

Policy Direction – Translational Research

Rationale and Relationship to Mission, Principles and Values

Since its inception in 1948, the MS Society of Canada has funded over \$140 million of research in multiple sclerosis (MS). This has resulted in the achievement of a number of significant advancements in understanding of the disease processes associated with MS. Research funded by the MS Society largely focuses on the detailed biological mechanisms of the disease, providing fundamental knowledge of how MS develops, as well as clinical and epidemiological aspects of MS. In addition to funding for basic research, the MS Society wishes to expand its' support to include funding for translational research. Translational research is a way of conducting research that moves basic research or laboratory findings toward practical application for patients. In the context of providing new treatments, translational research is a series of critical steps that are necessary to develop treatments for people living with MS.

Discussions, involving people affected by MS, donors, researchers, clinicians, other health charities, business advisors, Board members, staff and volunteers, explored the opportunity of expanding MS Society funding to include specific funding to accelerate the delivery of treatments to people living with MS.

Policy Objective

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that:

- The MS Society can fund the highest quality research, whether basic, translational or clinical to expedite treatments for people affected by MS, especially those living with progressive MS.
- Research which can lead to the development of new diagnostic tools and safe and effective therapies is being encouraged and supported to a point where commercial investment can make treatments available to people living with MS
- The MS Society can collaborate with other health charities and funders in Canada and elsewhere, as needed, to enable translational research

Policy Application

This policy applies to all MS Society funded researchers, volunteers and staff at all levels of the organization.

Authorization

The policy was approved by the Board of Directors of the MS Society of Canada on September 4, 2014.

Policy Details

Funding outside of Canada

The MS Society recognizes that translational research aimed at identifying and developing new clinical tools and therapies is taking place in leading institutions around the world. In recognizing this and the global collaborative research landscape, translational research funded by the MS Society will not be restricted to Canadian institutions. The MS Society will aim to fund the highest quality translational research without regard to geography.

Collaborations

The MS Society may form collaborations with other research institutions and health organizations in order to enhance efforts in translational research in the field of MS. Through these collaborations, the MS Society will aim to leverage resources, experience and knowledge and avoid duplication of existing efforts in translational research.

Diligence process

Any funded translational research must undergo a highly disciplined review process to ensure that standards for scientific merit, feasibility, and translational capacity are met. The review will take place by sub-committee of the Medical Advisory Committee (MAC), when required. The sub-committee will be selected by the Vice-President, Research with guidance from the MAC chair. The sub-committee will include ad-hoc scientific and business experts, a member of the MAC, and a person affected by MS. The VP, Research may choose alternative diligence processes, depending on the program under consideration for funding (i.e. translational research collaboration, clinical trials, academic research, etc.). The sub-committee will present a recommendation to the MAC, and a final decision will be made by the National Board of Directors. Should the MS Society co-fund translational research in

collaboration with another organization, as mentioned above, they may choose to rely on the diligence process of the collaborating organization. In this event, selected delegates from the sub-committee, and/or the VP, Research, may serve as observers. Any outcomes from this process will be considered by the sub-committee before they advise the MAC for final recommendation to the National Board.

Compliance with other MS Society policies

In funding translational research, the MS Society will comply with other policies governing the funding of research.

Policy on stem cell research

Policy on the use of animals in research

Policy on the use of human subjects in research

Policy on indirect costs

Policy on indemnification

In addition, the MS Society will conduct its' work using high ethical standards and in compliance with all laws and regulations governing research funding.

Intellectual Property

The MS Society will ensure that intellectual property generated from its funding in translational research is appropriately protected to encourage further investment.

Executive Champion

The Vice-President, Research is the Executive Champion of this policy

Monitoring and Compliance

The Translational Research policy takes effect immediately upon approval of the National Board of Directors. The Vice-President, Research is responsible for monitoring the application and compliance of this policy.

The Vice-President, Research is responsible for reporting to the President and Chief Executive Officer through quarterly compliance reports regarding compliance with this policy.

Related Policies, Legislation

MS Society of Canada Research Funding Programs and Awards Policies and Procedures

Policy Review

The policy is to be reviewed at least once every five years following approval: September 2014.

Definitions:

Translational research, for the purposes of this policy, is defined as research that moves laboratory findings or basic science discoveries toward practical application for patients. As this relates to new treatments, translational research is often described as a series of steps that de-risk potential drugs before they enter clinical trials, serving as a bridge between discovery research and commercialization.