HRCS
UKCRC Health Research
Classification System

UK CLINICAL RESEARCH COLLABORATION

igniting our potential

Workshop
Wednesday 14th January 2009

Background

The UKCRC is a partnership of all those organisations in the UK that conduct, fund, host and regulate clinical research. The UKCRC is now four years old and together we have taken forward a major agenda of work aimed at improving the environment for clinical research in the UK.

A major early challenge for the UKCRC was to improve coordination and build co-operation between funders within the UK. One approach taken in this area was to map and analyse the current UK-wide health research portfolio to create an evidence base to inform future planning. Two major analyses have been published (UK Health Research Analysis, 2006 and From Donation To Innovation, 2007) which together cover the vast majority of UK government and charity health research funding.

The health research analyses were based on the Health Research Classification System (HRCS), a common coding system covering all areas of biomedical and health research. The HRCS builds on the WHO International Classification of Diseases and a cancer-based system (the Common Scientific Outline) but its breadth of coverage across all types of research and areas of health and disease is unique.

The two analysis reports have been disseminated widely in the UK and had a major impact, providing the basis for high level strategy discussions and informing a number of joint funding initiatives. Most government and charity funders in the UK now use the HRCS for research management and prospective analysis and the availability of a single stable common classification system enables meaningful comparisons to take place. A number of funders internationally have also used the system successfully or would like to adopt it in the future.

The UKCRC has now developed a website providing online access to the HRCS coding manual and further guidance on the coding process. See: **http://www.hrcsonline.net/**

Purpose of the workshop

Most countries and funding bodies now have a requirement or wish to analyse their research funding in order to inform their strategy setting. Funders all face similar challenges in doing this. Common questions we face are:
- How can we compare our activity with that of others?
- How can we link science to funding?
- Is a common stable classification system available?

The UKCRC have addressed many of these challenges through the development and use of the HRCS. We believe that the HRCS is widely applicable to international health research and are committed to making the HRCS and its guidelines openly available to all. The purpose of the workshop is to introduce the HRCS to people not familiar with it and also discuss how we can facilitate and encourage its wider use.

Key discussion issues will include:
- How might the system evolve in a controlled fashion?
- How can we ensure future sustainability?
- What measures will provide quality assurance and maintain confidence in the system?
- What are the support and resource needs (including training, analysis tools, advice provision) and how might they be provided?