NHMRC
Clinical Trials Centre

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017 - 2021

Better healthcare through research

Vision & Direction

NHMRC Clinical trials Centre (CTC) aims to be a leading academic clinical trial research organisation in Australia and among the most sought after collaborators in the world.

Mission

To embed quality clinical trial research into health care

Purpose

The NHMRC CTC will be recognised as ***a leader of clinical trials research excellence, the innovator for the conduct of investigator-initiated clinical trials and the principal driver for translating clinical trials evidence into practice.*** Our approach is to apply our inherent strengths, breadth of knowledge and expertise, engage and lead our network of medical research communities and national and international collaborators to advance clinical trials research.

CORE VALUES:

We value **integrity, professionalism** and **collaboration**

Better healthcare through research

Key focus areas for 2017 – 2021	**EXCELLENCE** Academic clinical trials research excellence	**INNOVATION** Better health practice through innovative clinical trials	**EVIDENCE** Use best evidence to inform best practice
We will:	Lead quality clinical research in theme areas (cancer, CVD, diabetes, obesity and neonatal)	Develop new trial methods in design, biostatistics, risk modelling and health economics	Integrate trial evidence for better decision making, guidelines, implementation, policy
Our goals are to:	- to bring together world-class expertise in trial methods and conduct, clinical disciplines, biostatistics, health economics, biochemical and molecular sciences - build international collaborations - embed translational studies - deliver quality education, training, teaching and development programs	- to extend our methodological work in adaptive trial designs, patient preference assessment, prognostication, diagnostic test evaluation and cost-effectiveness analysis in practical application	- to combine findings from multiple trials in systematic reviews and to undertake health economic analyses to provide robust evidence for health care decisions for personalised care, guidelines and policy formulation
By concentrating on:	- research of key questions in cancer, CVD, diabetes, obesity and perinatal diseases - relationship building with collaborative trials groups and Academic Research Organisaitons (ARO) to undertake large-scale international trials - integrate basic translational sciences through the use of trial-related biospecimens, for biomarker discovery	- identifying optimal treatment strategies for individual patients and for populations at risk - incorporating genomics, molecular biology and new therapeutics linked to clinical and/or molecular profiles in theme areas - embed health economic evaluation into trial design - development of efficient, novel, and adaptive trial designs. - platform trials built on trial registries and globally accessible web-based studies	- bridging the evidence-practice gap - developing on-line risk assessment tools for personalised treatment choice; - enhancing unbiased systematic reviews, - undertaking meta-analysis to further global collaborative initiatives. - incorporating new findings into systematic reviews and evidence-based guidelines - working with policy makers and politicians - Increasing the value of clinical trials to the public

In this 2017–2021 strategy, we have outline three interrelated strategic areas that will help us to achieve our goal of becoming the leading academic clinical trial research organisation in Australia and among the most sought after collaborators in the world. The key focus areas are within the three themes that underpin our strategic plan : Excellence (in research and education), Innovation and Evidence.

Excellence

Academic clinical trials research excellence

Through a strong organisational culture and the dedication of focussed staff, we can continue to improve the quality of our research. We will focus on developing new opportunities for the engagement, retention and development of our staff and provide innovative infrastructure that will support and facilitate the effectiveness and sustainability of our dynamic and productive workplace. We will continue to recognise outstanding effort and leadership that contributes to the quality of our research endeavours.

Four interrelated strategic objectives will help us to achieve our research goal of leading quality clinical research in theme areas (cancer, CVD, diabetes, obesity and neonatal).

Strategic objective 1:

to bring together world-class expertise in trial methods and conduct, clinical disciplines, biostatistics, health economics, biochemical and molecular sciences

Initiative - research of key questions in cancer, CVD, diabetes, obesity and perinatal diseases

Cancer – We will aim to extend our collaborative clinical trials research program and undertake more molecular profile based and immune checkpoint inhibitor clinical trials. Focus will be directed to leading large-scale international trials which define best practice for large patient populations by assessing the impact of interventions on survival and quality of life.

Cardio vascular, diabetes, obesity – We will design and conduct innovative studies to identify novel therapeutic strategies and change practice in large populations

Perinatal – We will extend our collaborative trials research program, drive new standards of care in perinatal disease globally and assess economic value of treatments in the field

Strategic objective 2:

build national and international collaborations

Initiative - relationship building with collaborative trials groups and Academic Research Organisations (ARO) – nationally and internationally

We have a long tradition in establishing collaborations that enable us to participate in, and lead, international clinical trials. We are committed to working closely with our established collaborative partners to develop new concepts in clinical trials that answer questions important to the population, government and industry. Our focus will be on pursuing funding from non-traditional sources to support the conduct of large-scale clinical trials, raise the profile of innovative trial design and incorporate new technologies.

Through investing in international alliances we have attracted like-minded researchers and developed an enviable reputation for quality clinical trial design and conduct. The reputation of our researchers and collaborative partners also attracts interest from pharmaceutical companies, governments, health services and research organisations, looking for opportunities to support or undertake clinical research on a global scale.

A focus for our next stage of strategic growth is to extend our collaborative networks and work with consortia whose purpose best aligns with our academic and multidisciplinary agenda. Funding from traditional and non-traditional sources will enable us to leverage the expertise and collegiality of extensive established national and international trial networks and global collaborative hubs to promote the development and execution of priority-guided, peer-reviewed, investigator- and consumer-driven, international trials.

Strategic objective 3:

embed translational studies into our trials

Initiative - integrate basic translational sciences through the use of trial-related biospecimens, for biomarker discovery

New health technologies and new treatments, in particular, genomics, molecular biology and new therapeutics linked to clinical and/or molecular profiles, have opened to more personalised medicine, where the target trial populations are becoming smaller. This has increased the potential for greater benefit from personalised care. Well-designed clinical trials integrated with translational research are critical to real advances in patient care.

Strategic objective 4:

deliver quality education, training, teaching and development programs

Due to our expertise in the design, conduct and interpretation of clinical trials we are uniquely placed to provide support and advice to clinical researchers. We will continue to develop and deliver a program of education, training and teaching programs that are aimed at increasing and improving the extent, quality, interpretation, implementation and advocacy of clinical trials research in Australia.

Better health practice through innovative clinical trials

Our goal is to develop new trial methods in design, biostatistics, risk modelling and health economics

Strategic objective 5:

to extend our methodological work in adaptive trial designs, patient preference assessment, prognostication, diagnostic test evaluation and cost-effectiveness analysis in practical application

Initiatives include -

- identifying optimal treatment strategies for individual patients and for populations at risk
- incorporating genomics, molecular biology and new therapeutics linked to clinical and/or molecular profiles in theme areas
- embedding health economic evaluation into trial design
- developing efficient, novel, and adaptive trial designs.
- conducting platform trials built on trial registries and globally accessible web-based studies

We will build on our successful research methods to improve trial design, undertake complex analyses and better synthesise trial evidence to change practice and policy. We aim to further develop expertise and leadership in a program of platform trials to allow simultaneous evaluation of multiple biomarkers and therapies with those showing promise graduating to larger enriched controlled studies. Research into patient preference, adherence-adjusted estimates of treatment effect, linkage of diagnostic test evaluation and treatment trial information, and economic modelling methods will allow us to assess national impacts of potential health policy decisions.

Our research strategy will tackle problems in this new environment by bringing together world-class expertise in trial methods, clinical disciplines, biostatistics, health economics, biochemical and molecular sciences, and international collaboration to ensure the most important translational studies are embedded in the program.

Best evidence informing best practice

Our goal is to integrate trial evidence for better decision making, guidelines, implementation, policy

Strategic objective 6:

to combine findings from multiple trials in systematic reviews and to undertake health economic analyses to provide robust evidence for health care decisions for personalised care, guidelines

Initiatives include -

- bridging the evidence-practice gap
- developing on-line risk assessment tools for personalised treatment choice;
- enhancing unbiased systematic reviews,
- undertaking meta-analysis to further global collaborative initiatives.
- incorporating new findings into systematic reviews and evidence-based guidelines
- working with policy makers and politicians
- increasing the value of clinical trials to the public

A major health care challenge is translating the research findings generated from clinical trials into clinical practice, disease prevention and strategies to improve population health. Build on our previous work we will continue to incorporate new findings into systematic reviews and evidence-based guidelines and evaluate the effectiveness, cost-effectiveness and implementation of successful clinical trials interventions in primary care and community settings. We will develop innovative ways of combining trial evidence and integrating trial evidence with individual patient profiles of risk and preference to aid decision making, including methods for linkage of genetic and biomarker information to patient outcomes in defining patient risk and treatment benefit. We will also embed economics into clinical trials and develop guidelines to improve decision-making in health policy and practice.

Measuring success

Measure of research and education excellence

Strategic Objective		Initiative	Key indicators
1	to bring together world-class expertise in trial methods and conduct, clinical disciplines, biostatistics, health economics, biochemical and molecular sciences	research of key questions in cancer, CVD, diabetes, obesity and perinatal diseases	Cat 1-4 research income; publications
2	build international collaborations	relationship building with collaborative trials groups and Academic Research Organisations (ARO) – nationally and internationally	New partnerships, Collaborative agreements
3	embed translational studies	integrate basic translational sciences through the use of trial-related biospecimens, for biomarker discovery	Translational studies undertaken
4	education, training, teaching and development programs		Student numbers, professional development undertaken by staff

Measure of new trial methods in design, biostatistics, risk modelling and health economics

Strategic Objective		Initiatives	Key indicators
5	to extend our methodological work in adaptive trial designs, patient preference assessment, prognostication, diagnostic test evaluation and cost-effectiveness analysis in practical application	• identifying optimal treatment strategies for individual patients and for populations at risk • incorporating genomics, molecular biology and new therapeutics linked to clinical and/or molecular profiles in theme areas • embed health economic evaluation into trial design • development of efficient, novel, and adaptive trial designs. • platform trials built on trial registries and globally accessible web-based studies	Number of new and innovative trials commenced

Measure of the integration of trial evidence for better decision making, guidelines, implementation, policy

Strategic Objective		Initiatives	Key indicators
6	to combine findings from multiple trials in systematic reviews and to undertake health economic analyses to provide robust evidence for health care decisions for personalised care, guidelines and policy formulation	• bridging the evidence-practice gap • developing on-line risk assessment tools for personalised treatment choice; • enhancing unbiased systematic reviews, • undertaking meta-analysis to further global collaborative initiatives. • incorporating new findings into systematic reviews and evidence-based guidelines • working with policy makers and politicians • increasing the value of clinical trials to the public	Publications, reports

"The University of Sydney will be recognised as a world leader in health and medical research and will deliver outcomes of significant benefit for the health and wellbeing of society."

(Wills Review)