

NHMRC CLINICAL TRIALS CENTRE: FROM RESEARCH TO EVIDENCE TO POLICY

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Clinical Trials Centre, part of the University of Sydney, was established more than 10 years ago under the auspices of the National Health and Medical Research Council to promote and coordinate large-scale clinical trials in Australia and internationally. It is now a substantial institution contributing to the development of evidence-based medicine in Australia.

The Centre's purpose is to improve health outcomes, clinical practice and public health policy in Australia and internationally through the better use of clinical trials research. In other words, it aims to provide clinical evidence and also to lend its expertise to fostering the development of better evidence and better health policy for those working in fields of health in Australia. There are four main branches of this aim:

- to provide high-quality evidence of the effectiveness of health care interventions of major importance through large-scale randomised trials
- to be a national resource and centre of international standing in the design, conduct, analysis and interpretation of randomised clinical trials
- to provide high-quality education and training in the design, conduct, analysis and evaluation of clinical trials
- to promote and improve evidence-based health care through the use of randomised trials and clinical trial registries.

The clinical trials themselves provide clinical practitioners and policy makers with statistically robust information on the benefits and risks of treatments. Comprehensive evidence is available from long-term trials of thousands of patients, particularly those with cancer and cardiovascular diseases. Further, the Centre undertakes quality-of-life research and economic evaluations to assess the cost-effectiveness of treatments, and provides randomisation and trial registry services for those undertaking their own trials.

Staff at the Centre offer specialist advice and consultation on issues relating to trials design, conduct and analysis.

The Centre's educational service activities include offering regular short courses in statistical methods, research design and data management throughout the year. In September 1999, the Clinical Trials Centre will conduct the first International Clinical Trials Symposium. Themes include new statistical techniques, quality-of-life and economic assessment, changing health policies through the results of clinical trials, and the future of health care evaluation. ■

Further information and advice on collaborative research projects, consultancy, the symposium and education courses are available by telephone (02) 9562 5000, by fax (02) 9565 1863, by email enquiry@ctc.usyd.edu.au, or from the Web site www.ctc.usyd.edu.au.

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The *Bulletin* aims to provide its readers with population health data and information to motivate effective public health action.

Submission of articles

Articles, news and comments should be 1000 words or less in length and include a summary of the key points to be made in the first paragraph. References should be set out in the Vancouver style, described in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, 1997; 336: 309-315. Send submitted articles on paper and in electronic form, either on disc (Word for Windows is preferred), or by email. The article must be accompanied by a letter signed by all authors. Full instructions for authors are available on request from the editor.

Editorial correspondence

Please address all correspondence and potential contributions to The Editor, *NSW Public Health Bulletin*, Locked Mail Bag 961, North Sydney NSW 2059 or to Lmadd@doh.health.nsw.gov.au. Tel (02) 9391 9956, Fax (02) 9391 9232.

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