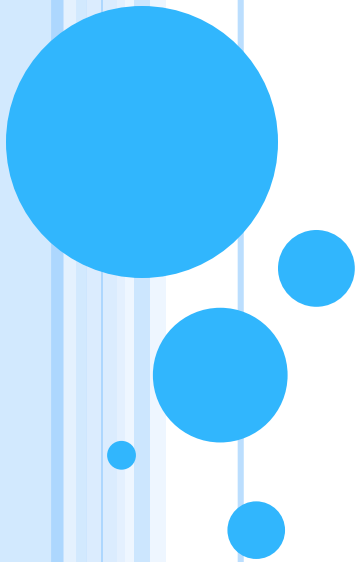
GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



OVERVIEW OF HMRF

- Emphasis is on the **translational potential** of research
- Applicants are **required** to provide a clear explanation in simple language on **how the research findings will:**
 - **benefit patients and/or the healthcare system**
 - influence **clinical practice** and/or health services **management**
 - inform **health policy** in Hong Kong

AREAS OF PROJECTS



AREAS OF PROJECTS

- Public Health, Human Health and Health Services Research
- Infectious Diseases Research
- Advanced Medical Research
- Health Promotion

PUBLIC HEALTH, HUMAN HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

- Examine the **cause, treatment and prevention** of the full range of diseases and conditions that affect **human health** and the impact of the organisation, financing and management of **healthcare services** on the delivery, quality, cost, access to, and outcomes of such services
- Research proposals under this theme should focus on one of the three broad areas of **public health**, **health services** and **Chinese medicine**

INFECTIOUS DISEASES RESEARCH

- Focus on infectious diseases which are prevalent in Hong Kong and neighbouring regions or areas in which the Hong Kong academic community has a competitive edge
- Basic science, clinical, translational, epidemiological and health services research studies are supported

ADVANCED MEDICAL RESEARCH

- Proposal shall focus on **clinical studies** which **apply advanced technologies** to facilitate the translation of knowledge generated from health and health services or infectious diseases studies into **clinical practice and to inform health policy**.

ADVANCED MEDICAL RESEARCH

- Examples of **clinical studies using advanced technologies**:
 - **clinical trials** on effectiveness of disease treatment using genome editing technologies;
 - clinical applications of sequencing technology for **disease prognosis, diagnosis and treatment** strategies;
 - development of **augmented or mixed reality** approaches for drug treatments, surgical procedures, systemic therapy and radiotherapy with evaluation in clinical practices;
 - **disease diagnosis or monitoring**

ADVANCED MEDICAL RESEARCH

- evaluate treatments and therapeutic interventions in **clinical, community or applied settings**
 - including clinical application and evaluation of pharmaceuticals (such as small molecules, vaccines, antibodies, hormones)
- **cellular, tissue and gene therapies**
 - including gene therapy, stem cell therapy, in vitro fertilisation, tissue engineering, faecal microbiota transplantation
- **medical devices**
 - including implantable devices, mobility aids, dressings, medical equipment and prostheses
- **surgical, obstetric and dental interventions**
 - including organ and bone marrow transplantation, tissue grafts and transfusions
- **radiotherapy and other non-invasive therapies**
 - including radiotherapy, microwaves, ultrasound, laser and phototherapy
- **psychological and behavioural approaches**
 - including cognitive behavioural therapy, counselling therapy and social interventions

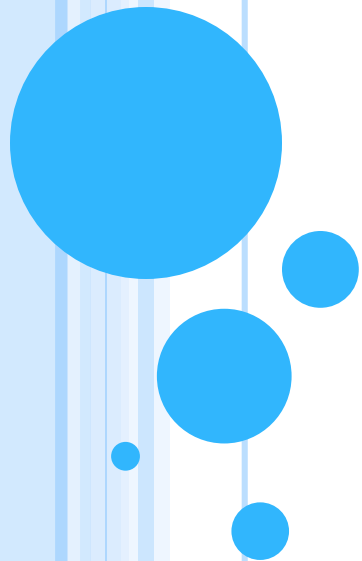
HEALTH PROMOTION

- Include a coordinated set of activities that help people adopt **healthier lifestyles** by enhancing awareness, changing adverse health behaviours or creating a conducive environment that supports good health practices
- Pre-set criteria for process and outcome evaluation based on the **RE-AIM** framework **is required**.
 - Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, Maintenance/sustainment

SEED GRANT

- The threshold of mini-grant has been raised from \$100,000 to **\$500,000** and renamed as **seed grant**
- Larger-scale **pilot studies** such as those evaluating trialability and scalability for future implementation or **small-scale research with achievable objectives**
- Studies conducted in clinical, community or applied settings with a **small sample size** for preparation of a large-scale research with **full sample size in future**
- Examples:
 - small clinical trials
 - feasibility studies for future clinical trials
 - clinical validation of a diagnostic tool with tests for acceptability and feasibility
 - epidemiological modelling of infectious or non-communicable diseases
 - cost-effectiveness studies
 - analysis of prospective / retrospective clinical data, etc

IMPORTANT POINTS TO NOTE



POINTS TO NOTE

- Declaration
 - **Supplementary sponsorship**
 - Monetary, investigational new drugs/devices, reagents, consumables and rental of equipment
 - Any use of the grant monies to **purchase products** or **services** from businesses owned wholly or partly by the administering institution or any of the applicants, or any of the proposed personnel and sub-contractors/agencies to be engaged in the project
 - Subject to the government's final decision

POINTS TO NOTE

- Double funding
 - Failure to declare **double funding** (including submission of grant applications or **similar proposals** to HMRF or other funding agencies (local or overseas)) and potential **conflict of interest** shall be subject to penalty as determined by the RC

POINTS TO NOTE

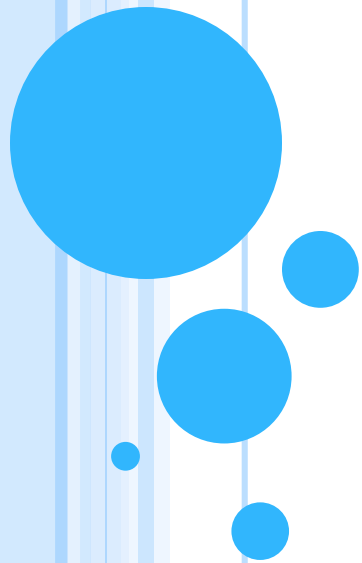
○ Plagiarism

- Plagiarism, including self-plagiarism, is not tolerated and is considered as a type of serious misconduct and subject to penalty

POINTS TO NOTE

- Routine public health or clinical services that are provided by the Government or government-funded agencies will normally not be considered for support
- In general, HMRF does not support guideline development
- Applicants are strongly recommended to consult / collaborate with field experts (e.g. Hospital Authority clinicians) to improve the feasibility of research proposals, in particular clinical studies and those involving human subjects
- The administering institution shall be responsible for the provision of the basic facilities required to support the project including employment service of the required project staff, procurement of services and equipment, accounting services, etc

PEER REVIEW PROCESS



1ST Tier Peer Review

- Referee Panel (2500+)
- Two external reviewers (ER) per application
- Work independently
- Standardised assessment criteria
- ERs assign an overall rating (1-4)
 - 4: recommended for support
 - 3: recommended for support (subject to clarification / amendment)
 - 2: not recommended for support at present (resubmission possible)
 - 1: not supported
- Applications receiving **single or double low** rating (1 or 2) are normally not eligible for second-tier peer review

2nd Tier Peer Review

- Senior health professionals and academics (~200)
- Includes **Non-Local Experts** from overseas
- Meet in person / via Zoom to discuss applications
- Two reviewers (Speakers) per application
 - Work independently
 - Standardised assessment criteria
 - Speakers assign an overall rating (1-4)
- Final overall rating / funding recommendation (1-4) decided by **consensus**
- The success rate over the last three years is on average **24%**
 - Comparable with other funding schemes
 - RGC GRF 2020/21 Medicine, dentistry and health: $96/367=26\%$

RESULTS OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

Decision letter in Oct 2022 (6 months after application deadline)

- 4 - Recommended for support
 - Nil / minor issues to address
- 3 - Recommended for support
 - **Subject to satisfactory response** to the ERs'+ GRB's comments within 3 weeks
 - Ethics approval / safety clearance/ consent for accessing data for third party data (*to be submitted within 12 weeks from the date of grant approval letter unless specified*)
 - For clinical trials, Department of Health **Clinical Trial Certificate / Medicinal Test Certificate** is required (suggest applying **as early as practical**, preferably during the submission of application to the HMRF) to avoid delay in project commencement
- 2 - Not recommended for support at present
 - Resubmission possible in next open call
- 1 - Not supported

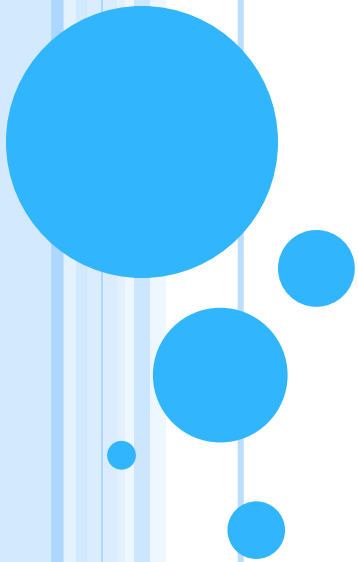
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH PROJECTS)

- Originality
- Relevance to the fund and thematic priorities
- Significance of the research questions
- Quality of scientific content
- Credibility of design and methods
- Applicability to local context
- Translational potential / value

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (HEALTH PROMOTION PROJECTS)

- Potential impact on the health needs of the target local community
- **Scientific evidence** of effectiveness of the proposed health promotion activities
- Innovation
- **Relevance to thematic priorities**
- Feasibility of the proposal
- Evaluation plan of programme effectiveness (**RE-AIM**)
- **Cross-sector collaboration**, in particular collaboration between non-governmental organisations and tertiary institutions
- Impact and **sustainability** of the programme
- Potential to build community capacity in health promotion

APPLICATION AND TIMELINE



GRANT SIZE & ELIGIBILITY

➤ Grant

- \$1.5 million for up to 3 years
 - Larger size / longer duration may be supported at the discretion of the GRB
 - \$0.5 million for Seed Grant for up to 3 years
- One application only per Principal Applicant
- research or health promotion project
 - new proposal or resubmission

ELIGIBILITY

- Invite applications from local tertiary institutions, hospitals, medical schools, non-profit-making organisations, registered community groups or other appropriate centres, units or services
- PA must be based in a local institution throughout the project period and employed by the local institution at time of submitting the application
- Inform us immediately if you plan to leave the local institution after submission of application. Failure to do so will result in disqualification of the application

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

- Through **eGMS** by **31 March 2022** (18:00 HKT)
- Pay attention to your institution's **internal deadline**, if any
- Application with incomplete signatures may not be considered
- **PA** will receive the acknowledgement email from the Secretariat if the application is successfully submitted
- Application will **NOT** be processed if the **proposal template (Section 13)** is not used

eGMS – ONLINE SUBMISSION



Welcome to the electronic Grant Management System (eGMS) of the Research Fund Secretariat of the Food and Health Bureau, HKSAR.

This is an online platform for managing the funding applications administered by the Research Fund Secretariat. The system supports electronic submission of proposals, on-line management of approved projects and dissemination of project results.

All grant applications must be submitted via this system starting from the launch of eGMS in December 2014. By setting up one single eGMS account, you can submit multiple grant applications for funding administered by the Research Office of the Food and Health Bureau.

Login to eGMS

Email:

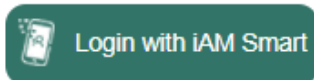
Your login email is your email address.

Password:

Login

[Forgot your password?](#)

[Forgot your login?](#)



[More Info >](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Account Registration **(FOR APPLICANTS ONLY!)**

Register for Principal Applicant Account

Register for Co-Applicant Account

Notes to Grant Review Board (GRB) Members/ External Reviewers

eGMS account has already been opened for GRB Members and External Reviewers. Please contact the Research Fund Secretariat (Email: egmsenquiry@fhb.gov.hk) if you have any questions.

v2.153(Soft Launch)

SECTION 13 PROPOSAL

- Proposed **research** project: Sections 13 (a) – (h) of the research proposal, with the standard header **2021 HMRF Open Call Proposal** should be attached as a PDF file to the e-Form
- The proposal template can be downloaded from <https://rfs.fhb.gov.hk>

Grant Applications

Investigator-initiated Projects

- Electronic Application Form (e-Form): Available in [eGMS](#)
(Path in eGMS: Project > Application > Application Call > Web-based Online e-Form)
- [Quick Guide for Completing the electronic Application Form](#) (PDF File 423K)
- [Proposed Research Project \(Section 13\(a\)-\(h\)\)](#) (Word File 35K) updated
- [Proposed Health Promotion Project \(Section 13\(a\)-\(h\)\)](#) (Word File 32K) updated

SECTION 13 PROPOSAL

- (d) Plan of Investigation (information should be provided where applicable)

d) Plan of Investigation:

[For advanced medical research, please state clearly how the study will focus on clinical studies and apply advanced technologies to facilitate the translation of knowledge generated from health and health services or infectious diseases studies into clinical practice and to inform health policies.]

[For study addressing thematic priorities under Implementation Science, please state clearly the proposed framework(s) / model(s) to be adopted and the pre-set criteria to evaluate/assess the barriers and facilitators of implementation outcomes.]

[For Seed Grant application (i.e. grant ceiling is HK\$500,000), please state clearly the pre-set criteria to enable scale-up to a larger project and/or enhance the efficacy/effectiveness of existing practice.]

(i) Subjects (with justification on the sample size) [redacted]

(ii) Methods [redacted]

(iii) Study design [redacted]

(iv) Data processing and analysis [redacted]

(v) Potential pitfalls and contingency plans [redacted]

SECTION 13 PROPOSAL

- Proposed **health promotion** project: Sections (a) – (h) of the proposal, with the standard header

2021 HMRF Open Call Proposal – Health Promotion

should be attached as a PDF file to the e-Form

- The proposal template can be downloaded from <https://rfs.fhb.gov.hk>

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- Electronic Application Form (e-Form): Available in [eGMS](#)
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SECTION 13 PROPOSAL

- (d) Project Plan (information should be provided where applicable)

(d) Project Plan:

[Please state clearly the pre-set criteria for process and outcome evaluation based on the RE-AIM framework. Please refer to <https://re-aim.org/> or <https://www.fic.nih.gov/About/center-global-health-studies/neuroscience-implementation-toolkit/Pages/methodologies-frameworks.aspx> for reference.]

[For Seed Grant application (i.e. grant ceiling is HK\$500,000), please state clearly the pre-set criteria to enable scale-up to a larger project and/or enhance the efficacy/effectiveness of existing practice.]

(i) Target group (justify and explain the feasibility in reaching the target group size)

(ii) Implementation plan

(iii) Contingency / alternative plan if any problem encountered during implementation

(iv) Cross-sector collaboration

RESUBMISSION

- Applications **not supported in a previous Open Call** meeting the following criteria should be submitted under the category of “Resubmission”–
 - Application rated “**3**” should be revised to address all reviewers’ comments in a structured and consistent manner
 - Application rated “**2**” should be **substantially** revised to address all reviewers’ comments in a structured and consistent manner

RESUBMISSION

- To be assessed on the **continued relevance** of the application with respect to knowledge gap, policy needs, translational value and **prevailing thematic priorities** at the time of resubmission
- Having satisfactorily addressed previous comments is **not a guarantee** of funding

RESUBMISSION

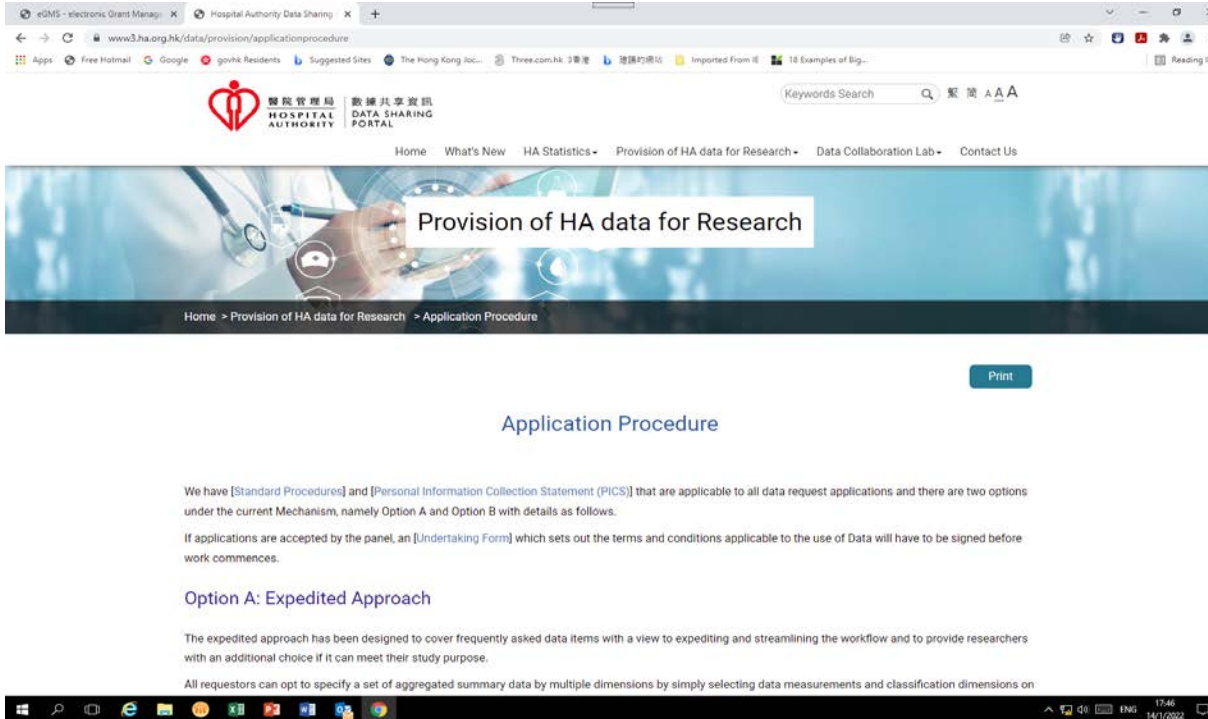
- Applications rejected in a previous HMRF Open Call (i.e. no grading or rated “1” or incomplete or outside of the funding scope) or Research Fellowship Scheme, or other funding agencies (local or overseas) must be submitted as a new application with extensive changes or improvements made with full justifications

CONSENT AND APPROVALS

- Human / animal research ethics approval
- Safety approvals (biological / chemical / ionising radiation / non-ionising radiation)
- HA Cluster Research Ethics Committee approval
- Department of Health clinical trial certificate (western / Chinese medicine)

CONSENT AND APPROVALS

- Clarify access to data / resources provided by others, e.g. letter of collaboration (colleagues in other local institution, overseas institution, Government departments, etc)
- Hospital Authority: Data Sharing Portal



The screenshot displays the Hospital Authority Data Sharing Portal website. The browser address bar shows the URL www3.ha.org.hk/data/provision/applicationprocedure. The page header includes the Hospital Authority logo and the text 'HOSPITAL AUTHORITY DATA SHARING PORTAL'. A navigation menu contains links for Home, What's New, HA Statistics, Provision of HA data for Research, Data Collaboration Lab, and Contact Us. A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main content area features a banner image with a stethoscope and a hand holding a tablet, with the text 'Provision of HA data for Research'. Below the banner, the breadcrumb trail reads 'Home > Provision of HA data for Research > Application Procedure'. A 'Print' button is visible on the right side. The main heading is 'Application Procedure'. The text below states: 'We have [Standard Procedures] and [Personal Information Collection Statement (PICS)] that are applicable to all data request applications and there are two options under the current Mechanism, namely Option A and Option B with details as follows. If applications are accepted by the panel, an [Undertaking Form] which sets out the terms and conditions applicable to the use of Data will have to be signed before work commences.' The section 'Option A: Expedited Approach' is highlighted. The text below explains: 'The expedited approach has been designed to cover frequently asked data items with a view to expediting and streamlining the workflow and to provide researchers with an additional choice if it can meet their study purpose. All requestors can opt to specify a set of aggregated summary data by multiple dimensions by simply selecting data measurements and classification dimensions on

APPLICATION TIMELINE FOR 2021 OPEN CALL

Date	Items
31 Mar 2022 (18:00 HKT)	Closing date
Oct 2022	Decision letters issued <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PA to respond to the comments of External Reviewers (ERs) and/or Grant Review Board (GRB) within 3 weeks
Nov - Dec 2022	Review of PAs' responses to satisfactorily address comments made by the ERs and/or GRB
Jan – Mar 2023	Final approval letter and agreement after resolving all outstanding issues including budget clarification and ethics approval

FURTHER INFORMATION

<https://rfs.fhb.gov.hk/>



Research Fund Secretariat
Food and Health Bureau
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

GovHK香港政府一站通 繁體版 简体版

Research Fund Secretariat

**Health and Medical
Research Fund (HMRF)**

Investigator-initiated Projects

Research Fund Secretariat
Food and Health Bureau
9/F, Rumsey Street
Multi-Storey Car Park Bldg
2 Rumsey Street
Sheung Wan
Hong Kong

Enquiry emails:

rfs@fhb.gov.hk (General)

egmsenquiry@fhb.gov.hk (eGMS)

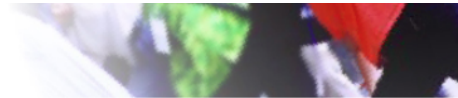
FURTHER INFORMATION - COMING JOURNAL CLUB

Date and Time	28 January 2022 (12:45pm - 2:00pm)	
Topic	How does genome sequencing help in medical research and enhance quality of healthcare	Amyloid in poststroke dementia - insights into dementia prevention
Speaker	Prof Richard CHOY Kwong-wai	Prof Vincent MOK Chung-tong
Status	Open for registration	
Date and Time	24 February 2022 (12:45pm - 2:00pm)	
Speaker	Prof Cindy LAM Lo-kuen	Dr Wendy LAM Wing-tak
Project Title (Project No.)	A study on health-related quality of life of patients with colorectal neoplasm and cost-effectiveness analysis of colorectal cancer screening in Hong Kong	A longitudinal study of psychosocial needs, physical symptom distress, and psychological distress of Chinese patients with colorectal cancer
Status	Registration not yet started	

<https://rfs.fhb.gov.hk/english/whatsnew/whatsnew.html>

FURTHER INFORMATION - COMING JOURNAL CLUB

What's New



- Home
- What's New
- Council & Committees
- Policies and Guidelines
- Annual Reports
- Call for Application
- Funds
- Funded Projects
- Past Events
- Publications
- Useful Links
- Contact Us

[What's New](#)

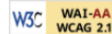
What's New

[10th Anniversary of Health and Medical Research Fund \(HMRF\)](#)

December 2021 marks the 10th anniversary of the HMRF. Special awards were presented at the 2021 Health Research Symposium to recognise the achievements of researchers supported by the HMRF. The awardees will present their work at the monthly [Journal Club from January to May 2022](#). Please [Register Early!](#)

(19 January 2022)

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- Publications
- Useful Links
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10th Anniversary of Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF)

Details of Journal Club:

Date and Time:	28 January 2022 (12:45pm - 2:00pm)	
Mode:	Video conference (By Zoom)	
CME/CPD:	Accreditation pending (College of Family Physicians, Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Paediatricians, Pathologists, Physicians)	
Topic	Presentation 1 How does genome sequencing help in medical research and enhance quality of healthcare	Presentation 2 Amyloid in Poststroke Dementia - Insights into Dementia Prevention
CME/CPD:	Prof Richard CHOY Kwong-wai Professor Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology The Chinese University of Hong Kong	Prof Vincent MOK Chung-tong Professor Department of Medicine and Therapeutics The Chinese University of Hong Kong

The deadline for registration is **24 January 2022**. Registration is free. Please [Register Early!](#)

THANK YOU

